

## Regular Article

Vivencio O. Ballano\*

# The Social Sciences, Pastoral Theology, and Pastoral Work: Understanding the Underutilization of Sociology in Catholic Pastoral Ministry

<https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2020-0132>

received March 20, 2020; accepted July 14, 2020

**Abstract:** Applying sociological imagination and theological perspectives and using some secondary literature that focus on the American pastoral experience, this article explains why sociology and the social sciences are underutilized in the pastoral ministry of Catholic priests despite the Catholic Church's openness to human sciences' contributions to evangelization after the Second Vatican Council. In particular, it examines how the (i) uneasy alliance between Catholic theology and sociology, (ii) overemphasis on the invisible and theological dimension of the Church in current ecclesiologies, (iii) highly philosophical and theological clerical education which sidelines the empirical sciences in clerical pastoral work, and (iv) dominance of the individualist approaches of clinical psychology in pastoral theology have greatly contributed to the neglect of sociological inquiries and perspectives in clerical formation and pastoral ministry. It also argues that a genuine pastoral care must be based on a holistic and empirical assessment of the pastoral needs of parishioners by priests using sociology and the social sciences before it prescribes a plan of action for pastoral care to accurately inculturate the Christian message in today's technological culture.

**Keywords:** social science, sociology, pastoral theology, ecclesiology, pastoral ministry, pastoral work, pastoral sociology

## 1 Introduction

When the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1986) released the pastoral letter entitled “Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy” in November 1986,<sup>1</sup> various negative reactions were solicited from the business community, newspapers, and periodicals that specialize in economic and business affairs, such as *Forbes*, *Fortune*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, and economists who were all not accustomed to reflect on the relationship between a free market economy and religious values of society.<sup>2</sup> Some social scientists and scholars had also expressed some negative reactions to this pastoral letter, especially on the accuracy of the empirical analysis of the bishops on the true state of the American economy.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, they questioned the American bishops' factual assessment of the local economy and accused them of disregarding the current research work of eminent economists on the subject matter. In particular, the economist William Reese (1989) wrote a scholarly article to rebut the bishops' empirical assessment and lament on the document's lack of acknowledgment of the current literature and research

---

1 United States Catholic Bishops, “Economic Justice for All.”

2 Bambera, “US Bishops' Pastoral Letter,” 2012.

3 E.g., Lucas, “A Critique of Bishops' Pastoral Letter;” Block, “Neglect of the Marketplace.”

---

\* **Corresponding author: Vivencio O. Ballano**, Institute for Human and Social Development (IHSD) and Department of Sociology, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines, e-mail: voballano@pup.edu.ph

findings of some top American Nobel laureates in economics as well as the letter's tendency to disregard the work of professional economists.<sup>4</sup>

This lack of the Catholic clergy's dialogue with social scientists and appreciation of scientific research and its tendency to moralize or spiritualize empirical issues in pastoral work can be simply illustrated by an anecdote in which "a zealous missionary in a remote island with no formal training in the local culture asked the bishop: 'How can I best know the local culture? The bishop replied: 'Kneel down, and I will bless you. No further preparation is needed. Just trust in Providence!'"<sup>5</sup>

In this instance, one may ask: Are scientific research studies and perspectives relevant to the pastoral ministry of Catholic bishops and priests? In particular, are sociological perspectives and inquiries that study society and culture necessary in the ministerial work of priests? The insistence on the factual analysis of Catholic priests on certain social issues which may run counter to the claims of current scientific research can make people wonder whether Catholic clerics are exempted to use the latest scientific research and literature in their pastoral work and exhortation and whether the social sciences, especially sociology, which claims to study society scientifically, matter in their ministerial work.

The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) became open to the modernizing world after the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), a universal gathering of all bishops around the world convoked by Pope John XXIII in 1962 to update the Church's teaching and practice as well as to the contributions of the human and social sciences to the Church's work of evangelization and pastoral ministry.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, recent years have witnessed a great advance in the use of the social sciences in the RCC's pastoral ministry. Despite this progress, prescriptive views and individualist approaches largely influenced by philosophy, clinical psychology, and pastoral theology on clerical pastoral work still prevail among the clergy. Clerical education on sociology and other social sciences lags behind, with the emphasis on philosophy as the necessary preparation for theology and pastoral ministry. This seems counterproductive since the pastoral ministry toward their flock implies understanding the behavioral and structural patterns of their pastoral needs in order to accurately diagnose and address them the pastoral care. Doing pastoral work implies pastoral ministry for priests and bishops toward their parishioners. Pastoral ministry can be understood as the metaphor of pastoral care as that of the shepherd caring for their flock, a metaphor grounded in the life and caring practices of the church.<sup>7</sup>

Using some sociological insights and drawing on some secondary literature, this article attempts to explain why sociology is underutilized in Catholic pastoral ministry, focusing mainly on the pastoral experience of Catholic priests in the United States (US). It argues that pastoral ministry implies accurately applying the RCC's teachings and pastoral care to people's social behavior, thus needing the scientific approaches of sociology and other social sciences to appropriately adapt them to people's cultural experience in society. Specifically, it explains how the following major structural factors hinder the incorporation of sociology in clerical pastoral ministry, namely, (i) the prevailing negative attitude of the Catholic Church toward the social sciences, (ii) the negative unintended consequences of the current dominant ecclesiologies that stress the invisible or theological dimension of the Church, rather than the visible and empirical aspects, (iii) the clerical seminary education that focuses on philosophy and theology and sidelines sociology, and (iv) the apparent lack of sociological perspectives and methodologies of the Church's current approach to pastoral ministry. It further argues that the social sciences, especially sociology, play a crucial role of providing priests with empirical perspectives and structural contexts to accurately diagnose pastoral problems and provide them with realistic pastoral solutions.

<sup>4</sup> Reese, "Why is the bishops' letter," 554–7.

<sup>5</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, Theologians*, xxii–xxiii.

<sup>6</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, 78.

<sup>7</sup> Pattison and Lynch, "Pastoral and Practical Theology."

## 2 Pastoral theology, sociology, and Catholic pastoral ministry

Most literature that deals with the pastoral ministry of Catholic priests is usually associated with the subdiscipline called pastoral theology and seldom with sociology and other social sciences, except psychology that has greatly influenced the psychospiritual formation of seminarians and pastoral ministry of priests.<sup>8</sup> Sociology, as the social science that specializes the study of human societies, is less understood in the RCC by pastoral caregivers than its sister discipline, psychology.<sup>9</sup> Although empirical studies on clerical pastoral ministry have made significant progress in recent years, pastoral theology still remains influential in shaping clerical pastoral work. The practice of pastoral ministry has resulted in the development of pastoral theology within the broader framework of practical theology.<sup>10</sup> Of all the subfields of theology, pastoral theology is often seen by many clerics to be the discipline that is most oriented toward the ministerial practice in priestly life.<sup>11</sup> Thus, Thomas Oden noted that pastoral theology is a special form of practical theology for the clergy, which focuses on the practice of priestly ministry, with a particular attention to the systematic definition of the pastoral office and its function.<sup>12</sup>

Pastoral theology has discovered in the social sciences a fresh model on how to relate theory and practice in pastoral work. Through the years, it has become dependent, to a considerable degree, on the use of clinical psychology, rather than on sociology or other social sciences, in understanding clerical pastoral ministry. As early as 1939, theological schools have started offering counseling courses as part of pastoral theology and by the 1950s, almost all of them have incorporated counseling in pastoral theology. “The widespread use of psychology has fostered questions about how pastoral theology can be both a genuinely theological and a scientifically psychological discipline.”<sup>13</sup> Despite this effort, pastoral theology has struggled theologians with its ambiguities and lack of clear identity and approach as an academic discipline.<sup>14</sup> With pastoral theology’s focus on psychology during this period, the structural approaches of sociology and other social sciences became underutilized by Catholic clerics.

The renewed interest to incorporate sociological perspectives and methodologies in clerical pastoral ministry only began to commence after Vatican II, especially in the US, with the rise of pastoral sociology, a subdiscipline that aims for “the integration of social science methods, theory, and research findings with the theological language and self-understanding of church life and ministry.”<sup>15</sup> Research and literature that study the Catholic priesthood during this period failed to appreciate the crucial role of sociology in the pastoral ministry of priests. And McSweeney considered this as strange, since the priesthood for centuries has claimed to mediate ultimate reality and to symbolize the transcendent in society.<sup>16</sup>

In general, sociological research that involves priests and religious in the RCC is mainly motivated by institutional concerns and sponsored by church-supporting foundations to help solve practical problems.<sup>17</sup> Studies on clerical pastoral ministry tend to be restricted to practical issues of problem-solving within the

<sup>8</sup> Livingstone et al., “Pastoral Formation;” Lucerna and Gayoles, “The Effect of Pastoral.”

<sup>9</sup> Furniss, “The Forest and the Trees.”

<sup>10</sup> Stitzinger, “Pastoral Ministry,” 144. Practical theology was formally introduced as an academic curriculum in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. Schleiermacher, one of the founders, divided theology into three fields: philosophical theology, historical theology, and practical theology. In Europe, practical theology is said to address the practice of the leadership of the church, but in the United States, its focus is on the attitude and skill training of ministers. There is still an ongoing debate on the true nature of practical theology. But in recent decades, practical theologians worldwide have agreed on starting their investigations in practice itself, and to them, practical theology has become description of and reflection on the “self-understanding of a particular religious tradition” (Dingemans, “Practical Theology,” 82–3).

<sup>11</sup> Miller-McLemore, “The human web.”

<sup>12</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*.

<sup>13</sup> Miller-McLemore, “The human web,” 366.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 367.

<sup>15</sup> Froehle, “Catholic pastoral sociology,” 1.

<sup>16</sup> McSweeney, “The Priesthood,” 6–7.

<sup>17</sup> Hoge, “Religious Leadership/Clergy.”

church,<sup>18</sup> heavily relying on theological and psychological approaches. Thus, when clerical sexual abuse erupted in the US, for instance, research studies that intend to understand its causes in clerical ministry remained focused on their psychological dimension,<sup>19</sup> rather than on their sociological and structural aspects, although seminal works that use sociological perspectives have started to advance.<sup>20</sup>

An early research work that directly used sociology in pastoral theology is the study of Neusse and Harte entitled “The Sociology of the Parish.”<sup>21</sup> Joseph Fichter’s three sociological studies entitled “Southern Parish” (1951), “Social Relations in the Urban Parish” (1954), and “Parochial Schools” (1958) followed this initiative.<sup>22</sup> Then quantitative research studies that used large-scale social science surveys and sociological frameworks began to emerge. In particular, the surveys done by the priest-sociologist Andrew Greeley and his colleagues at the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago pursued pastoral sociology.<sup>23</sup> Dean Hoge’s landmark study entitled “The First Five Years in the Priesthood” also contributed to the greater use of sociology in clerical pastoral work. It identified some major difficulties faced by newly ordained priests in the first five years of their pastoral ministry.<sup>24</sup>

Despite this initiative to advance sociology in pastoral theology in the US, pastoral sociology has yet to make a substantial impact on clerical pastoral ministry. Sociology’s influence on priestly pastoral work in the Church remains marginal. With this lack of sociological perspectives, Furniss lamented that clerics often lose sight of the “forest,” that is, the structural aspects of their pastoral care, because of their preoccupation with the “trees” or with individuals and their personal problems.<sup>25</sup>

The main objective of this article is to identify and analyze some major structural factors that make sociological perspectives and inquiries peripheral or underutilized in the RCC, especially in the field of clerical pastoral ministry, namely, the (i) uneasy alliance between Catholic theology and sociology, (ii) overemphasis on the invisible and theological dimensions of the Church in current ecclesiologies, (iii) highly prescriptive clerical education, which sidelines the empirical sciences in clerical pastoral work, and (iv) dominance of the individualist approaches of clinical psychology in pastoral theology. It argues that the holistic and structural perspectives of sociology are not just supplementary but necessary and crucial in clerical pastoral work.

### 3 Factors contributing to the underutilization of sociology in pastoral ministry

#### 3.1 Uneasy alliance between Catholic theology and sociology

One major factor why clerics tend to underutilize sociology and the social sciences in their pastoral ministry is the prevailing uneasy alliance between Catholic theology and sociology in the RCC. The birth of the social sciences in the nineteenth century coincided with the rise of modernity and secularism in continental Europe.<sup>26</sup> The Catholic hierarchy viewed this development with suspicion. The Church’s negative view of positivism and the lack of active dialogue between sociologists and Catholic priests<sup>27</sup>

<sup>18</sup> McSweeney, “The Priesthood,” 6–7.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Plante and McChesney, *Sexual Abuse*; Plante, *Facts vs. Fiction*; Rosetti, *A Tragic Grace*.

<sup>20</sup> E.g., Greeley, “How Serious,” 6–10; Kenan, *Child Sexual Abuse*, Ballano, *Sociological Perspectives*.

<sup>21</sup> Neusse and Harte, *The Sociology of the Parish*.

<sup>22</sup> Fichter, *Southern Parish*.

<sup>23</sup> Froehle, “Catholic Pastoral Sociology.”

<sup>24</sup> Dean, *The First Five years*.

<sup>25</sup> Furniss, “The Forest and the Trees.”

<sup>26</sup> Clark, “Secularization and Modernization.”

<sup>27</sup> Ballano, “Catholic Social Teaching,” 2–3.

make one wonders whether the Catholic clergy truly appreciates the importance of sociology and the social sciences in their pastoral ministry. What primarily guides clerics in pastoral ministry is the subdiscipline of theology called pastoral theology, which is defined as that “branch or field of theological knowledge and inquiry that brings the shepherding perspective to bear upon all the operations and functions of the church and the minister, and then draws conclusions of a theological order from reflection on these observations.”<sup>28</sup> Although it deals with practical life, pastoral theology largely remains theological, prescriptive, and micro in approach rather than descriptive and structural in dealing with people’s social and spiritual problems.

Seward Hiltner argued that pastoral theology represents a theological subdiscipline in its own right, generating theological insight from the practical vantage point of serving the flock. Ministering to people’s pastoral needs denotes priestly care for the faithful, a metaphor grounded in the life and caring practices of the church.<sup>29</sup> It is not simply applying insights generated through theoretical discussions in biblical, historical, or doctrinal theology but rather correlating experience with theology.<sup>30</sup> Pastoral work in clerical ministry includes an accurate understanding of the social behavior of people. Thus, it needs some sociological research and insights on the part of the pastor. However, the secular and positivist assumptions of sociology have turned off many members of the Catholic hierarchy, resulting in distrust for sociological undertakings.<sup>31</sup> Historically, sociology was founded in the nineteenth century in an atmosphere of Comtism, utilitarianism, agnostic biblical criticism, and comparative religion, an environment which was unfavorable to religion.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the RCC and Catholic clergy tend to view sociology and the social sciences with suspicion, leading to its underutilization in the Church’s pastoral ministry.

In addition, the relationship between sociology and theology through the years has been characterized as an alliance and conflict.<sup>33</sup> Although both sociology and theology give an account of the human condition and include topics through which they can potentially find common ground, sociologists and theologians tend to dismiss each other’s views as irrelevant, resulting in a closure that has marked much of their coexistence.<sup>34</sup> Thus, Greeley argued that the root of the conflict between sociologists and theologians is one of respect: both claim to view their disciplines as a science with a distinct methodology. However, theologians, who are concerned with the proper methodology for their own discipline, seem to consider themselves dispensed from the methodologies of the social sciences when they want to discuss society.<sup>35</sup>

The basic conflict between scientists and theologians is the insistence of the latter that the world of nature and people must be studied inseparable from the basic truth about creation and salvation. “Science is a way of knowing that attempts to explain the natural world using natural causes. It is agnostic toward the supernatural – it neither confirms nor rejects it.”<sup>36</sup> Science has a self-imposed or intrinsic limitation, which implies that it is simply not equipped to deal with claims of the supernatural. This is the provisory and empirically ground attitude of scientists.<sup>37</sup> Grace builds on nature: God has given people the talent and resources to subdue the earth and discover Him in His creation. “Since God was revealed in his works as well as in his words, nature became a legitimate, authoritative source for the knowledge of God.”<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Hiltner, *Preface to Pastoral Theology*, 15–29.

<sup>29</sup> Seward, *Preface to Pastoral Theology*.

<sup>30</sup> Hiltner, *Preface to Pastoral Theology*, 15–29.

<sup>31</sup> Ballano, “Catholic Social Teaching.”

<sup>32</sup> Arbuckle, “Theology and Anthropology.”

<sup>33</sup> Pickering, *Sociology and Theology*.

<sup>34</sup> Brewer, “Sociology and Theology Reconsidered.”

<sup>35</sup> Greeley, “Sociology and Theology,” 34.

<sup>36</sup> Scott, “The ‘Science and Religion’ Movement,” 29.

<sup>37</sup> Boundry et al., “How not to Attack Intelligent Design.”

<sup>38</sup> Lindberg, *The Beginnings*, 146.

Despite the uneasy alliance between theology and sociology, current literature generally indicates that religious or theological views do not necessarily conflict with scientific views.<sup>39</sup> In some cases, theology is somehow dependent on the activity of science when it makes claims about the empirical world. “In so far as theology is influenced by culture it will, wittingly and unwittingly, reflect culture and use it as a medium or sounding board for its message.”<sup>40</sup> Therefore, all theology contains, implicitly, sociology and a sociological theory about self and society, as it often raises questions about the societal implications of God’s law to individuals and social structures.<sup>41</sup> In his doctoral thesis, *Sanctorum Communio* [Communion of Saints], Bonhoeffer thinks that Christianity has a sociologically definable essence despite its supernatural origins. Preaching Christianity to human and cultural experience entails anthropological and social science theory and research to accurately insert the gospel to people’s cultural behavior.<sup>42</sup>

### 3.2 Overemphasizing the invisibility of the Church and pastoral ministry

Another major structural factor that contributes to the highly theological view of clerical pastoral ministry and sidelining of sociology in pastoral care is the overemphasis of some dominant ecclesiologies in RCC on the invisible or theological dimension of the Church, which neglects its visible or empirical aspect.<sup>43</sup> The macro affects the micro. Ecclesiology affects ministry. The RCC’s theological understanding on the nature of the Church, as expressed in dominant Church models of Catholic ecclesiology, can affect clerical thinking on how priests and bishops should pursue their pastoral ministry in the social order.

The RCC teaches that the Church is both a visible or human and invisible or divine community in the world.<sup>44</sup> The visible dimension represents the Church’s self-understanding as a human institution and the invisible as spiritual and eschatological community, the “Body of Christ.” Focusing on one dimension over the other can affect the way theologians and clerics understand the Church and their pastoral work in the world. The ecclesiologist Avery Dulles identified six models of the Church to summarize the visible and invisible dimensions of the Church, namely, Institution, Mystical Communion, Sacrament, Herald, Servant, and Community of disciples. To Dulles, when an image is employed reflectively and critically by people to deepen one’s theoretical understanding of the Church, it becomes a model. Church models are both explanatory and exploratory as they summarize people’s ecclesial knowledge and lead ecclesiologists to new directions.<sup>45</sup>

The ecclesial model of the Church as Mystical Communion is said to be the most dominant one after Vatican II. Hahnenberg (2005) argued that the two of the most dominant twentieth-century ecclesiologies are the Church models Mystical Body of Christ and Communion. The central and fundamental ecclesiology of the documents of the Second Vatican Council is said to be the Communion model. During the 1970s and 1980s, the ecclesial models proposed by Vatican II such as the Body of Christ, Sacrament, and People of God gradually gave way to increased emphasis on the notion of communion as a comprehensive category.<sup>46</sup> Thus, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger who became Pope Benedict XVI views the communion model as the “one basic ecclesiology” for the Church.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Wuthnow, “Science and the Sacred.”

<sup>40</sup> Torrance, *Christian Theology*, 8.

<sup>41</sup> Ballano, “Catholic Social Teaching.”

<sup>42</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*.

<sup>43</sup> Hegstad, *The Real Church*.

<sup>44</sup> “[T]he Mystical Body of Christ, are not to be considered as two realities, nor are the visible assembly and the spiritual community, nor the earthly Church and the Church enriched with heavenly things; rather they form one complex reality which coalesces from a divine and a human element” (*Lumen Gentium*, 8).

<sup>45</sup> Dulles, *Models*.

<sup>46</sup> Hahnenberg, “The Mystical Body.”

<sup>47</sup> Ratzinger, “Ultimately.”

Although Vatican II became open to the contributions of the human sciences and more engaged in the secular world, the Communion model, which focuses on the spiritual or invisible dimension of the Church rather than its secular and visible character, is still highly endorsed by the Catholic hierarchy. This is consistent with the intellectual formation of clerics, which is centered on theology and philosophy, resulting in a more prescriptive clerical view on the fundamental nature of the Church and its ministry in the world.

Examining the perspectives and emphases of dominant ecclesiologies of the Church in recent history reveals the RCC's leaning toward the invisible rather than the visible aspect which results in the sidelining of the empirical aspect of the Church. Hahnenberg (2005) identified the two dominant twentieth-century models that dominated the current Catholic Church's ecclesiology: the mystical body ecclesiologies of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s and the communion ecclesiologies of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.<sup>48</sup> The Mystical Body model goes back to the earliest reflections on the Christian community as reflected in the letters of Paul. The Pauline image of the "Body of Christ" had been recurring in the Catholic ecclesiology. It began to appear in Catholic theology with growing frequency during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>49</sup> This image which emphasizes the Church's invisible reality – the mystical body of Christ – was affirmed, although its relationship to the visible Church on earth was variously understood.<sup>50</sup>

The "Communion ecclesiology," on the other hand, has a wide range of meanings in Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholic circles. But in the general sense, it refers to the understanding of the Church as expressed in the documents of Vatican II, which emphasizes that the ultimate basis of the relationships of people in the Church is their union with God through Christ and in the Holy Spirit.<sup>51</sup> Like the Mystical Body model, it also stresses the invisible and spiritual dimension of the Church. With the dominance of these two models, clerical thinking on the primary nature of the Church tends to be too normative and theological, thereby downplaying its empirical and social aspects that need the scientific investigations of sociology.

### 3.3 The invisible dimension of the Church and the social sciences

A closer look at the Mystical and Communion models reveals an emphasis on the spiritual or invisible dimension of the Church to the detriment to its equally important visible or secular aspect.<sup>52</sup> The Church is both human and spiritual, just as Christ is both human and divine. The humanity and divinity of the Church are of equal significance while it is still on earth despite its eschatological character. However, these two dimensions could not be clearly illustrated in any of Avery Dulles's models. Despite Vatican II's emphasis on the humanity of the Church, the institution and community of disciples' models could not still capture equitably the spiritual or invisible dimensions of the Church. Thus, there seems to be a need for an ecclesial model that can truly represent both its spiritual and empirical aspects. That is why Catholic theologians saw "People of God" and "Body of Christ" as complementary models to recognize the Church's human and spiritual dimensions.<sup>53</sup>

A dominant ecclesial model that highlights the visible over the invisible or vice versa can lead to an unbalanced view on the true nature of the pilgrim Church here on earth. It can have a negative impact on clerical thinking, especially in appreciating the crucial role of the empirical perspectives of sociology in pastoral ministry. Putting more emphasis on the spiritual or theological aspect of the Church in

<sup>48</sup> Hahnenberg, "The Mystical Body," 9.

<sup>49</sup> Ratzinger, "Ultimately."

<sup>50</sup> Hahnenberg, "The Mystical Body."

<sup>51</sup> Doyle, "Henri de Lubac," 2010–11.

<sup>52</sup> Hegstad, *The Real Church*.

<sup>53</sup> Hahnenberg, "The Mystical Body," 15.

ecclesiology at the expense of its empirical aspect can also have an unintended effect on the Church's mission to inculturate the Christian faith in human cultures. Thus, Hegstad aptly argued the following:

If ecclesiology is more concerned about the visible church, rather with the invisible, this will influence the way we do ecclesiology. First, this result in the lessening of the gap between a theological understanding of the church and other academic disciplines. If theology deals with the visible church, the very same church may also be studied from the perspective of historical and social sciences. It is important to clarify how the theological understanding of the church is to be related to, and integrated with, perspectives and results from other disciplines.

Second, if the concrete and empirical church becomes the object of ecclesiology, this means that theology cannot simply see the church as a doctrinal topic. Theology must take into account what the church actually is. Ecclesiology is not only about the church from a theoretical point of view, but a doctrine of the church as we experience it in reality.<sup>54</sup>

The Catholic theologian Nicolas Healy (2012) pointed out that the basic weakness in contemporary ecclesiology is its emphasis on abstract ecclesial models that tend to neglect the empirical nature of the church: modern ecclesiology is too concerned with the ideal church and pays too little attention to empirical realities of everyday life.<sup>55</sup> In his book "Christian Community in History," the ecclesiologist Roger Haight also argued that the primary object of ecclesiology should be the empirical church, keeping in mind its eschatological hope. Focusing on the empirical dimension of the Church does not necessarily mean denying its spiritual nature and the metaphysical aspect of its Christian faith. To him, it is important to stress that the Church is first and foremost a human institution grounded in human society and culture, although its ultimate goal and mission are supernatural.<sup>56</sup> This is posited by Cardinal Suenens when he rejected the inevitability of a "verticalism–horizontalism" conflict in ecclesiology, arguing that both spiritual renewal and temporal commitment are characteristics of the contemporary Church.<sup>57</sup>

Since the Church is grounded in the contemporary world, Catholic ecclesiology and theology must also consult current literature and research of the social sciences if they aim to accurately apply the ecclesiastical teachings in society, specifically in adapting pastoral care to people's behavior. The rise of subdisciplines in theology, such as empirical theology, practical theology, and sociological theology, is actually attempts of contemporary theologians and social scientists to incorporate empirical research and perspectives in theology and ecclesiology. This is to stress the need for empirical grounding of some theological claims of ecclesiologists about the Church and its involvement in the world. Some theologians have long recognized that they cannot operate effectively without anthropological knowledge and recourse to the social sciences. In "practical" or "pastoral" theology, for instance, eclectic appropriations of empirical insights and methodology often take place, and pragmatic syntheses are arranged that enhance instrumental insight into the ministerial task and the ongoing life of the church.<sup>58</sup>

Emphasizing the invisible nature of the Church by many ecclesiologists, who are mostly clerics, seems to be a by-product of their prescriptive education in the seminary, which focuses on philosophy and theology, resulting in the highlighting of the theological and metaphysical aspects of the Christian faith and downplaying its behavioral aspect. Theology borrowed from the former categories from Greek philosophy such as "nature" and "person," "substance" and "accident," "matter" and "form," "potency" and "act," and "causality" and "finality" which have become part and parcel of the structure of Catholic theology; so much so that to tamper with them is regarded by some as tantamount to a dangerous innovation of Christian theology itself.<sup>59</sup> However, the Christian faith not only possesses a metaphysical or dogmatic feature but also has a behavioral aspect. Once it is preached to people in their local cultures, it becomes inculturated and adapted to people's behavior.<sup>60</sup> Clerics need sociology and the empirical

<sup>54</sup> Hegstad, *The Real Church*, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Healy, "Ecclesiology."

<sup>56</sup> Haight, *Christian Community*, 3.

<sup>57</sup> Suenens and Camara, *Charismatic Renewal*.

<sup>58</sup> Roberts, "Psychotherapy," 371.

<sup>59</sup> O'Mahony, "The Role of Philosophy," 290.

<sup>60</sup> Ballano, "Inculturation."

sciences to truly inculturate the Christian message in human experience as well as adapt their pastoral care realistically to people's apostolic needs. Evangelization can lose much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed and if it does not use their language, signs, and symbols. Clerics must pay "attention 'to actual people, to using their language, their signs and symbols, to answer the questions they ask'" in giving pastoral care.<sup>61</sup>

There has been a tension between theology and practice in the RCC<sup>62</sup> as well as an uneasiness between the empirical and the theological in pastoral ministry. The empirical assumptions and naturalistic methodologies of the sciences have often been seen by Catholic clerics with suspicion and in conflict with religious views. Clerics tend to assume that there is a fundamental incompatibility between scientific and religious "world-views." The empirical literature, however, is surprisingly unsupportive of this incompatibility.<sup>63</sup> The scientific and religious views are not necessarily in conflict with one another. The natural and social sciences' theories and methods to understand nature and society in their natural settings do not necessarily oppose religion. Religious beliefs are beyond the factual verification of the social sciences. However, religion can rely on scientific research and literature to ascertain whether some of its claims about people's behavior, culture, and the social order are empirically true.

### 3.4 Philosophical and theological bias in clerical education

The RCC which has more than one billion members around the globe is governed by a powerful group of ordained and celibate clerics called the hierarchy which only comprises less than 1 percent of the total Church membership.<sup>64</sup> Highlighting the invisible and theological dimensions of the Church in clerical pastoral ministry is intimately connected with the highly prescriptive intellectual formation of clerics in seminaries and Catholic colleges and universities. Although the RCC has updated the academic formation of clerics after the Second Vatican Council, the academic training of priests in seminaries, colleges, and universities remains fundamentally focused on philosophy and theology, with very minimal courses in sociology and the social sciences. The lack of sociological training in priestly formation can lead to a more theological understanding of pastoral work. Vatican II's *Optatam Totius* [Decree on Priestly Training], which is considered second in importance only to spiritual formation of priests, still acknowledges the primary role of the philosophical and theological disciplines as essential components of priestly formation in spite of the dominance of the social sciences in modern and contemporary times.<sup>65</sup>

The lack of an intensive science education in the seminary contributes to the unbalanced view of clerics between the theological and empirical aspects of the Church and to the lack of appreciation of sociological research in clerical pastoral ministry. Heibling (1993) argues that the seminary curriculum, which focuses on theology and philosophy, often isolates seminarians from the present conditions and leaves them without practical knowledge on how to deal with the social world.<sup>66</sup> "[M]any priests (and apparently Bishops), when reflecting back on their seminary philosophy course, complained on the amount of time spent on problems and discussion which they never met afterwards."<sup>67</sup>

Philosophy, which lacks scientific methodology to confirm whether its theoretical claim is supported by data, is incapable of rendering an accurate description of the world. "Philosophies endlessly and inevitably refute philosophies, and there is no common ground from which to adjudicate what is true philosophically. In fact, people inevitably disagree even on the first principles of rational

<sup>61</sup> Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 1975, 154.

<sup>62</sup> McSweeney, "The Priesthood."

<sup>63</sup> Wuthnow, "Science and the Sacred."

<sup>64</sup> Doyle, 2006.

<sup>65</sup> *Optatam Totius*, 15–6.

<sup>66</sup> Heibling, "Formation of Catholic Formation."

<sup>67</sup> Roche, "The Aggiornamento," 234.

thought.”<sup>68</sup> With its a priori methods of reasoning, philosophy deals with a conceptual rather than an empirical question.<sup>69</sup> It may aid Catholic theology in explaining the metaphysical nature of the Christian faith, but it cannot adequately help ecclesiology in bringing out the empirical dimension of the Church and its pastoral ministry.

The spiritual dimension of the Christian faith includes the transcendent truths on divine revelation, which is beyond the empirical investigation of sociology and the social sciences. These same truths, however, can assume some behavioral dimensions once they are preached and inculturated by clerics and missionaries in pastoral ministry.<sup>70</sup> When the Christian faith is inserted in society through the process of inculturation, it takes some pastoral or empirical aspects that require scientific skills and research methodology of sociology, anthropology, and other social sciences to discern which cultural traits are compatible or incompatible with the gospel values. The empirical methodologies and perspectives of sociology can ensure that clerical pastoral work and preaching are scientifically grounded in the local culture, respectful of the cultural traits of people and, at the same time, mindful of the orthodoxy of the Christian teaching.

Because of the minimal social science training in seminary formation, the perspectives of priests on people's pastoral needs remain prescriptive rather than descriptive. In general, the Catholic hierarchy still has several reservations in incorporating sociological theory and research in pastoral theology, owing to their “secular assumptions” and positivist orientation. Thus, with the clerics' lack of in-depth sociological education in seminary formation and active collaboration with professional sociologists and social scientists, pastoral work is often interpreted in a very theological fashion, without regard to the current sociological research which might aid pastors to address complex pastoral problems. However, theology, such as pastoral theology, should not be understood as a mere theory divorced from practice, but as a reflection based on practice, and related to practice.<sup>71</sup> Thus, before clerics start to theologize on their pastoral experience, scientific research and description of their current pastoral practices are necessary to attain accuracy in their theological reflection and inculturation.

## 4 The significance of the social sciences in today's pastoral ministry

Doing pastoral work implies an accurate assessment of peoples' social and spiritual needs by pastors. Pastoral ministry denotes the giving of pastoral care by priests to their flock based on actual human needs. Philosophy with its a priori reasoning could not adequately assist pastoral ministry in analyzing complex moral and social issues of contemporary cultures. The historical and social contexts of the medieval, reformation, and counter-reformation eras in which philosophy played an important role in addressing heresies and errors against the Christian faith are significantly different from today's postmodern environment. Priestly training needs to be more empirical to address the growing complexity of today's priestly ministry as Hornsby-Smith aptly argued:

What seems to be clear is that the priest of tomorrow will be unable to rely solely on the formal definition of his role and the authority due simply to his position in the organisational hierarchy but will increasingly be expected to manifest leadership skills as the religious initiator, sustainer and motivator of members of small groups clustered around the parish community. The implication is that a new type of person will need to be attracted for this form of ministry and there will be a need to modify educational and training programmes in order to develop the new skills which will be needed in the parishes over the next few decades. At a time of rapid social change it is also obvious that a continuous and systematic programme of in-service professional training will be essential.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> White, “Whether Faith.”

<sup>69</sup> Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science*, 4.

<sup>70</sup> Ballano, “Inculturation.”

<sup>71</sup> Hegstad, *The Real Church*, 4.

<sup>72</sup> Hornsby-Smith, “Priests, People and Parishes,” 166.

Today, especially in the US, many priests serve complex communities in highly urbanized settings. These communities are “increasingly multicultural and multiethnic because of changing immigration patterns set off by the globalization process and the availability of accessible travel. The pre-modern, modern, and postmodern worlds exist side by side, each demanding attention.”<sup>73</sup> Parish structures have also changed considerably after Vatican II, and the priest’s role and ministry have altered significantly. At present, many American priests are assigned as pastors in multiple parishes. This implies that parish structures change as society becomes more complex. Thus, what would make a parish excellent fifty years ago might not be the same today.<sup>74</sup> “In the larger social and political environment, contexts have changed as well, including the role of parish priests in public sphere.”<sup>75</sup> With this evolving nature of parish structure and pastoral life due to constant societal change, sociological education and constant dialogue between priests and social scientists to understand social contexts and people’s behavioral patterns accurately are necessary for pastoral ministry today. Priests themselves can sometimes encounter serious personal crisis as pastoral situations become more complex for them to understand owing to their lack of sociological perspectives.

To truly care one’s flock, Catholic priests must understand the pastoral needs of their parishioners accurately before giving concrete pastoral advice or professional help. A survey done by Dean Hoge among newly ordained priests revealed that priests are in doubt whether they consider themselves as professionals on par with the laity, given their limited training in empirical sciences.<sup>76</sup> Priests and bishops are primarily educated in philosophy and theology; thus, lacking in professional skills in the behavioral sciences, which are necessary in dealing with social and moral problems.

The pastoral ministry of priests also entails an accurate reading of the “signs of the times” if people’s concerns deal with the social order. In his social encyclical *Mater et Magistra* [Mother and Teacher], Pope John XXIII underscores that the first and fundamental stage of the three stages in applying moral principles in society is knowing the factual situation as much as possible:

There are three stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgment on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what the circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles.<sup>77</sup>

These three steps can be summarized by three key words: see, judge, and act. The first step (see) is to observe or review concrete situation as accurately as possible. The second stage (judge) is to assess and pass moral judgment on the situation, whether it is immoral or moral. The final stage (act) is to choose an appropriate pastoral action to address it. Knowing the empirical situation is crucial, because the second and third stages are dependent on it. An inaccurate assessment of a social situation can lead to an inaccurate moral judgment and choice of pastoral action. Healing a “sickly” flock so to speak requires first a scientific diagnosis of the sickness to identify and judge precisely the type of illness and decide what medical prescription is effective and appropriate.

Although Church teachings are of divine origin and beyond scientific verification, they do contain some theories about social behavior, social system, and the social order. In this case, clerics need sociology and the social sciences to inculturate pastoral prescriptions correctly in the world according to ecclesiastical teachings. The pastoral prescription of priests to apply the social doctrine of the Church on the common good in a local culture, for instance, requires some sociological perspectives and ethnographic studies to accurately understand what constitutes public good in that particular culture. Mere common sense, philosophical speculation, and popular knowledge on the social order

---

<sup>73</sup> Hoge, *The First Five Years*, ix.

<sup>74</sup> Froehle, “Research on Catholic Priests,” 39.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>76</sup> Hoge, *The First Five Years*.

<sup>77</sup> John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, 235.

would be insufficient as the basis for clerical pastoral and social action, especially in complex moral situations.<sup>78</sup>

## 5 Pastoral sociology, theology, and pastoral ministry

One emerging subfield of practical theology that can provide a holistic view of the pastoral concerns of priests in the ministry is pastoral sociology. Froehle defines pastoral sociology as “the integration of social science methods, theory, and research findings with the theological language and self-understanding of church life and ministry.”<sup>79</sup> Pastoral sociology has a complex history in the RCC. But after Vatican II, pastoral sociology gave Catholic theology as a whole a wider social context and empirical support for some of its societal claims. It also became a new source of inspiration for reform-oriented clergy. It provided pastoral caregivers with a balanced viewpoint for their ministries by adding sociological perspectives to their theological and psychological frameworks. The RCC has long encouraged Catholics around the world after Vatican II to use sociological techniques to understand the socioreligious change in the world.<sup>80</sup>

One significant aspect of clerical ministry is to provide a pastoral guide to the faithful on matters of urgent concern to the universal or local church. This is often expressed in homilies, exhortations, and pastoral letters by bishops’ conferences. However, providing pastoral guide in the form of pastoral exhortations that deal with concrete social issues requires some sociological research and empirical grounding. The pastoral letters of bishops, for instance, need sociology to provide empirical data to back up some of their social analysis and theological teaching. Pattison and Lynch argued that experience, “the text of the present,” must be the starting place for theological inquiry and against which its findings and value must be tested.<sup>81</sup> Theology is intimately connected with certain types of social relationships and processes; thus, it cannot avoid relating theological ideas to social behavior. Theology has an interface with sociology.<sup>82</sup> Thus, pastoral theology needs sociology, not just clinical psychology, to understand the social and cultural contexts of clerical pastoral care in the ministry.

The theory of structural functionalism in sociology sees reality as one. All social components of the human community are interrelated.<sup>83</sup> Sociological perspective can provide pastoral caregivers with this holistic view of social reality. Aside from seeing the local from the global or *vice versa*, sociology can also create a new sensitivity to clerics to make them better observers of the world, assimilating the past in a new way and laying the foundation for action and involvement.<sup>84</sup> A proper understanding of the social context is a prerequisite for a good theology.<sup>85</sup> A scrutiny of Church history reveals that the domain of Christian faith is partly invisible and partly visible. The invisible refers to the strong belief in God and His salvific work, while the visible denotes the social and behavioral manifestation of this belief in human experience. The invisible is expressed in the Christian belief of the Church as God’s chosen people, while the visible is manifested in the Church’s ecclesiastical structure and administration. Thus, doing pastoral work in clerical ministry to preach the Christian faith needs not only theology but also sociology to manifest both the invisible and visible aspects of the faith to people.

Sensing the social patterns and structures may be quite imperceptible to ordinary people, but it can be apparent to sociologists who possessed scientific data on many similar situations.<sup>86</sup> Sociology can provide

<sup>78</sup> Ballano, “Catholic Social Teaching.”

<sup>79</sup> Froehle, “Catholic Pastoral Sociology,” 85.

<sup>80</sup> Dols and Pauls, “Introduction: Pastoral Sociology,” 100.

<sup>81</sup> Ford and Muers, *Modern Theologians*, 411.

<sup>82</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*.

<sup>83</sup> Holmwood, “Functionalism.”

<sup>84</sup> Baum, “The Impact of Sociology.”

<sup>85</sup> Gill, *Theology Shaped*.

<sup>86</sup> Kuruwa, “Social Order.”

pastors with the necessary holistic view and methodology to understand people's pastoral needs. Sociology can enable them to see theoretical and empirical connections of their various pastoral experiences and allow them to pull together all kinds of stray observations that seem unrelated. C. Wright Mills,<sup>87</sup> an American sociologist, calls this type of holistic thinking "sociological imagination" – a quality of the mind, which is the result of a rigorous sociological training, to see connections between the micro and the macro, between biography and history as well as between the local and the global.<sup>88</sup>

The relationship of the individual and society is seen more clearly and holistically when a sociological perspective is added to the present theological and psychological perspectives of pastoral theology. The sociologist asks how individuals are shaped by their society and how society can be influenced and changed by individuals. "A pastoral care which is informed by the sociologists' investigations is much more conscious of the cultural context of individual problems."<sup>89</sup> Pastoral caregivers who add a sociological perspective to their existing theological and psychological perspectives can possess a more holistic viewpoint, which gives serious attention to society, i.e., the social context of troubled individuals.<sup>90</sup> The subfield called sociological theology that synthesizes sociology and theology acknowledges that even peoples' most heartfelt convictions can give rise to unintended social consequences.<sup>91</sup> Thus, all ideas, except the purely formal and abstract ideas such as those in mathematics, geometry, and economics, are properly subject to the sociostructural analysis of sociology.<sup>92</sup>

Finally, the utilization of sociology is imperative for today's complex, networked, and globalized society, which philosophy and theology could not scientifically account owing to their lack of empirical methodologies. In recent decades, society has experienced rapid developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs).<sup>93</sup> "Our world has been in a process of structural transformation for over two decades. This process is multidimensional, but it is associated with the emergence of a new technological paradigm, based in information and communication technologies, that took shape in the 1970s and diffused unevenly around the world."<sup>94</sup> Sociologists argue that the speed of social life over the past few decades has increased so greatly. Thus, clerics need to take an intensive training in scientific methodology and/or collaborate with social scientists in their pastoral ministry and preaching to accurately inculturate the Christian message to people's social practice. For this reason, sociology is necessary to understand the complexity of giving pastoral care to people in the contemporary age. As long as clerics and Christian scholars understand and maintain the demarcation between the social sciences and theology, they can maintain useful communication with both fields, resulting in greater confidence in the social scientific insights incorporated into theological perspectives, particularly in pastoral theology.<sup>95</sup>

## 6 Summary and conclusion

This article has shown that despite the crucial role of sociology and the social sciences in giving Catholic priests with empirical and holistic perspectives to deal with pastoral ministry, pastoral theology, which relies heavily on psychology, still remained the dominant influence in clerical formation and pastoral work, resulting in the underutilization of sociology in priestly ministry. It has also discussed that the (i) prevailing attitude of distrust of the Catholic hierarchy toward sociology's "secular assumptions" and

---

<sup>87</sup> Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*.

<sup>88</sup> Ballano, "Catholic Social Teaching."

<sup>89</sup> Furniss, "The Forest," 359.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 350.

<sup>91</sup> Gill, *Theology Shaped*, 3.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>93</sup> Yu and Shaw, *Exploring potential human*, 410.

<sup>94</sup> Castells and Cardoso, *The Network Society*, 3.

<sup>95</sup> Montgomery, "Can Missiology," 287.

positivist methodologies, despite Vatican II's openness to the contributions of the social sciences, (ii) overemphasis on the visible and theological dimension of the Church by Mystical Body and Communion ecclesiologies in the RCC, (iii) prescriptive clerical education in the seminary that focused on philosophy and theology, and (iv) influence of the individualist approaches of clinical psychology in pastoral theology constitute the four main structural factors that sidelined the use of sociology and the social sciences in pastoral theology and clerical pastoral ministry. Lastly, it has explained that with the growing complexity of the current network and global society, pastoral situation and pastoral work become more complex to deal with, thus, requiring some sociological perspectives and research to truly understand people's pastoral and social needs before clerics extend pastoral care. Sociology provides structural contexts and holistic view to people's pastoral needs; thus, helping clerics to find appropriate pastoral interventions to inculturate the Christian faith in society.

## References

- Arbuckle, Gerald A. "Theology and Anthropology: Time for Dialogue." *Theological Studies* 47 (1986), 428–47.
- Ballano, Vivencio O. "Catholic Social Teaching, Theology, and Sociology: Exploring the Common Ground." *Religions* 10:10 (2019), 557. doi: 10.3390/rel10100557.
- Ballano, Vivencio O. *Sociological Perspectives on Clerical Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Hierarchy: An Exploratory Structural Analysis of Social Disorganization*. Singapore: Springer Nature, 2019.
- Ballano, Vivencio O. "Inculturation, Anthropology, and the Empirical Dimension of Evangelization." *Religions* 11:2 (2020), 101. doi: 10.3390/rel11020101.
- Bambera, Joseph C. "U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter: Economic Justice for All After 25 Years, 2012." *Misecordia University Symposium*. Accessed March 5, 2020. <https://circle.org/jsourc/u-s-bishops-pastoral-letter-economic-justice-for-all-after-25-years-2012/>.
- Baum, Gregory. "The Impact of Sociology on Catholic Theology, 2012." <https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2826/2454> (accessed on 20 February 2019).
- Block, W. E. "Neglect of the Marketplace: The Questionable Economics of America's Bishops." *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics and Public Policy* 2:1 (1985), 125–60.
- Brewer, John David. "Sociology and Theology Reconsidered: Religious Sociology and the Sociology of Religion in Britain." *History of the Human Sciences* 20 (2007), 7–28.
- Castells, Manuel and Cardoso, Gustavo, eds. *The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy*. Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2005.
- Clark, Jonathan Charles Douglas. "Secularization and Modernization: The Failure of a 'Grand Narrative.'" *The Historical Journal* 55:1 (2012), 161–94. doi: 10.1017/S0018246X11000586.
- Dingemans, Gijsbert D. J. "Practical Theology in the Academy: A Contemporary Overview." *Journal of Religion* 76:1 (1996), 82–96.
- Dols, Paul, and Paul, Herman. "Introduction: Pastoral Sociology in Western Europe, 1940–1970." *Journal of Religion in Europe* 9:2–3 (2016), 99–105. doi: 10.1163/18748929-00902001.
- Doyle, Dennis M. "Henri de Lubac and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology." *Theological Studies* 60:2 (1999), 209–27.
- Dulles, Avery. *Models of the Church. Expanded Edition*. New York, NY: Image Books Double Day, 2002.
- Fichter, Joseph. *Southern Parish*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.
- Ford, David F., and Muers, Rachel. eds. *Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology since 1918*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- Froehle, Bryan T. "Catholic Pastoral Sociology in the United States since Vatican II: Making a Path by Walking." *US Catholic Historian* 25:4 (2007), 85–116.
- Froehle, Bryan T. "Research on Catholic Priests in the United States, Since the Council: Modeling the Dialogue between Theology and Social Science." *US Catholic Historian* 29:4 (Fall 2011), 19–46.
- Furniss, George M. "The Forest and the Trees: The Value of Sociology for Pastoral Care." *Journal of Pastoral Care* 46:4 (1992), 349–59. doi: 10.1177/002234099204600404.
- Gill, Robin. *Theology Shaped by Society: Sociological Theology, Vol. 3*. Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2012.
- Greely, Andrew M. "How serious is the problem of sexual abuse by a clergy?" *America* 168:10 (1993), 6–10.
- Greeley, Andrew M. "Sociology and Theology: Some Methodological Questions. Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America," 2012. Accessed on February 16, 2019. <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/article/view/2872/2497>.

- Hahnenberg, Edward P. "The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70:1 (2005), 3–30. doi: 10.1177/002114000507000101.
- Haight, Roger. *Christian Community in History, Volume 3: Ecclesiastical Experience*. London: Bloomsbury, 2008.
- Healy, Nicolas. "Ecclesiology, Ethnography, and God: An Interplay of Reality Descriptions." In *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, edited by Pete Ward. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2012.
- Hegstad, Harald. *The Real Church: An Ecclesiology of the Visible*. Eugene, Oregon: Pick Publications, 2013.
- Heibling, Madonna. "Formation of Catholic Education Leaders throughout the Twentieth Century." *Religious Education* 88:4 (1993), 543–63. doi: 10.1080/0034408930880404.
- Hiltner, Stewart. *A Preface to Pastoral Theology*. New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1958.
- Hiltner, Sewer. *Preface to Pastoral Theology*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1968.
- Hoge, Dean R. *The First Five Years of the Priesthood: A Study of Newly Ordained Catholic Priests*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002.
- Hoge, Dean R. "Religious Leadership/Clergy." In *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions. Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research*, edited by H. R. Ebaugh. Boston, MA: Springer, 2006.
- Hornsby-Smith, Michael P. "Priests, People and Parishes in Change: Reflections of a Sociologist." *New Blackfriars* 65:766 (April 1984), 153–69.
- John, XXIII. *Mater et Magistra: Encyclical of Pope John XXIII on Christianity and Social Progress*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Accessed on January 25, 2019. [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_15051961\\_mater.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html).
- Kenan, Marie. *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender, Power, and Organizational Culture*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Kuruwa, Sabo Suleiman. "Social Order in Sociology: Its Reality and Elusiveness." *Sociology Mind* 2 (2012), 34–40.
- Lindberg, David C. *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in the Philosophical, Religious, and Institutional Context, 600 B.C. to A.D. 1450*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 150.
- Livingstone, Barbara, Myers, Catherine Mills, Jordan, Merle, Jelinek, Bonnie Scott and Plumly, Ann. "Pastoral Formation Process for Seminarians a New Model for Developing Psychologically Healthy Pastors." *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counselling* 63:3–4 (2009), 1–7.
- Lucas, Robert F. "A Critique of the Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy." In *Economics, Theology, and the Social Order*, Center Symposia Series, CS-18, Graduate School of Management, University of Rochester, 1986, 68–77.
- Lucerna, Eugene, and Gayoles, Lisa Anna. "The Effect of Pastoral Counselling on the Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being of Seminarians." *Philippine Social Science Journal* 1:1 (2018), 1–20.
- McSweeney, Bill. "The Priesthood in Sociological Theory." *Social Compass* 21:1 (1974), 5–23. doi: 10.1177/003776867402100101.
- Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. "The human web: Reflections on the state of pastoral theology." *The Christian Century*. April 7, 1993. Accessed on March 6, 2020, [https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/jspui/bitstream/1803/2651/1/Miller-McLemoreHumanWebStateOfPastoralTheology110.11\\_1993.pdf](https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/jspui/bitstream/1803/2651/1/Miller-McLemoreHumanWebStateOfPastoralTheology110.11_1993.pdf).
- Mills, Wright C. *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Montgomery, Robert L. "Can Missiology Incorporate More of the Social Sciences?" *Missiology: An International Review* 40:3 (2012), 281–92.
- Neusse, C. Joseph, and Harte, Thomas J., eds. *The sociology of the parish*. Milwaukee, WI: Bruce Publishing, 1951.
- Oden, Thomas C. *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry. First Edition*. New York, NY: Harper One, 1983.
- O'Mahony, Brendan. "The Role of Philosophy in the Formation of Priests." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 34:4 (1967), 281–300. doi: 10.1177/002114006703400401.
- Pattison, Stephen, and Lynch, Gordon. "Pastoral and Practical Theology." In *Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology since 1918*, edited by David F. Ford, Rachel Muers. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- Pickering, William S. F. *Sociology and Theology: Alliance and Conflict*. Hertfordshire: Harvester Press, 1980.
- Plante, Thomas G. *Facts vs. Fiction: Catholic Clergy Sexual Abuse*. Santa Clara, CA: TEDx Santa Clara University, 2019.
- Plante, Thomas G., and McChesney, Kathleen L. eds., *Abnormal psychology. Sexual abuse in the Catholic Church: A decade of crisis, 2002–2012*. Santa Barbara, California: Praeger/ABC-CLIO, 2011.
- Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. *Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church*. Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005. Accessed June 20, 2019, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/justpeace/documents/rc\\_pc\\_justpeace\\_doc\\_20060526\\_compendio-dott-soc\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html).
- Ratzinger, Ratzinger. "Ultimately There is One Basic Ecclesiology." *L'Osservatore Romano* [English ed.], 17 (June 1992), 1.
- Reese, William S. "Why is the bishops' letter on the U.S. economy so unconvincing?" *Journal of Business Ethics* 8 (1989), 553–60. doi: 10.1007/BF00382931.
- Roche, Joseph L. "The Aggiornamento of Catholic Philosophy." *Philippine Studies* 13:2 (1965), 232–57.
- Scott, Eugenie C. "The 'Science and Religion' Movement. An Opportunity for Improved Public Understanding of Science?" *Skeptical Inquirer* 23:4 (1999), 29–31.
- Seward, Hiltner. *Preface to Pastoral Theology*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979.

- Stitzinger, James F. "Pastoral Ministry in History." *The Master's Seminary Journal* 6:2 (Fall 1995), 143–80.
- Suenens, L. J., and Camara, H. *Charismatic Renewal and Social Action: A Dialogue*. Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1979.
- Torrance, Thomas F. *Christian Theology and Scientific Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- United States Catholic Bishops. "Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy," 1986. Accessed March 1, 2020. [http://www.usccb.org/upload/economic\\_justice\\_for\\_all.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/upload/economic_justice_for_all.pdf).
- White, Thomas Joseph. "Whether Faith Needs Philosophy: Philosophy Fertilizes What Postmodernity Would Sterilize." *First Things Journal* (July 2011). <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2011/07/whether-faith-needs-philosophy>.
- Winch, Peter. *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*, Second Edition. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Wuthnow, Robert. "Science and the Sacred." In *The Sacred in a Secular Age*, edited by Phillip E. Hammond, 187–203. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1985.