



Pastoral Research Online

Issue 34

October 2016

Survey of priests working in Catholic parishes

In the 2011 National Church Life Survey, a questionnaire was distributed to anyone involved in significant leadership within a parish. Overall, 248 priests completed the lengthy questionnaire (12 pages), which included a set of questions about seminary training and about subsequent professional development or ministry training.

Sixty-nine of the 248 (28%) priests said they had done some leadership development or ministry training in the area of management or administration in the previous two years. Of these, almost two-thirds (64%) gave it a score of 4 or 5 out of 5, with 5 meaning it was 'very effective' in equipping them for the leadership role they had at the time.

Priests were asked to say how satisfied they were with different aspects of their initial ministry training. While 81 per cent said they were happy with their training in theology, 77 per cent were happy with their training in biblical studies, and 74 per cent were happy with their training in books of the Bible, only 23 per cent said they were happy with the training they received in church management and administration.

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Table 1: Satisfaction with initial ministry training

Area	Per cent choosing 4 or 5*
Theology	81
Church history	77
Books of the Bible	74
Worship (liturgy)	66
Personal spiritual formation	62
Mission	57
Preaching	57
Pastoral activities (counselling, helping people with grief, etc)	49
Leading churches through change	30
Languages (Hebrew / Greek)	29
Understanding leadership	29
Church management / administration	23

* where '5' = 'Highly satisfied'

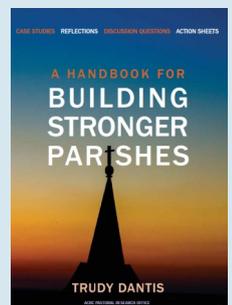
Source of data: National Church Life Survey 2011. Table prepared by ACBC Pastoral Research Office: www.pro.catholic.org.au. Copyright © Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

ADVANCE NOTICE: MELBOURNE BOOKLAUNCH

Friday 9 December, ACU St Patrick's Campus

Stay tuned for further details about the Melbourne launch of Dr Trudy Dantis' **Handbook for Building Stronger Parishes**, based on her ground-breaking research into factors that lead to vitality in Australian Catholic parishes.

The handbook is now available for purchase from: garrattpublishing.com.au



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STAFF TRAVEL

Over the course of the next month, the office of the PRO will be light on staff due to the attendance by Bob and Stephen at the *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Meeting in Atlanta, US*. Bob will then attend a meeting of the *'Asia-Pacific Catholicism and Globalisation Project'* in Washington DC.

Stephen will be back in the office on Wednesday 9 November, while Bob will be back on Monday 21 November.

Should you wish to make contact during this time, email would be best, but you may get a slow response. Alternatively you can ring the office on Monday or Tuesday and you will receive a friendly greeting by Annemarie who will ably assist you.

For more information about the office, or how we can assist you, please contact:

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... *Survey of priests working in Catholic parishes (continued from front page)*

Respondents were also asked how well their seminary training equipped them for various areas of ministry.

The highest score was for 'Teaching / preaching', with just over half (52%) of the responding priests stating that their seminary training equipped them 'very well' in that area. Just under half (48%) of the respondents said that their seminary training had equipped them 'very well' for pastoral work and counselling. However, only nine per cent said that their initial seminary training equipped them 'very well' for church financial administration (see Table 2).

Table 2: How well did initial ministry training equip you in the following areas?

Area	Per cent 'Very well'
Teaching / preaching	52
Pastoral work / counselling	48
Your work in your present local church generally	35
Mission / outreach	31
Helping attenders to exercise ministry in everyday life	26
Maintaining boundaries between work and the rest of life	23
Ministry in rural and remote areas	22
Understanding a community (its makeup and how it works)	22
Inner-city ministry	21
Working with difficult people	21
Cross-cultural ministry	20
Leading a group / organisation through change	20
Handling conflict situations in a church	20
Coping with stress	20
Organisation management skills for church leadership	18
Responsibility for multiple congregations / centres	17
Planning/direction-setting with a group	17
Church financial administration	9

Source of data: *National Church Life Survey 2011*. Table prepared by ACBC Pastoral Research Office: www.pro.catholic.org.au. Copyright © Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

2016 National
Church Life
Survey

UPDATE

Over the months of October and November more than 250 parishes from around

Australia are undertaking the 2016 National Church Life Survey.

There are some helpful resources on the survey website (www.2016ncls.org.au) which encourage parish leaders to promote a positive attitude towards participation, including promotional material, worship resources such as prayers and homily notes, and audio visuals. Parishes should receive their results before Easter, which in 2017 is in mid-April.

All of the details about the survey can be found at the NCLS website, or contact Stephen at the PRO for further information if you can't find what you're looking for.