

March 2017

Preparing Priests to Work with Catholic Schools: A Content Analysis of Seminary Curricula

Michael J. Boyle

Loyola University Chicago, mboyle3@luc.edu

Anthony Dosen, CM

DePaul University, adosen@depaul.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), and the [Other Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Boyle, M. J., & Dosen, CM, A. (2017). Preparing Priests to Work with Catholic Schools: A Content Analysis of Seminary Curricula. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 20 (2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.2002052017>

This Article is brought to you for free with open access by the School of Education at Digital Commons at Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for publication in *Journal of Catholic Education* by the journal's editorial board and has been published on the web by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons at Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information about Digital Commons, please contact digitalcommons@lmu.edu. To contact the editorial board of *Journal of Catholic Education*, please email CatholicEdJournal@lmu.edu.

Preparing Priests to Work with Catholic Schools: A Content Analysis of Seminary Curricula

Michael J. Boyle, Loyola University Chicago
Anthony Dosen, CM, DePaul University

This documentary study of academic programs at Catholic Seminaries and Theology Schools through the United States sought to answer the question: "What types of preparation does the seminary curriculum provide to new pastors about their role in the parish's Catholic School?" Results of program syllabi review show a dearth of preparation given to this aspect of this parochial ministry. Recommendations for further investigation are offered.

Keywords: Catholic schools, seminarians

Providing a Catholic education to the faithful is a critical responsibility placed on the parish priest (Canon 794 §2). Past research suggests that the attitudes of bishops and priests are critical for the success of Catholic schools (Belmonte, 2007; Convey 1999; Frabutt 2010). On a national level in the United States, there is a perception of a lack of preparation of priests in the area of effective leadership and management of Catholic schools (Boyle, 2010). However, there is a paucity of systematic studies investigating the preparation of pastors to work effectively with Catholic schools. The purpose of the current investigation is to systematically analyze the program of studies of Catholic seminaries to identify specific course content that would prepare seminarians (future priests) to effectively work with Catholic schools.

Review of Literature

The parish school provides a unique opportunity for evangelization. The vocation of the parish priest is to lead, sanctify, and teach in the name of the diocesan bishop. Priestly ministry is traditionally described as the prophetic, priestly, and kingly roles. The prophetic role is connected with teaching, the priestly with worship, and the kingly with governance. Witherup (2012) notes the paucity of development in the roles of teaching and governance:

One also notes that two of the three traditional “powers” of the priesthood (Latin, *munera*)—teaching (*munus docendi*), divine worship (*munus liturgicum*), governing (*munus regendi*)—are not developed to any great degree. The prominence of the high priesthood imagery overshadows the royal and teaching (prophetic) dimensions of the priesthood of Jesus Christ in favor of the cultic, sacrificial office. The seeds of these later two offices of the priesthood are present, but they remain in the background. (pp. 58-59)

Historically, Catholic priests defined themselves in terms of sacramental ministry, oftentimes to the detriment of the preaching and teaching mission that is an inherent part of ordained ministry. The work of sacramental ministry trumps the work of proclamation of the Word and governance of the Church. The definition of priesthood in terms of sacramental ministry, which dates back to before the Council of Trent, has left the priest of the 21st Century with a one-sided vision of priesthood. Oelrich (2007) in discussing the role of the priest, especially in light of the diminishment of priestly vocations in the past 50 years, points out that the primary role is *Sacramental Priest*, along with the term “Canonical Pastor.” Other than mentioning in passing the threefold *munera* of the priest, the focus of priesthood in our own era perseveres to be defined primarily as a sacramental ministry, with little notice given to the ministry of either Word or governance. Witherup (2012) opined, “It is likely that few priests reflect in depth on the teaching role of priestly ministry unless they are specifically engaged in higher education” (p. 114). Witherup’s opinion is backed up by McNulty (1976), who spoke of the ministry of teaching in the priesthood in light of his work as a seminary professor. This should not totally disappoint, for the documents of the Second Vatican Council provide ample sources of reflection on the topic.

In the next section of this review, we examine the pertinent documents from Vatican sources followed by a review of the work that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have published since the Second Vatican Council. This review will bring the particulars of the formation of Catholic priests in the United States into a sharper focus.

Vatican Documents

Presbyterorum Ordinis (Paul VI, 1965b), The Decree of the Second Vatican Council on the ministry and life of priests, reflects on the ministry of the Word that is at the heart of ordained ministry:

The People of God are joined together primarily by the word of the living God. And rightfully they expect this from their priests. Since no one can be saved who does not first believe, priests, as co-workers with their bishops, have the primary duty of proclaiming the Gospel of God to all. In this way they fulfill the command of the Lord: "Going therefore into the whole world preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15), and they establish and build up the People of God. Through the saving word the spark of faith is lit in the hearts of unbelievers, and fed in the hearts of the faithful. This is the way that the congregation of faithful is started and grows, just as the Apostle describes: "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17). (Chapter 2, Section 1, para. 4)

The proclamation of the Word is the foundation upon which the sacramental ministry and community of the Church is based. Therefore, it deserves a prominent place in the understanding of priestly ministry. The prominence of this ministry of teaching is such that the Council Fathers recommended:

Priests therefore, as educators in the faith, must see to it either by themselves or through others that the faithful are led individually in the Holy Spirit to a development of their own vocation according to the Gospel, to a sincere and practical charity, and to that freedom with which Christ has made us free. Ceremonies however beautiful, or associations however flourishing, will be of little value if they are not directed toward the education of men to Christian maturity. In furthering this, priests should help men to see what is required and what is God's will in the important and unimportant events of life. Also, Christians should be taught that they live not only for themselves, but, according to the demands of the new law of charity; as every man has received grace, he must administer the same to others. In this way, all will discharge in a Christian manner their duties in the community of men. (Chapter 2, Section 1, para. 6)

In summary, the teaching ministry of the priest impacts the entirety of his ministry. The teaching ministry is both formal and informal, it is the proclamation of the Gospel within the Sacred Liturgy, and the catechesis that occurs both in the classroom and the counseling parlor.

Optatam Totius (Paul VI, 1965a), the Second Vatican Council's decree on the training of priests, also highlights the importance of the ministry of teaching:

That pastoral concern which ought to permeate thoroughly the entire training of the students also demands that they be diligently instructed in those matters which are particularly linked to the sacred ministry, especially in catechesis and preaching, in liturgical worship and the administration of the sacraments, in works of charity, in assisting the erring and the unbelieving, and in the other pastoral functions. (Section 6, para.19)

Once again, the Council Fathers give primacy of place to catechesis and preaching. As is becoming clear, this is not by accident, but rather by a design to state that catechesis and preaching should hold primacy of place in the priest's ministry.

Optatam Totius recommends that seminarians, in preparation for this ministry of the Word, should be familiar with those social sciences that inform good educational practice.

They should also be taught to use the aids which the disciplines of pedagogy, psychology, and sociology can provide, according to correct methodology and the norms of ecclesiastical authority. Likewise, let them be properly instructed in inspiring and fostering the apostolic activity of the laity and in promoting the various and more effective forms of the apostolate. Let them also be imbued with that truly Catholic spirit which will accustom them to transcend the limits of their own diocese, nation, or rite, and to help the needs of the whole Church, prepared in spirit to preach the Gospel everywhere. (Section 6, para 20)

These recommendations of integrating the social sciences, especially pedagogy, into the curriculum of priestly intellectual formation find a lukewarm welcome in the *Program of Priestly Formation* (USCCB, 2006), in which the wider thoughts of the council were shrunk into an understanding of pedagogy in the early editions, but even this mention was ignored.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops *Program of Priestly Formation*

The *Program of Priestly Formation* (hereafter referred to as *PPF*) focuses the context of the ordained priest's life and ministry in the Church. As stated in the 2006 edition of the *PPF*:

For priests, the specific arena in which their spiritual life unfolds is their exercise of ministry in fulfillment of their mission. The life of priests in the Spirit means their continuous transformation and conversion of heart centered on the integration or linking of their identity as configured to Christ, Head and Shepherd (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* nos. 21-23), with their ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral governance or leadership (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, nos. 24-26). (USCCB, 2006, p. 11)

One should not lose sight of the order of priestly ministry: Word, sacrament, and pastoral governance. The primary office of the priest is the ministry of the Word, the proclamation of the Gospel. It is from the successful proclamation that the Church is formed and the sacramental life of the Church is opened to the community. Finally, it is within the continued proclamation of the Good News and the celebration of God's salvation in the sacramental life and worship of the church that pastoral leadership finds its context. The ministry of preaching, and teaching, is the first movement of the priest's ministry.

It is this ministry of preaching and teaching that is the focus of this paper. The practice of preaching and teaching traditionally falls under the pastoral formation of the seminarian. In *PPF* 2006, the ministry of preaching and teaching is summarized in one paragraph.

Proclamation of the Word: Pastoral formation needs to emphasize the proclamation of God's Word, which indeed is the first task of the priest. This proclamation ministry is aimed at the conversion of sinners and is rooted in the seminarian/preacher's ability to listen deeply to the lived experiences and realities of the faithful. This listening is followed by the preacher's ability to interpret those lived experiences in the light of Sacred Scripture and the Church's Tradition. Understanding the intersection of God's Word and human experiences, the seminarian/preacher initiates a lifelong mission and ministry of bringing God's Word to the world through preaching and teaching. This requires that

the seminarian couple the deepest convictions of faith with the development of his communication skills so that God's Word may be effectively expressed (USCCB, 2006, pp. 77-78).

At face value, this excerpt from the 2006 *PPF* is a beautiful and comprehensive exposition of the ministry of preaching and teaching. However, upon examination of the earlier editions of the *PPF*, its focus seems limited. For example, in 1971, the *PPF* spoke of both preaching and teaching, with a particular emphasis upon catechetics.

The seminarian will have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the various aspects of the parish: worship, administration, education, and mission. He will participate in the worship of the community observing and sharing in the Eucharist and the other sacraments in their parish setting, and, if a deacon, preaching the Word of God under the helpful direction of an experienced parish priest. He will become acquainted in some measure with the functioning of the parish, as it responds to the educational and other needs of the parishioners... Other areas that should be included in the program are catechetics or another form of religious education, and some form of specialized ministry, e.g., Catholic Charities, hospitals, community organizations, agencies for the handicapped, special diocesan or religious apostolates (NCCB, 1971, p. 27).

In contrast to the 2006 edition, *PPF* 1971, speaks specifically about the educational needs of the parishioners and highlights both catechetics and religious education. In later editions of the *PPF* the recommendations about the ministry of teaching become even more specific.

In addition to having an accurate knowledge of Sacred Scripture and systematic theology, the seminarian should learn those special skills of pedagogy needed to communicate the Gospel message in a clear, precise and well-organized way geared to the level of knowledge of those being taught and their different cultural backgrounds. In this endeavor there should be collaboration with the personnel of the diocesan offices of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and the seminarians should be encouraged to attend catechetical workshops and congresses (NCCB, 1976, p. 37).

The 1976 and 1982 editions of the *PPF* mirror each other (NCCB, 1976; NCCB, 1982). Their recommendations for seminarians include receiving a pedagogical base and encouraging them to engage in the practice of continuing education by attending catechetical workshops and congresses. Among the various editions of the *PPF* the 1976 and 1982 editions speak clearest about the need for seminarians to have a pedagogical background and to continue to study best teaching practice in catechetics.

NCEA and Assessment of Priests

In 2008, the National Catholic Education Association published an assessment strategy based on the duties of priests. Interestingly, the authors outline the tasks and duties of Catholic priests in regard to their work of teaching the faith (Ippolito, Latcovich, Maylin-Smith, 2008). As Ippolito et al. describe, there are eight tasks that the assessment evaluates:

1. Evangelizes the community and culture
2. Models a living witness of the Gospel
3. Implements RCIA processes
4. Prepares people for sacraments
5. Supervises faith formation programs
6. Catechizes adults, youth and children
7. Responds to questions of faith
8. Uses the media to communicate the message of faith

In terms of the priest's leadership and administration of the parish, the following tasks and duties are evaluated:

1. Oversees strategic planning grounded in Gospel values and the diocesan mission
2. Oversees parish programs, ministries and apostolates
3. Oversees the stewardship of parish finances
4. Employs and manages parish staff
5. Supervises the maintenance of the physical plant
6. Supervises parish communication

While these particular tasks are not as directly related to the teaching mission of the priest, they are critical factors that involve the priest's role in the administration of a parish school. While the principal takes on the primary function, the pastor's role is, as stated above, supervising and overseeing. Interestingly enough, these factors find only a peripheral place in most seminary curricula. There is yet another domain in which the teaching function is found—the practices associated with a ministry of presence with parish

groups. The particular task states that the parish priest visits the school or religious education program (Ippolito et al., 2008). The question with which we were left was how will the parish priests be able to exercise these ministries without some knowledge and skill background? These issues are important for the life of the priest generally, but they can be critical for a priest who is required to supervise a parochial school in his parish.

Thoughts on the Ecclesial Documents

The Vatican documents provided the priests with a loop-hole. If they are not able to undertake these pastoral duties, they may delegate the tasks to others. Unfortunately, this has created an attitude that has allowed the priest to take on only those roles which he must absolutely do by his ordination as a priest. Hahnenberg (2006) suggests that

One challenge for the priest today is to be minister of the word in the context of many ministers. Much of the daily ministry of the word in the parish is now being done by others. Lay ministers run religious education programs and provide sacramental preparation; they lead Bible studies and organize faith-sharing groups. The homily remains a central feature of the priest's ministry. But to locate his service to the word in the homily alone leads to a theology of leftovers, in which the identity of the priest is built around those things the laity cannot do. The challenge is to understand the priest's ministry of the word as comprehensive but not exclusive (p. 110).

The pastor possesses both the responsibility and the authority within the parish for the establishment and operation of the parochial school. The pastor also possesses the canonical authority to hire a principal, teachers, and staff to operate the school.

... the pastor has exclusive right to act on behalf of the parish in all juridic affairs, is responsible for the administration of all parish goods, and within the limits of the law has the ultimate authority in the parish and therefore the parish school. (Ciriello, 1994, p.137)

When the pastor does not possess knowledge related to the educational process, the situation becomes difficult for both the principal and the pastor. The pastor is placed at a disadvantage and is unable to provide necessary sup-

port for the principal. In cases like this, there is a likelihood for misunderstandings and conflict (Schafer, 2004).

The themes of pastoral authority, interpersonal qualities, and role differentiation have been identified, among others, as critical in an effective Catholic school leadership approach (Brock and Fraser, 2001). The parish school principal must communicate well with the pastor if she/he expects his support. Likewise, the pastor/chief executive must support the principal and exhibit trust by not allowing the chain of supervision to be short-circuited. All involved, including a lay board, must understand the daily operation of the school to be the primary role of the principal. Pastors and secondary school chief executives “should not interfere in conflicts between parents and school personnel” (Brock & Fraser, 2001, p. 94). When these procedures break down and pastors or chief executives attempt to run the school, conflict is the inevitable result. The literature notes that minimizing disincentives and assuring a good match between individuals, specific principalships, and school/parish cultures is essential to the success of the organization and the principal (Canavan, 2001). Durow and Brock (2013) suggest that priests should receive more pastoral formation and supervision in the role they need to play in the administration of the parish school prior to assignment. Those pastors who have successfully managed a parish school in the context of the total parish might provide such formation and supervision.

Method

Sample

Programs of study from the Roman Catholic seminaries listed on the website of the Association of the Theological Schools (www.ats.edu) were identified for use in this analysis. In the absence of specific course syllabi located on the website, individual schools were contacted via email and a request for a copy of the syllabus was requested. The request was directed to the academic head of the department. Specifically, courses that provide seminarians with background about Catholic schools, the administration of these schools, and the priest's proper role in the pastoral care and administration of Catholic schools, were identified for inclusion in this study. Examples of course titles of selected courses include: Church History; Theology of Teaching and Ministry; Principles of Catechesis; Parish Administration; Youth Ministry; and Ministry of Teaching. Of the 46 active programs, 18 institutions responded (response rate = 39%). From these 18 institutions, 38 syllabi were reviewed.

Syllabi were collected by a graduate assistant who removed all identifying information from the syllabus and coded it in such a way that no individual institution could be connected to any particular syllabus. Syllabi from the same institution were grouped and labeled with a code to signify that the syllabus came from the same institution. All information regarding the instructor was removed so that a completely blind review could be conducted.

Data Analysis

For coding purposes, there were four sections that were defined for each syllabi. The operational definitions for each section are as follows:

- **Course Description:** Any introductory section of the syllabus that presents an overview of the course and the content that will be covered over the term.
- **Course Goals/Objectives/Outcomes:** Any section that outlines the instructional aims of the course is considered as the Outcome section. In some cases, the goals and outcomes may be listed as separate sections. However, for the purpose of this analysis, these separate sections will be seen as one unit.
- **Topics/Schedule:** This is list of topics (whether in a list or embedded in a course schedule) that will be covered over the course of the term. There may be some instances where the topic section is a general overview of the content and specific sub-topics are listed in the schedule. However, for the purpose of this analysis, these separate sections will be seen as one unit.
- **Assignments:** This is the list of required activities for the course that will be assessed and used to determine a grade.

Each syllabus was reviewed for the presence of the following three topics: (a) Catholic schools; (b) catechesis; and (c) teaching and learning. Then, each part of the syllabus (course description, course goals/outcomes, course schedule, and course assignments) was analyzed for the quality of reference to the topic. Syllabi with no reference to the topic were coded 0; those containing at least one inference to the topic were coded 1; and those with at least one explicit reference to the topic were coded 2.

Syllabi were reviewed independently by both researchers using a shared observation protocol. Initially, five randomly selected syllabi were reviewed. Then, ratings were compared across raters. Any significant variations were discussed and consensus related to ratings was reached. Each rater then rated the complete samples of syllabi independently. Reliability was then deter-

mined by calculating the Kappa coefficient across both raters. The inter-rater reliability coefficient ($r=.73$) was determined to be extremely reliable, suggesting strong agreement between raters. Frequency distributions were then determined for each of the topics by quality.

Results

Frequency Distribution

Topic: Catholic school. The syllabi were analyzed for the presence of explicit reference to Catholic schools. Frequency of occurrences and percentages are presented in Table 1. In reviewing the results, both raters found that the majority of the syllabi had no direct reference to Catholic schools in the course description (86.8%), course goals/outcomes (86.8%), or course schedules (86.8%) or assignments (92.1%). A very small minority of the syllabi contained any direct reference of Catholic schools in the course description (10.5%), course goals/outcomes (10.5%), course schedule (7.0%), and assignments (2.0%).

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage by Rater: References to Catholic Schools

Syllabus Section	Quality	Rater 1		Rater 2	
		Count	%	Count	%
Course Description	No reference	33	86.8	33	86.8
	Inference	1	2.0	2	5.0
	Explicit Reference	4	10.5	3	7.0
Course Goals/ Outcomes	No reference	33	86.8	34	89.4
	Inference	1	2.0	1	2.0
	Explicit Reference	4	10.5	3	5.0
Course Schedule	No reference	33	86.8	36	94.7
	Inference	2	5.0	0	0.0
	Explicit Reference	3	7.0	2	5.0
Assignments	No reference	35	92.1	35	92.1
	Inference	2	5.0	1	2.0
	Explicit Reference	1	2.0	2	5.0

Note. Percentages round to nearest number and therefore will not total 100%.

Topic: Catechesis. The syllabi were analyzed for the presence of explicit reference to catechesis. Frequency of occurrences and percentages are found in Table 2. In reviewing the syllabi, both raters found that a majority of the syllabi did not contain a reference to Catechesis in the course description (76.3%) course goals/outcomes (65.7%), course schedule (81.5%) or assignments (73.0%).

Table 2
Frequency and Percentage by Rater: References to Catechesis

Syllabus Section	Quality	Rater 1		Rater 2	
		Count	%	Count	%
Course Description	No reference	29	76.3	29	76.3
	Inference	1	2.0	2	5.0
	Explicit Reference	8	21.0	7	18.0
Course Goals/Outcomes	No reference	25	65.7	28	73.6
	Inference	3	7.0	0	0.0
	Explicit Reference	9	23.0	9	23.0
Course Schedule	No reference	31	81.5	32	84.2
	Inference	0	0.0	1	2.0
	Explicit Reference	7	18.0	5	13.0
Assignments	No reference	28	73.0	27	71.0
	Inference	3	7.0	3	7.0
	Explicit Reference	7	18.0	8	21.0

Note. Percentages round to nearest number and therefore will not total 100%.

Topic: Teaching and learning. The syllabi were analyzed for the presence of explicit reference to teaching and learning. Frequency of occurrences and percentages are found in Table 3. In reviewing the syllabi, both raters found that a majority of the syllabi did not contain a reference to Teaching and Learning in course description (81.5%), course goals/outcomes (73.0%) course schedule (81.5%) or assignments (73.0%)

Table 3
 Frequency and Percentage by Rater: References to Teaching and Learning

Syllabus Section	Quality	Rater 1		Rater 2	
		Count	%	Count	%
Course Description	No reference	31	81.5	27	71.0
	Inference	3	7.0	7	18.0
	Explicit Reference	4	10.5	4	10.5
Course Goals/Outcomes	No reference	28	73.0	26	68.4
	Inference	6	15.0	5	13.0
	Explicit Reference	4	10.5	7	18.0
Course Schedule	No reference	31	81.5	31	81.5
	Inference	1	2.0	3	7.0
	Explicit Reference	6	15.0	4	10.5
Assignments	No reference	28	73.0	30	78.9
	Inference	6	15.0	2	5.0
	Explicit Reference	4	10.5	6	15.0

Note. Percentages round to nearest number and therefore will not total 100%

Discussion

This documentary study of academic programs at Catholic seminaries and theology schools through the United States sought to answer the question: “What types of preparation does the seminary curriculum provide to new pastors about their role in the parish’s Catholic School?” Results of program syllabi review show a dearth of preparation given to this aspect of parochial ministry. Few seminary courses move beyond a mere mention of Catholic schooling to a discussion of the challenges that confront parish schools and the ministerial opportunities that Catholic schools provide for parish priests. The question that remains at the end of the study is how might we, as educators, better prepare priests for this aspect of their parochial duties?

The results of this preliminary investigation suggest that, despite the great responsibilities parish priests have in the governance of parochial schools, there is little content available in priestly formation programs to help priests work effectively in their parish schools. The pastor possesses both the re-

sponsibility and the authority within the parish for the establishment and operation of the parochial school. The pastor also possesses the canonical authority to hire a principal, teachers, and staff to operate the school. The pastor clearly is not only the pastor of the parish, but also the pastor of the school (Geelan, 2000, p. 6). Yet, the analysis of the content of the curriculum would suggest that seminarians may not be receiving the necessary kind of courses that would make them successful in this role.

The lack of content knowledge of schools and the educational process leaves potential priests at a disadvantage. As Weiss (2007) suggests,

The shared leadership between these two key players, the parish pastor and school principal, is essential for the life and future of Catholic education. The basic assumption in this critical relationship is that the pastor and the principal work as a collaborative team for the effective operation of the school (p. 9).

Without adequate preparation, priests are not equipped with the necessary content base to be effective partners in this critical relationship with the parish school principal.

Several of the examined syllabi provided interesting insights into the preparation of priests for engaging in the educational apostolate. In one course, seminarians were required to teach for one semester in a religion program at a Catholic high school alongside a certified teacher. At a different seminary, the parish management course dealt extensively with issues of Catholic school administration as they intersect with the parish. In a third case, a course in the institution's Sacred Theology Licentiate (STL) program assisted students in gaining skills in K-12 education, teaching higher education, and working in adult education programs at the parish level. These programs set a standard for analyzing other programs. On the weak side of the examples, several courses in the history of the American Catholic Church spoke to the development of Catholic education in the 19th century. However, these courses tended to treat the topic rather cursorily.

Clearly, there is work that needs to be done in the area of training priests to for their roles in Catholic schools. However, there are some opportunities for creative approaches to this issue. One obvious area to explore is whether innovative partnerships between priestly formation programs and Catholic institutions of higher education (CIHE) could be developed to help create programming to address the needed areas of development. CIHEs could

potentially create and deliver modules to seminarians in a systematic fashion to increase knowledge and skills in effective administration of parish schools. Certainly, with the advent and increasing use of the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Schools (Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill, 2007), standards-based modules could be developed. The standards can provide an effective framework and structure in necessary areas of effective schools management, including mission and Catholic identity, governance and leadership, academic excellence, and operational vitality) At the very least, seminarians should be required to have at least one field-based experience in a Catholic school context.

This investigation is only a scratch on the surface. The sample size (n= 18, 39% response rate), although respectable, limits the generalizability of this study. It is quite possible that a greater number of syllabi included in the study would have yielded a different picture of the course content of priestly formation programs. On the other hand, the sample size (n = 18) may indicate a paucity of programs assisting seminarians in their education related to Catholic schools. If true, this would suggest that further study of this topic could yield additional recommendations to address the issues raised in this study. Further study should include focus groups and individual interviews with the various constituency groups: seminarians, newly ordained priests, and deans/faculty of priestly formation programs. Such information could help to identify strengths and gaps in existing programs. This could help to create additional kinds of approaches to ensure that future pastors are equipped to effectively work with their parish schools.

Conclusion

The authors entered into the study with a biased assumption that many parish priests would prefer not to have their parish tied to a Catholic school. Although there may be many reasons for this situation, one may very well be a lack of understanding of how appropriately interact with their parochial school. This study has confirmed the suspicion of the authors that little is done in seminary education to prepare future priests to deal with the challenges of pastoring the parochial school. Further studies, like those mentioned above, need to be conducted to determine what other factors may be involved in this particular attitude amongst priests.

References

- Belmonte, A. (2007). Leading Catholic schools into the future: Some challenges and dilemmas for resolution. *Leading and Managing*, 13(2), 15-29.
- Boyle, M. (2010). Developing and sustaining leaders for Catholic schools: A summary of the conference proceedings of the second Catholic higher education collaborative conference. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 14(1), 94-106.
- Brock, B. L., & Fraser, J. (2001). Principals and pastors sharing school leadership: Perspectives from Nebraska and New South Wales. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 5(1). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce/vol5/iss1/7>
- Ciriello, M. J. (1994). The principal as spiritual leader: Formation and development for Catholic school leaders. Washington, DC: *The United States Catholic Conference*.
- Convey, J. (1999). Factors affecting the views of bishops and priests about Catholic schools. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 2(3), 248-264.
- Durow, W., & Brock, B. (2013). The retention and attrition of Catholic school principals. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 8(2).
- Frabutt, J., Holter, A., Nuzzi, R., Rocha, H., and Cassel, L. (2010). Pastors' views of parents and the parental role in Catholic schools. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 14(1) 24-46.
- Geelan, T. E. (2000). Pastoring Catholic education boards, commissions, and councils: Witness of an experienced pastor. Washington, DC: *National Catholic Educational Association*.
- Hahnenberg, E. (2006). One priestly people. In D. Dietrich (Ed.), *Priests for the 21st century*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company.
- Ippolito, J., Latcovich, M., & Mayln-Smith, J. (2008). *In fulfillment of their mission: The duties and tasks of a Roman Catholic priest: An assessment project*. Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Educational Association.
- McNulty, F. (1979). The priestly responsibility to teach. *Religious Education*, 74(2) 131-142.
- National Conference of Catholic Bishops [NCCB]. (1971). *The program of priestly formation of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops*. (1st ed.). Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1976). *The program of priestly formation of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops*. (2nd ed.). Washington D.C. National Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1982). *The program of priestly formation of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops*. (3rd ed.). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference.
- Oelrich, A. (2007). Forum: A theological reflection on the titles *canonical pastor*, *sacramental priest*, and *parish life coordinator*. *Worship*, 81(6), 540-549.
- Ozar, L. A., & Weitzel-O'Neill, P. (Eds.). (2012). *National standards and benchmarks for effective Catholic elementary and secondary schools*. Chicago, IL: Loyola University Chicago, Center for Catholic School Effectiveness.
- Paul VI. (1965b). *Optatam totius*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_optatam-totius_en.html

- Paul VI. (1965b). *Presbyterorum ordinis*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_presbyterorum-ordinis_en.html
- Schafer, D. F. (2004). Leadership role expectations and relationships of principals and pastors in Catholic parochial elementary schools: Part I. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 8(2). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce/vol8/iss2/6>
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB]. (1993). *Program of priestly formation (4th ed.)*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2006). *Program of priestly formation (5th ed.)*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Publishing.
- Weiss, S. (2007). Pastor-principal relationship in the parish school. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 11(1). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce/vol11/iss1/2>
- Witherup, R. D. (2012). *Gold tested in fire: A new Pentecost for the Catholic priesthood*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

Michael J. Boyle, Ph.D., is Clinical Assistant Professor and Director of the Andrew M. Greeley Center for Catholic Education at Loyola University Chicago. Correspondence regarding this article can be directed to Dr. Boyle at mboyle3@luc.edu

Anthony J. Dosen, C.M., Ph.D., STL, is an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at DePaul University in Chicago, IL. He is also the Formation Director for Vincentian seminarians of the Western Province of the United States. Correspondence regarding this article can be directed to Fr. Dosen at adosen@depaul.edu