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A Window on Murphy: Perspectives and Insights of Clergy of the Archdiocese of Dublin: a Presentation of Data Collated from a Survey Entitled "A Window on Murphy"

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A Presentation of Data Collated from a Survey Entitled *'A Window on Murphy'…the Perspective of Clergy of the Archdiocese of Dublin*.

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'A Window on Murphy'…Perspectives and Insights of Clergy of the Archdiocese of Dublin.

A Presentation of Data Collated from a Survey Entitled *'A Window on Murphy'…the Perspective of Clergy of the Archdiocese of Dublin*[1].

Introduction

This article draws on data from survey undertaken by the author of this article. The survey was entitled *'A Window on Murphy'…the perspective of Clergy of the Archdiocese of Dublin*. The survey set out to gain an insight into the life and ministry of the priests of the Archdiocese at the time of the publication of the report of the *Commission of Investigation into Child Sexual Abuse in the Archdiocese of Dublin; 1975-2004* commonly known as *The Murphy Report*. The report was published in November 2009; two chapters were withheld and were released at later dates. This article reflects on some of the initial findings of the data provided by the clergy of the Archdiocese of Dublin who responded to the survey. The *Murphy Report* was a significant event in the history of the diocese. For the first time in its history, a Government investigation was carried out into the functioning of the diocese and a report of this investigation was published in the public domain. The report highlighted instances of abuse and the handling of that abuse within and by the Archdiocese and other agencies. The report was available in full via the internet and the *Government Publications Office*.

Overview

This paper will initially present an overview of the methodology of the survey. The data will then be presented in three sections. Firstly, an examination of the 'mind-set' or outlook of clergy *vis-à-vis* their life as diocesan priests will be presented. Secondly, the paper will highlight the predominant supports within the experience of clergy at the time of the publication of the *Murphy Report* and its aftermath. Thirdly, the paper presents some of the

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[1] This presentation is representative of those clergy who responded to the survey entitled *'A Window on Murphy…the perspective of the Clergy of the Archdiocese of Dublin'*. This paper is written as a first step in a process of engaging with those who responded to the survey with a view to developing further questions with which the data will be examined.

notable findings from the data which outline the environment and culture within which the clergy who responded to the survey live their lives and undertaken their priestly tasks.

This paper does not set out to make recommendations. Its purpose is to capture a narrative of the experience of the clergy of Dublin at the time of the publication of the *Murphy Report*. The author is himself a priest of the Archdiocese of Dublin. He has a history of involvement with migrant groups; both emigrant and immigrant. In his work with these groups he studied their experiences to assist these often marginalised groups journey away from isolation towards integration. Their experiences informed strategies which were subsequently used to advocate for policy change.

Studies show that the presentation of narratives of events are helpful for those who wish to capture a moment in time, pause to reflect on it and somewhere and somehow in the future may wish to advocate for change. Narrative has two important features according to McLoud. While remembering events a person is not only reporting on them; they are also constructing a social identity. Furthermore,

> The very experience of telling, of being considered worthy enough to be heard, is step in the direction of a new sense of who they are.[2]

In addition, the impact of events on any social setting are experienced not in the abstract but in specific practices shaped by economic, political and social forces that influence these events. The field of migration policy is seldom studied in the abstract. Studies give consideration to specific life settings in order to evaluate how polices impact on individual and group situations. A study of undocumented citizens or those who are considered to be refugees give social scientists an insight into the lives of the people who fall into these categories and into the forces that influences their lives. Similarly, a study of the clergy of Dublin, with the Murphy Report as a point of reference, can reveal a lot;

> Surprising things can happen…the field of cultural studies, at its best, does not know the answers ahead of time but finds them, often provisionally, and only through the examination of specific events.[3]

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[2] McLeod, John, (1997) *Narrative and Psychotherapy*, London: Sage Publications Ltd. (pg 39)
[3] Juffer, Jane, (2013) *Intimacy Across Borders: Race, Religion and Migration in the U.S. Midwest*, PH: Temple University Press. (pg.32)

For the sake of clarity please note the following points; firstly, the use of the word clergy throughout the report refers to clergy who responded to the survey. Secondly the objective of the author at this stage is to honour those who responded to the survey. This in no way seeks to distract from the terrible and horrific acts of abuse that were detailed in the *Murphy Report.* Further publications will detail how clergy perceived the benefit of the *Murphy Report* to victims and their families. At this juncture the data shows that close to 100% of the replies to the survey reveal that, in the opinion of the clergy who responded to the survey, the *Murphy Report* was both helpful and necessary for victims. Firstly the report told their story and it allowed victims and their families a freedom to talk about much that was previously hidden. Secondly clergy state that the *Murphy Report* increased their understanding of the horror of abuse making their ministry more sensitive to victims and their families.

Methodology

The survey document was distributed by post to the clergy of the diocese during the first week of September 2013. This date marked three years and ten months since the publication of the *Murphy Report*. Two options were offered to those wishing to complete the survey. Firstly, there was an on-line option. To access the online option the letter sent to the priests directed them to a website link and within twenty four hours they received, by email, a further link to the main survey document which allowed them to complete the document while providing the option to revisit and edit their contribution if they so wished. For those who were not computer literate or who preferred to complete the document in a hand-written form, a hard copy of the document was also enclosed in the envelope. Both the online and the hard copy provided an option to complete the survey via an alias name chosen by the participants. The data relating to the identity of the participant was held in a separate file. This guaranteed the participants a degree of anonymity while at the same time allowing the survey coordinator to ensure that there were no false entries or bogus submissions. Forty nine point four per cent of the questionnaires were completed on line; the remaining 50.6% of questionnaires were completed via hard copy. The completed document was subsequently posted to the coordinator in a pre-addressed envelope. The survey underwent two pilots. One each occasion six priests were asked to complete a survey questionnaire and their feedback was used to develop the final survey document. The pilots

paid due attention to the technical aspects and challenges of the online elements of the survey; the preservation of anonymity, the clarity of the questions, the occurrence of repetition and the average completion time for the survey.

Survey Cohort

The target group for this survey is priests who were ministering in the Archdiocese of Dublin at the time of the publication of the *Murphy Report* in November 2009. Identifying this specific group was a difficult task. Priests are subject to a change of appointment, priests retire, some are on sabbatical or study leave and some priests may be listed as working in the diocese may actually be members of religious orders who move between dioceses. The source for this listing of clergy was the website for the Archdiocese of Dublin on the week commencing Sunday the 4th of August 2013. The website address is http://dublindiocese.ie/guidebook/priests. The number of priests listed that week (04/08/2013) as priests resident in the diocese was five hundred and eighty nine. There are a number of variables which cannot be accounted for within this listing. By the time the survey was ready for posting, a number of the listed priests may have moved address due to diocesan changes; others may not have been appointed when the *Murphy Report* was published; others may belong to other diocese holding part-time appointments while completing studies and still others may have been on holidays or too ill to complete the documentation. In summary, it is very hard to estimate the number of clergy on this listing who qualify to complete the survey. However, this method of selection ensured that the cohort selected was representative and did not in any way seek by intent or by error to exclude any particular view, opinion, or category of clergy who were ministering in the Archdiocese when the *Murphy Report* was published.

The survey was posted to 575 clergy listed on the diocesan website. Fourteen of the priest listed had no postal address. According to the Office of the Moderator of the Archdiocese there were 477 priests[4] with diocesan appointments as of October the 31st 2013. Ninety seven responses were received in response to the invitation to participate in this survey.

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[4] The breakdown is as follows: 267 diocesan priests, 169 Religious priests i.e. belonging to a religious order, 36 Foreign National priests and 5 described as others. See Figs 1.1. and 1.2 attached showing various categories of priests in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Based on numbers provided by the diocese, this gives a response rate of 20.33%[5]. The priests of the Archdiocese of Dublin were surveyed on two previous occasions. The Dublin Council of Priests which is a body comprised of nominees of the Archbishop and priest representatives who are elected by the priests of the diocese conducted survey in 1997. The survey at that time was circulated to 578 priests of whom 323 responded giving a 55.8% response rate[6]. A recent consultation undertaken by the same body in 2012 was circulated to priests. This consultation lacked scientific rigour and cannot be considered as a survey in the strict sense, however it did seek to elicit matters that related to the well-being of clergy. The results of this consultation are not generally available.

The response rate of 20.33% to this survey implies that this survey does not claim to be representative of the entire clergy of the Archdiocese of Dublin. For some the survey may be interpreted as a good sampling but for many it may only claim to be a survey of those who responded. As previously stated, from the responses that were submitted, this paper does not wish to make assumptions for the entire body of clergy of the Archdiocese of Dublin. Nevertheless, the data may prove helpful or may carry information that is applicable to the larger body of clergy. The one substantial difference between the two surveys mentioned and the one on which this paper is based is that the previous surveys were supported by a larger body of clergy; this survey is undertaken by an individual. Furthermore, the 1997 survey was quantitative in its methodology whereas this survey is qualitative which by its nature requires a degree of reflection and is subsequently more demanding of the respondents.

This paper seeks to investigate three questions; firstly, what information is at hand from the survey data which helps us understand the mind-set of clergy in the Archdiocese of Dublin; secondly, what does the data tells us about the supports that clergy availed of at the time of the Murphy Report and thirdly, are there any significant observations made by clergy that

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[5] Recent research into the response rates and the cost effectiveness of various community based survey methods produced the following results: telephone survey response rates 30.2%; the personalised postal survey response rates elicited a 10.5% response; a generic postal survey returned a 7.5% response and internet surveys generated a 4.7% response. The survey concluded that 'postal surveys remain the most economic option for population based studies'. Bio Med Central (2012) *Comparison of response rates and cost-effectiveness for a community-based survey: postal, internet and telephone modes with generic or personalised recruitment approaches* [Online], available http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3502082/ [accessed12/01/14].
[6] Lane, D., ed. (1997) *Reading the Signs of the Times: A Survey of Priests in Dublin*, Dublin: Veritas.

indicate a changing environment within which they live their lives and pursue their ministry. Before one begins to interpret this data it is important to remember that this information is qualitative rather than quantitative. Various narratives identified may not represent any one person; the data represents certain narratives between which individuals may lie. In summary, no one narrative defines a person completely but one narrative may dominate their outlook.

In order to attend to questions outlined in the previous paragraph, the data was examined and issues relating to these questions were coded and collated. During the data collation attention was paid to three variables; year of ordination; whether the person was ordained for the diocese or was working in the diocese but not ordained for the diocese and finally if the person who entered the data was in a parish, a chaplaincy or another appointment. These variables were included in case clarifications ware needed at a later stage of the analysis.

At this stage it is important to reinforce three points. Firstly, the *Murphy Report* is not responsible for the life situation or general mind-set among clergy; however, the *Murphy Report* is a significant point in time in the life of the diocese. Secondly, though there are many lenses through which one may view this data, this paper seeks only to honour those who completed the survey by focusing on what the data tells about their life situation. The perspectives of other groups mentioned in the data will be given due consideration at later stages. Thirdly, this study does not attempt to put the findings into secondary classifications nor does it attempt to put words on these categories other than those words used in the data, again this is to show respect for those who responded to the survey

Section One: The Mind-set of Dublin Clergy

The first question for consideration is 'what information is at hand from the survey data which helps understand the mind-set of clergy in the Archdiocese of Dublin'?' The data presented three categories that tell us something about the Catholic clergy in the Archdiocese of Dublin who responded to the survey.

Mind-set One: Lacking in energy

The first category emerging is the 15.46% who mention that they are lacking in energy or bordering on depression. Terms that they use to describe their status are: 'weary', 'switched-off' or 'hung out to dry'. One qualification has to be used when interpreting this data: namely that some clergy who replied refer to their own situation and others refer to their perception of clergy in general. However, turning to the replies in this category we find people referring to the time the report was published as a time when 'I live with a dark cloud over me…there is a sadness in me but also a hope for the future'. Another elderly priest, after a life of service in the diocese says 'I can't wait to retire…just let me say Mass and preach Jesus'. One other priest in this category, who would be classed as middle aged, generalises from his own perspective saying; 'Priests in the diocese have 'switched-off…we may not be able to save what is left'. Referring again to the period when the Murphy Report was published, a younger priest, ordained between the years 1995-99, records that 'it was the lowest point in the morale of clergy – and I believe that this has yet to be overcome'. One recently ordained priest noted that the report had the effect of 'de-energising an already tired/demoralised group'.

Mind-set Two: You are on your own.

A second grouping is categorised by the phrase 'you are on your own'. The feeling of being on your own is recorded by 11.34% of respondents. The week of the publication of the *Murphy Report* may have served to give expression to many feelings that may have been latent in people for some time. Generally speaking we often say it is a crisis that brings out the best and the worst in people; this is also the case with organisations. There is indeed another paper on the subject of 'the Sunday after the *Murphy Report* was published'. However, for the moment and for the purposes of this paper, that Sunday heightened the sense for some of 'being out on your own'. Feeling very raw one priest, ordained in the eighties spoke of being 'left with nothing to face the people with'. Facing the congregation on that weekend, one priest from the same ordination era simply said 'priests are left to self-support'. Another older priest said that despite the fact that those in authority did their best, this era plunged him into a realisation that it was now a case of 'every man for himself'. There are other angles to the sense of being 'out on your own' which come across

in the data. One reply noted that the training for and the culture of priesthood in the Diocese of Dublin rendered people 'individualistic'. The person has since left the active ministry.

Mind-set Three: You are on your own but I have done something about it.

The third category which is a substantially larger category is 'we are on our own but I have done something about it'. This category is more difficult to quantify as it manifests itself across the data in a variety of ways. This will be presented in the next section when consideration is given to supports that priests availed of at the time of the *Murphy Report*. This mind-set is exemplified by a statement made by a priest who is in his early seventies: 'My ministry and my inner life are what I make of them. This is liberation'. The data suggests that the sense of being on one's own in ministry is multi-faceted. For instance, and specifically in relation to the time of the publication of the *Murphy Report*, one reply tells that 'it is up to each one of us to take responsibility for our own journey through all of this'.

This category has emerged from the reality that the work of clergy is not without its difficulties and demands; the context of that work is ever changing and at times uncertain. Realising the state of play one priest relates;

> I had to realise that I am on my own as a priest in Dublin. So, I really stopped looking for any meaningful support. I have no sense that we are engaged in a communal mission, not in any fraternal sense of the word.

Yet another related directly to the publication of the *Murphy Report* said, 'support was not needed I feel', he continues, 'as adults we had to face the facts with both sadness and honesty. We did not need more 'paternalistic' or 'infantilising' support!'. The statement by this priest was not dismissive of the need for support or the need for initiatives to support clergy. At a later stage he noted that there is very little fraternity because, 'guys are just trying to keep their heads above water' and further on he said that 'nothing is being done to empower the presbyterate'. The data shows that when priests come to the realisation of the harshness of the challenges facing their ministry, some flounder but for others there is a tendency to put personal and professional support structures in place. Among these supports there is mention of fraternities, pastoral reflection groups (mostly set up by the

diocese), spiritual direction, directed retreats, therapy, prayer groups and other faith based communities.

In conclusion to this section, which considers how the time of the publication of the Murphy Report gives an insight into the 'mind-set of Dublin Clergy', it is worth noting that when 'being on one's own' is mentioned it fluctuates between a place of liberation or oppression; dependence or responsibility, individualism or engagement. The next section which highlights the supports that were available to clergy at the time of the publication of the report expands on ideas alluded to in the previous section of this paper.

Section 2: The Supports for Clergy.

Support One: Ecclesial Movements

In the face of growing difficulties, combined with an ability to name those difficulties, 9.2% of priests who responded to this survey are actively involved in structures that offer support to their ministry and further serve to enhance their individual well-being. One priest, while recognising that the mood in his class group is 'more resigned and a little depressed', acknowledges the benefits of annual eight day retreats he further acknowledges the support received on a rehab programme following heart surgery and on another occasion he benefited greatly from sessions of psychotherapy. Another priest, who is quite descriptive about the shortcomings within the hierarchical model of church, states that the church in Dublin 'is more concerned with bureaucracy and politics than service' yet he admits that this has propelled him into 'making a more determined effort to deepen my spiritual and personal life'. This priest is also a member of what he describes as 'a group support initiative' which was set up by the diocese. An example of this trend of individuals seeking support in ministry is noted by one priest who is a long standing member of Focolare[7];

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[7] The Focolare Movement had its origins during the Second World War in the Italian city of Trent, where it was founded by the late Chiara Lubich. The organisation now has a world-wide outreach and membership. The movement is inspired by the prayer of Jesus: 'That all may be one' (John 17,21). For further details see http://www.focolare.ie/

> The small number of priests closely involved with this (Focolare), including myself, have noticed a greater urgency on the part of at least some clergy, to develop relationships of fraternity...before they were inclined to go it alone, or to deepen those relationships if they'd been somewhat involved.

Referring to a pilot scheme for supervision in ministry one other priest recognises that 'I think it helped me to be more reflective and more constructive in making my way in ministry'.

Many of the supports mentioned in the previous section are located outside the place of work or pastoral engagement. This second item of support is one which is based within the place of pastoral engagement. The parish and its people is referred to by many but it is specifically mentioned by 24.7% of the respondents as an important support at the time of the publication of the report.

Support Two: The Parish

The second area of consideration in this section which looks at support for priests is the support received from the people of the parish. Reading the data one senses a synergy that cannot be captured adequately in words. The outpouring of support provided the local priest with much needed encouragement. The priest is one who ministers to people in a specific setting. At the time of the report it was as if the tables were turned and the people ministered to the priest. Though many people were angry and they expressed their anger to the priest as they left mass that Sunday; many offered words of encouragement and support. There were only two instances in a parochial setting that priests met with difficulty. One priest recalls that on a Sunday following the publication of the report 'a woman, - not a local, - came up the aisle giving out'. One other priest noted when on the Sunday when he preached about the report that 'I had little or no experience of being dealt with unfairly, apart perhaps by one individual'. One priest who braved the airways on national radio experienced one instance where something discourteous was said by another caller. The caller was referring not to him directly, but spoke about a priest who had abused the caller many years previously. The person who proffered the discourteous remark contacted the priest via the programmes producers afterwards to apologise for his outburst explaining, that 'he brings his children to mass and tries to explain to them that not all priests are bad'. Though this instance did not take place in a parish setting it reveals the

extraordinary dynamics that were occurring between priests and people shortly after the report was published.

A few statements collected from the data summarise the synergy I talk about. One priest describes how a meeting was organised to support parishioners and the wider public; 'we held the meetings to help parishioners but found that people came to support the priests'. Another priest ordained in the 1960-64 era recounts;

> I stood at the door after mass and the reaction of 'whispered support'; 'we'll get over this Father'; 'A tough morning Father', 'Christ is bigger than this Father – hang in there'…it was the people spread over two parishes that gave me support – but still the worst days of my priesthood.

A younger priest, ordained between 1995-99 tells that 'the responses of so many ordinary people was hugely supportive to me and if I did not have that I do not know how I would have been able to keep going in ministry as a priest'. The data shows that for many clergy there was an underlying sense of vulnerability and indeed neediness. It was largely unspoken, not fully articulated, but one instance captures it. Standing at the door of the church that Sunday the priest remembers that a person leaving mass said, 'your credentials in this matter were never in doubt'. What is more remarkable than this statement is the qualification that the priest offers; 'the fact I remember this so clearly speaks to me of its importance to me at the time'. Another priest relates that

> The real presence and the holiness of priesthood weren't the most obvious ideas around that day but at the same time people were very sensible in saying and telling us –we know this happened but it is about the few and not the many.

Priests, while appreciative of the support from parishioners, were very aware to the impact of the report on their lives and ministry. There was a sense that their world, and their context for priesthood was changing. 'The ground which I stood on when I was ordained in 1975 has been taken from under me', one priest writes. He continues, 'perhaps it is a good thing'. An older priest describes this in a slightly different manner 'we are all in a new age and altered relationships'. More specifically one priest noted the strong sense among those he served that 'the Church would never again really have a hold on their lives. They were not again going to look to the Church for guidance, instruction or advice'. There is strong evidence that Parish Pastoral Councils proved very helpful and supportive to clergy in parochial settings. The exact nature of this support will be documented at a later date.

Support Three: Other Clergy.

The third area of support that is present in the data is the support from the deanery[8] and other priests at a local level. It soon emerged that it was important to visit this data with a very focused question as the data contained a variety of responses and contextual issues. Therefore the data was examined through the lens of the following question to adequately research this topic 'when priests say they found meeting with fellow priests helpful what format did this take and did they consider it effective in terms of support?' Firstly, there was a strong distinction between meeting clergy before, during, and after the publication of the report with many saying that they found the meetings in 'Citywest[9]' very helpful in the lead up to the report.

Secondly, some were of the view that the diocese did what it could but in truth how could anyone prepare for what was to unfold? Thirdly, many priests felt that meetings of priests following the reports publication were adversely affected by other factors such as the debate that emerged over the matter as to whether auxiliary bishops mentioned in the report should resign or not. The question over the resignation of auxiliaries caused division at a time when the opposite was needed. Fourthly, there was strong feeling, by 16.4% of those who responded, that there was very little support in place for priests. Many felt that priesthood in the diocese was 'leaderless and rudderless' with one expressing the expectation that 'there would be a meeting with priests to discuss the *Murphy Report*…which didn't happen…I felt this failed priests'. One other priest acknowledged that the lack of support wasn't unwillingness but rather those with responsibility were 'not really sure how to support clergy'.

Fifthly, those members of religious orders who replied to the survey did reveal that for the large part they received support from their religious communities, leadership and superiors. Sixthly, some priests seemed to pick up on the message that if the diocese was to offer support for priests the diocese would be in conflict with its need to offer support to victims

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[8] A deanery is a geographical area within a diocese. In Dublin the priests of the deaneries meet four times a year. Each deanery is chaired by a Vicar Forane who meets with the Archbishop prior to the deanery meeting.
[9] The 'Citywest' meetings refer to meetings organised by the Archdiocese designed to offer ongoing support and education to clergy of the Archdiocese.

of abuse. Finally on a point for further consideration; the inclusion of prayer and liturgy in some of the responses suggest that their role is deserving of attention in a later study.

Twenty seven point eight per cent of clergy said they found meeting with other clergy during and after the publication of the report helpful. From the data it emerges that deaneries were encouraged to meet the night the report was published. When this happened the outcomes were mixed. One Vicar Forane - the person who offers leadership in the deanery - said 'in hindsight, I am not sure how helpful it was or if it was just a case of circling the wagons'. As time went on though it was the informal meetings organised by fellow clergy and small gatherings that proved more supportive. As one priest in the 50-54 age category said,

> Priests I feel found more support when meeting together spontaneously themselves to talk about the report rather than in any initiative coming from the diocese.

The data with words such as 'open', 'informal', 'over lunch', 'neighbouring' contain evidence of priests finding support. One of the younger respondents volunteered that he got most support from talking to other priests. However there are exceptions to this when the degree of necessary informality was integrated into the deanery structure.

> Priests in the deanery did gather together around the time to talk and share their views and how they were feeling. I think it was helpful for most. Some priests were visibly upset, others were stronger but the combination was good overall.

From a research perspective it would be interesting to revisit those deaneries where people found support at the time of the publication of the report to examine how they went about the task of supporting their members and more importantly how they cultivated their effectiveness. There is strong evidence to suggest that one dominant structure of support available to priests in less in evidence today; only one respondent in the 80-84 age group noted the importance of support he received in class gatherings i.e. year of ordination meetings.

Support Four: Friends and Family

The fourth notable area of support mentioned in the data is the support offered by friends and family. Fourteen point seven per cent of respondents indicated that friends and family were available to offer support around the time the *Murphy Report* was published. Some

said they got no support from fellow clergy and relied solely on family and friends and some said they received support from friends with little support from family. One notable trend in the responses is that priests in the sixty plus category are specific in their reference to priests and friends; they exist in distinct categories whereas those in the under sixty category identify friends and then note that some of these may be priests; priests number among friends as distinct from more senior clergy who identify friends and priests in different groupings.

Section Three Factors emerging within the Culture of Diocesan Clergy

The third section of this paper looks at the perceptions of clergy who responded to the survey. Does their data reveal any notable changes in the diocesan culture which may have an impact on their lives and ministry? Specifically, this section will look at the perceptions of fraternity among priest; perceptions regarding the preparation and follow up to the Murphy Report and finally the Office of Bishop *vis-à-vis* the clergy. A study of the data relating to these three areas gives us insights into changes within the culture of clergy that affect their life and ministry.

Culture One: Fraternity

The question of fraternity and support from fellow clergy was examined in a previous section, however at this juncture this paper will examine the deeper perceptions of surrounding fraternity in the light of the *Murphy Report* according to those who responded to the survey. Interestingly enough 18.55% of the clergy who responded to the survey, are of the view that the sense of fraternity has increased among priests since the publication of the report. A smaller number, 10.3%, believe that the publication of the *Murphy Report* exposed a lack of fraternity among clergy with some believing that the report by its nature decreased the levels of trust between clergy.

The data showed both a desire for more fraternity and an increase in fraternal support. This came across in a number of ways. For one particular priest, in his late sixties, it was a case of 'we are an endangered species and must stick together or be wiped out'. Another priest in the same age category noted among his fellow clergy 'a greater sense of fraternity, arising from some solidarity in the face of adversity'. Similarly a retired priest, who still holds an

appointment, has noted that diminishing numbers combined with the fallout from the *Murphy Report* has 'brought us closer together'. However he warns that fraternity among clergy is not easy, remarking that 'like Ronald Knox – I always found priests to be a tricky lot'. One other trend among priests was the realisation of the need to step up to the plate and care for one another, 'I think, the increasing levels of illness, both mental and physical, is testament to the real cost priests have had to bear'. A priest in his early sixties has made a change to his perception of his fellow clergy. Admitting that he tended to avoid the company of clerics he now has 'set time aside for clerics working in the general area around his parish'.

Another, while noting the increased sense of fraternity, offers the view that 'more support from diocesan authorities is still needed'. Of course the question remains as to what priests are looking for when they talk of fraternity. From much of the data it appears that fraternity provides a safe space to interact with those who share the same profession; a place to take refuge in a hostile environment maybe? One priest however notes that while many priests seem to be in a state of mild depression that 'looking for reassurance…is not true fraternity'.

An important point to highlight at this stage which was raised in the data is that an initiative was mooted at the Council of Priests to study the impact of the *Murphy Report.* This initiative hoped *to* include ways to empower priests in a 'post-Murphy situation'. It appears that this proposal was turned down by the Council.

Culture Two: Preparation and Follow-Up to the Publication of the *Murphy Report*.

The second theme to be discussed in this section and one which emerges as important in the data is a reflection on the preparation and follow up to the publication of the *Murphy Report*. Most of the replies to the survey express favourable comments towards the preparation for the publication of the report. The recommendations as to how one should 'be around friends' the night the report was published and further recommendations for dealing with the media were appreciated. A small number found some of the content in the preparatory talks hard to take. Referring to an input from a psychologists one priest said 'I came away with mounting anger…she proceeded to tell us to get up on the following Sunday morning and tell the people of God it was our fault!' In the midst of all this intense preparation another younger priest reflects back and realises that 'we were coached on how

to respond, what to say off the altar and if we were interviewed. But no one asked *how are you*?'

There is a widely held belief in the data that meetings in advance of the publication of the *Murphy Report* were helpful but something happened once the report was published; it seems that from the perspective of the clergy that the diocese appeared to collapse into organisational free-fall. Images used to express the slippage of support include 'this melted away in the immediate and long-term aftermath only to be replaced by a fire-fighting reaction'. One other priest relates quite bluntly that 'the supports for the clergy that were planned before the publication in fact proved to be completely the wrong thing'.

A narrative that is returned to in the data on a few occasions can be summarised as follows: the preparation highlighted the horror of abuse; those planning the preparation meetings believed that the report would bring to the fore many who have been abused and priests were asked to listen to the victims and their families; when the report was published 'the horror of abuse shifted to the authorities who failed'…'that put them on the back foot right from the off and no one seemed prepared to take the rap' to the extent that 'the diocese did not know what to do for a priest in the aftermath of the report' and as for the mutual support that priest were to give to one another 'some priests could barely talk to each other never mind be mutually supportive'.

In summary, priests were asked to take the line that 'bad priests' caused this problem; for some this spilled into a 'bad priesthood' in Dublin thereby tarnishing their own priesthood. As one priest observed; 'the diocese took the view that all priest were to blame'. When the focus shifted from 'bad priests' to 'bad bishops' it was then that the planned structures of support for clergy collapsed. Somewhere in the midst of this collapse a decision was taken to row with the 'bad bishop' line abroad in the media. One priest remembers that all of a sudden the 'diocesan image replaced the care of priests'. Another priest saw the diocesan offices taking on the role of a 'shadow media'.

In the aftermath and indeed in the face of this seeming collapse there was rage among people and rage in society generally but there was a silence among the clergy; some have managed to capture what lay beneath that silence. One man in his fifties simply said, 'long term it is hard to evaluate shame'. Realistically it is hard to recover from and indeed harder

still to fully understand some of the instances that occurred. One elderly priest, retired but active, recalls being asked by a person from the media 'for confirmation that I was not a perpetrator and was 'okay''; he added that the provision of a full-time or part-time service for clergy that were upset or disturbed by such occasions 'would have been of great help'. Another priest in his fifties noted an unease in himself as he delved into the silence that surrounded him and tried to make sense of all that was going on,

> I had an uneasy sense of individual abusers being made to be scapegoats for a problem which could have wider implications for the Church and possibly point to systemic issues.

Many priests were supported in the post publication phase through their engagement with Parish Pastoral Councils. Those who mention this particular engagement are less aware of the impact of the surrounding chaos further outlining how the strategies and structures put in place by these Councils were very beneficial to clergy according to the data received in this survey. As referred to earlier they aimed to support the people of the parish and succeeded in providing a much needed and highly valued ministry to the clergy of the parish. The relevance of this cannot be overstated as many clergy who responded to the survey noted that they were not provided with a space to reflect on the impact of the report on their life and ministry. By highlighting the supportive actions of Parish Pastoral Councils the data reveals that the church thinks and acts best locally. The data shows that the institutional, centralised, church may not possess the gifts and talents of the local church.

Two religious order priests made very interesting comments regarding the life of diocesan priests. One, who expressed how well supported he was by his own superiors, noted his admiration for the amount of hard work being done by the diocesan clergy in his deanery 'to the point, where I think we are killing our diocesan priests with too much work'. Another member of a religious order expressed horror when the deanery meeting following the report introduced the topic of clustering of parishes;

> I think the proceeding ahead with clustering at the time was lunacy/madness/ insensitive/crazy. Space was NOT given at the time to reflect on report and its impact.

These observations from non-diocesan clergy are revealing. The perspective of religious who work alongside diocesan clergy is helpful. Maybe they have even exposed the coping

mechanism among diocesan clergy which is mirrored in the organisational capacity of the diocese which simply put is 'just to get on with it'. There is also evidence in the minds of those who responded to the survey of an inability of the institutional church to think systemically. This is particularly worrying as one of the findings of the *Murphy Report* was the same inability of the institutional church to think and act systemically which in turn contributed to the problems of the management of Child Sexual Abuse cases.

The most consistent change in the life and ministry of priests mentioned in the data is the adherence to Child Protection Guidelines; they have become *the* priority. It is also clear from the data that any pastoral activity associated with children is burdensome for many to the degree that some clergy rejoice in the fact that they have no altar servers. Whereas there is strong evidence of the implementation of Child Protection Guidelines there is less evidence of polices which encourage the engagement of children in the life of the Church This is further evidence of a coping mechanism which is again a case of fix it and get on with it without a desire, willingness, or ability to look at an issue from a broader, systemic perspective.

Culture Three: The Office of Bishop vis-à-vis the Clergy.

This paper now turns its attention to the perception of the local ordinary i.e. their bishop by clergy. A point of clarification is necessary here before the data is presented. Common sense and indeed the data suggest that the office of the ordinary is influenced by the personality of the incumbent bishop. However this analysis focuses on the perception of the role of the office of the ordinary in the life of the clergy and secondly shows how that role is affected by the *Murphy Report*. There are many references both to the office of bishop and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin who is the current Archbishop throughout the data. Many references praise his 'courage' and 'consistency' throughout the period of time when the *Murphy Report* was published; many others comment that the ordinary is distant from his clergy. Once comment that is typical of this is 'at a deep personal level, like the 'Father/Son' relationship it has never existed with this ordinary. He is the Boss!' There are a variety of responses within these two polarities. However to keep within the realm of the research question this section refers only to the answers to question 13.1 in the survey document

namely 'Has the publication of the Murphy Report altered the balance between the pastoral and administrative role of the ordinary *vis-à-vis* the clergy'.

Sixty point seven per cent of those responding to the survey answered this question. An examination of the data showed clusters of data in four main categories. Of those that responded 11.3% responses would be described as not answering the question; 10.3% felt they were not able to answer the question mainly due to the fact that they were members of religious orders and don't have any dealings with the ordinary, another 10.3% responded 'no' and 28.86% responded 'yes'.

Respondents who didn't answer the question that was asked showed little consistency other than a number who refer to the treatment of auxiliary bishops. In the category of 'not able', the answers varied between 'not aware', 'not sure' and simply 'don't know'. The category that answered 'no' was more nuanced. Of those that responded 'no', a little over one quarter of the replies suggest that it has always been the case of heavy on administration and light on pastoral; 'no' was more a case of 'business as usual'. However the majority were simply 'no'.

Of those that responded yes; there was more data and more commentary than in the other four categories. A number of themes emerge among the 'yes' answer. Firstly, the Archbishop is commended highly for his public response to the Murphy Report. Secondly, of those that answered yes, there is the view that this response was based on a wish to protect the institution at all costs. Those who report this find it upsetting as it appears to them that the desire to protect the institution was one of the main findings of the *Murphy Report*. In the past children who were abused were sacrificed for the good of the institution now it is priests and even bishops. Thirdly, others note that the message emanating from the office is that a well administered diocese is a good diocese; not that people complain about this but they say it is at the expense of the pastoral. Fourthly, the words and phrases that are used to describe the office of Bishop during and since the *Murphy Report* are 'enforcer', 'distant', 'outside the ship', 'reserve', 'caution', 'nervous whenever I get a phone call from Archbishop's House'. Words like 'trust', 'confidentiality', and 'compassion' are used with the words 'loss of'. Fifthly and finally, a small number of the replies express surprise that there has been no effort to reflect on the issues that arose in the midst of the publication of the

Murphy Report. Specifically mentioned is the fact that there seems to be little attempt to give some theological understanding of events or even the issuing of a pastoral letter advocating a way forward in the light of all that has happened.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper the author said that no recommendation would be made or conclusions drawn. The conclusion is with those who read and reflect on the data. It is the author's sincerest wish that those who contributed to the survey find that their voice is heard and that the presentation of the data reflects their thoughts. It is also the authors wish that clergy who did not take part in the survey may find the data useful as they reflect on priesthood in these times. Furthermore; it is hoped that the data may in some way honour those who supported their clergy in Dublin at this difficult time in their lives and ministry. As stated earlier this paper in no way wishes to deflect from the pain and suffering of victims and their families over the years; neither does it excuse any professional mishandling of cases.

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Fig.1.1 The diagram shows the percentage response to the survey by age group (blue) and the percentages in these age groups (red) holding an appointment in the Archdiocese of Dublin.
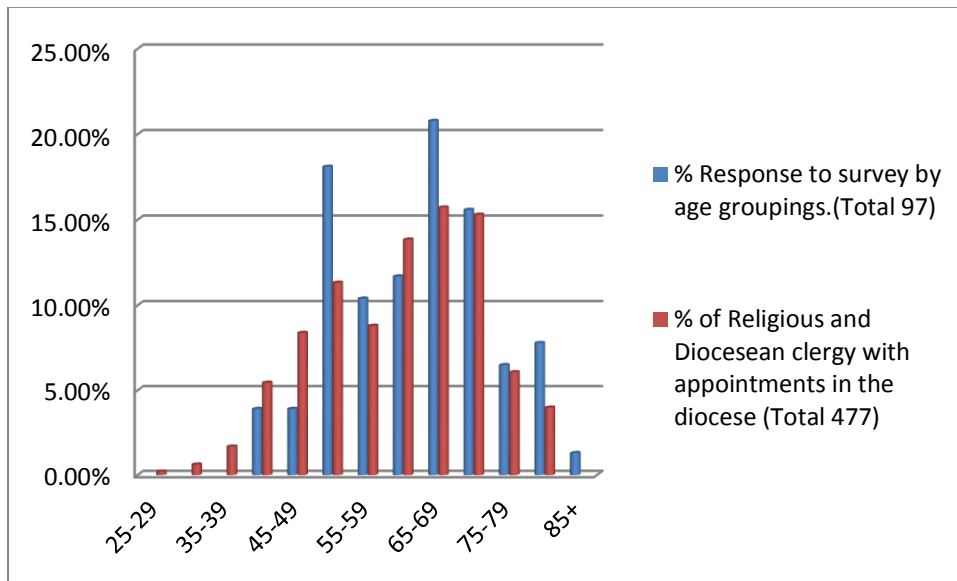

Fig. 1.2 as Fig. 1.1 but including the category (green) of those 'Ordained for Archdiocese of Dublin' which excludes those with appointments in the Archdiocese who were not ordained for the Archdiocese.
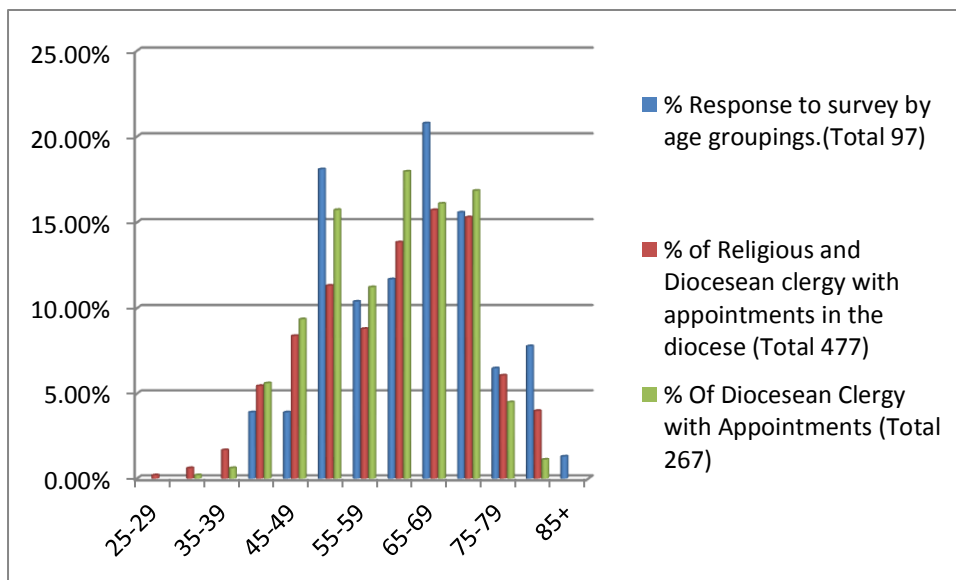
Fig. 2. This diagram shows the percentage response to the survey of those ordained for the Archdiocese of Dublin and those working in the Archdiocese but not ordained for the Archdiocese compared to the actually percentage figures of these grouping in the diocese. Others include foreign national clergy who hold a temporary appointment in the Archdiocese.
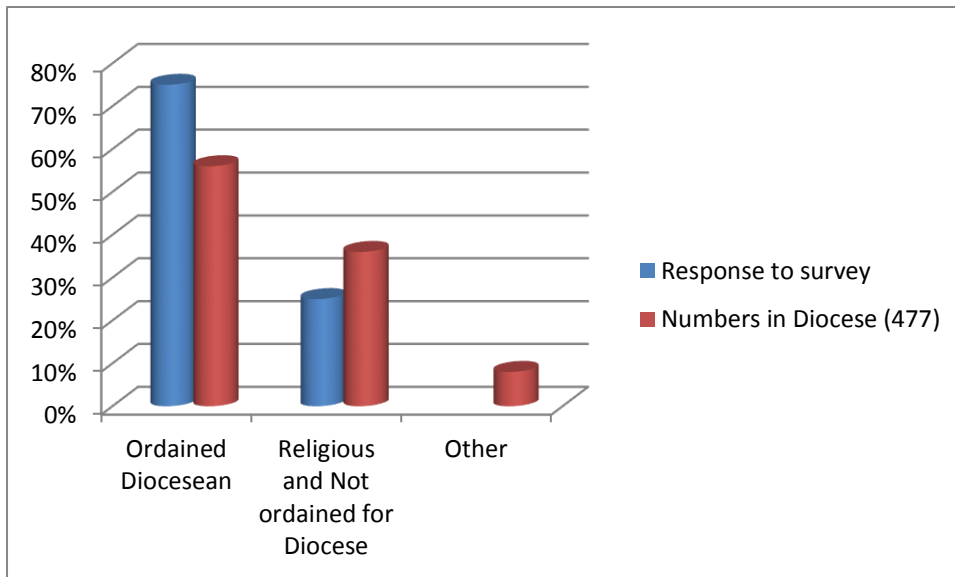
Fig. 3. This diagram shows the appointments held in the Archdiocese of Dublin by those who responded to the survey.
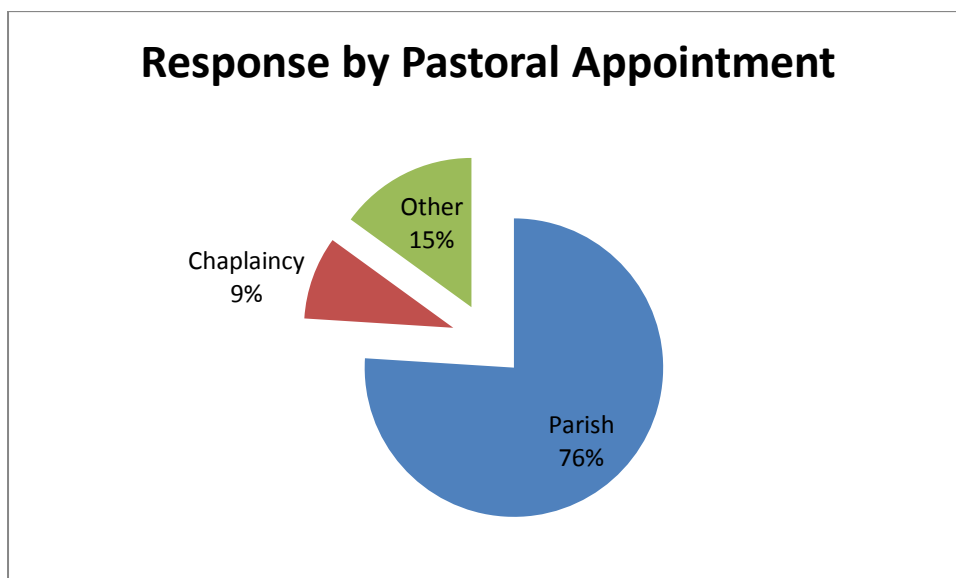
Fig. 4. The survey respondents were asked if they were prepared to meet in a one to one or group situation to discuss the findings of the survey or to clarify matters that they raised in their responses. This diagram shows their responses to these questions.