

**FAITH AND IMAGINATION:
A STUDY OF THE PORTRAYAL OF PRIESTHOOD
IN THE NOVELS OF ANDREW M. GREELEY**

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
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Dedicated
to
my dear parents
and
all my respected teachers
to whom
I am immensely indebted
for what I am
at present
by *God's* grace

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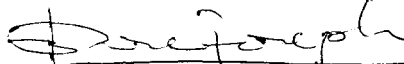
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “**Faith and Imagination: A Study of the Portrayal of Priesthood in the Novels of Andrew M. Greeley**”, submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English**, is a record of *bona fide* research carried out by **Devassy P. R.**, under my supervision and guidance. No part of this thesis has been submitted earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or any other similar titles.

Thrissur
October, 2007


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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled, "**Faith and Imagination: A Study of the Portrayal of Priesthood in the Novels of Andrew M. Greeley**", has been carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of **Dr. C. J. Davees**, Reader, Department of English, St. Thomas' College, Thrissur, Kerala. No part of it has previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or any other similar title of any university.

Thrissur
October, 2007


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CONTENTS

	Preface	vi
	A Note on Documentation	xii
Chapter I	Introduction: Faith and Imagination	1-52
Chapter II	Faith and Reason: <i>Ascent into Hell, Patience of A Saint, Happy are Those Who Mourn, Irish Gold and White Smoke</i>	53-89
Chapter III	Faith and Preaching: <i>Happy are the Peace-Makers, The Bishop and the Three Kings, The Bishop and the Beggar Girl of St. Germain, Irish Eyes and September Song</i>	90-129
Chapter IV	Faith and Love: <i>The Cardinal Sins, Thy Brother's Wife, Virgin and Martyr, An Occasion of Sin and Summer at the Lake</i>	130-181
Chapter V	Faith and Administration of Sacraments: <i>The Angels of September, Happy are the Oppressed, Irish Mist, A Christmas Wedding and Irish Love</i>	182-233
Chapter VI	Faith and Suffering: <i>Wages of Sin, Fall from Grace, The Bishop and the Missing L Train, Irish Stew and Priestly Sins</i>	234-287
Chapter VII	Conclusion	288-301
	Works Cited	302-308

PREFACE

During my theological studies at St. Thomas' Apostolic Seminary, I regret to say, that hardly had I any awareness of the role of imagination in the process of evangelization, in the administration of sacraments and other liturgical celebrations. When I did my M.A. at St. Thomas' College, Thrissur, neither was I told nor did I learn much by way of relating imagination to religious faith except a few partial references in connection with the analysis of the poems of Milton, Blake and Hopkins. My experience in the seminary was that the theological formation did not leave enough provision for imagination, whereas the literature classes, in compliance with the university syllabus, had nothing to do with religious aspects.

But when I participated in a course on the Sociology of Religion in partial fulfilment of my preparation for my M.A. in Sociology, the idea of a combination of religious faith and imagination struck me for the first time. I was overwhelmed by the considerations of the prospects of and the problems involved in the merging of faith and imagination. The timely guidance I received from Dr. C.J. Davees, who is my esteemed colleague in the same department, ushered me to the literary corpus of Andrew M. Greeley, the American priest – novelist in whom I came across the culmination of the combination of faith and imagination. But for the scholarly suggestions, recommendations and proper direction, given to me by Dr. Davees, this venture would never have reached the shore of satisfaction. I am immensely

grateful to him, for all that he has done to me in the process of completing this thesis.

As a best-selling novelist in the States, as a Catholic priest working in the Archdiocese of Chicago, and as a Professor of Sociology, Greeley has made significant contribution to both the society and the Church. In spite of his busy schedule, he strained himself to provide me with some of his books and valuable advice without which I could not have commenced on and completed this research. He has been quite willing to clarify my doubts and answer my questions on many an occasion. To my knowledge, neither an individual nor a library does possess as many books of Greeley as I do, at present. My recognition of Greeley as one who not only did not find it a problem to combine faith and imagination, but also did justice to the demands of the various constituents of Catholic imagination in his writings, has made me an admirer of his. May I express my whole-hearted thanks to him.

Being a priest committed to work in and for the Archdiocese of Thrissur, I could never have completed this work, without the support of my superiors. I have no adequate words to express my gratitude to Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy, the former Patron of this college, and Mar Andrews Thazhath, the present Patron, both of whom have been the driving-force of my perseverance during all these years of research. My sincere thanks are also due to the two Vicar Generals, Very Rev. Fr. Raphael Vadakkan and Very Rev. Fr. Raphael Thattil, who is at present the Manager of this college, for their encouragement extended to me. I whole-heartedly thank all of them.

I cannot but mention the names of a few persons who have played a vital role in my life as a student, a teacher, a priest and, now, a researcher. All of them would have been extremely happy on account of my having submitted this thesis, if they were alive today. First and foremost, I mention my father, Mr. P. D. Rappai who slept in the Lord on 24 September, 1988. Late Archbishop Mar Joseph Kundukulam and the then Vicar General, very Rev. Fr. Ignatius Chalissery are the persons of happy memory who employed me here as a Lecturer. I also remember gratefully the services I have received from two of our former Principals i. e. late Rev. Fr. Paul Alappat and late Rev. Dr. Antony Porathur. I extend my indelible indebtedness to them by mentally prostrating at their feet, and earnestly praying, "May their souls rest in peace".

Last but not least let me thank Rev. Fr. Martin Kolamparath who assisted me in preparing the final draft, on a war-footing basis, but with utmost care. I thank him very sincerely. Let me also thank the librarians of this college, and the manager and the staff of M. M. B. Offset Printers at Mariapuram and M/s. Educare Infotech, Thrissur.

To be frank, I have been very much moved by the study of Greeley's novels. They have taught me the fact that there exists an inseparable relationship between literature and religion. Having been acquainted with Greeley's priestly characters, I am resolved to approach other priests with greater respect and more concern. This research has also renovated my own spiritual life and intensified my priestly commitment to the Church and the

society. I am sure that the perusal of Greeley's novels will be very beneficial to both the teachers and the students, as well as the clergy and the laity. His novels enable the students of literature to know more about the recent trends in American fiction.

For fear of exceeding space and time, let me confess that I have confined myself to Greeley's combined employment of faith and imagination in his novels. Many other aspects like the narrative techniques of Greeley, Greeley as a critic of the Church and the Government, the theme of women-

Words fail me to express my intense gratefulness to Pro. A. M. Francis, the Principal and Rev. Fr. Baiju Chakkery, the Bursar. They never ceased from urging me to go on with the work in full swing and full speed. They kept me always goal-oriented. I thank them immensely for their encouragement and support.

I can never forget the co-operation shown by my colleagues, especially, Pro. Bose Joseph, the Head of the Department of English. Pro. Bose Joseph has taken special interest in submitting my thesis to the University, at the earliest. May I extend to all my colleagues, my loving regards and ineffable gratitude. On this occasion, I also remember with immense sense of thankfulness all the teachers working in this college who have seen to it that I complete this work in due course of time.

I cannot but mention the names of a few persons who have played a vital role in my life as a student, a teacher, a priest and, now, a researcher. All of them would have been extremely happy on account of my having

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For fear of exceeding space and time, let me confess that I have confined myself to Greeley's combined employment of faith and imagination in his novels. Many other aspects like the narrative techniques of Greeley, Greeley as a critic of the Church and the Government, the theme of women-empowerment in Greeley's novels, the necessity of lay participation in Church administration, the future of the Catholic Church as portrayed in Greeley's novels, and the like deserve serious and detailed analysis. I have not entered these areas, for they are beyond the range and scope of this thesis. I hope more candidates will come forward to concentrate on these aspects, in years to come.

Summing up, to all those who would ask me, as to how I managed this, my answer will be one and the same. 'I praised the Lord, and the Lord raised my load'. I wind up these words making a final acknowledgement that in spite of all the scholarly corrections and directions, I have received from my guide, my friends and a lot of well-wishers, if any flaw figures in the ensuing pages, no one else is to blame, other than myself.


Devassy P. R.

A NOTE ON DOCUMENTATION

In writing this thesis I have adhered to *MLA Hand Book for Writers of Research Papers* (Sixth Edition) by Joseph Gibaldi. For the quotations from *The Holy Bible* I have followed *The King James Version*. All the books cited are arranged alphabetically, in the place of the conventional division of sources into primary and secondary.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

FAITH AND IMAGINATION

The relationship between literature and religion is, more often than not, taken for granted with a large number of poems, plays and novels that we read, dealing more or less explicitly with religious ideas and sentiments. It is generally known, for instance, that some acquaintance with the basic beliefs of Christianity is important for a reading of writers like Chaucer, John Donne, Gerard Manley Hopkins, T.S. Eliot, William Faulkner and others. But more than that, covert allusions to and subtle assumptions of religious practice and belief occur in almost all literary works where they are not so clear. In this context, the question of how far criticism can legitimately go in using religious ideas to interpret literature becomes pertinent. Such a critical requirement has resulted in reading imaginative literature to demonstrate echoes of religious myths, rituals, Biblical associations, Christian symbolism and even Christian theology, present covertly or overtly in it.

This thesis is an attempt on an exposition of the pervasiveness of a balanced merging of faith with imagination in all walks of life, especially, in the effective ministry of a Catholic priest as portrayed in the fiction of the American writer, Andrew M. Greeley. Here an attempt is made to assert that a Catholic priest, as depicted in his novels, does not seem to fulfill his evangelical commitments to the Church and the world, unless and until he develops and follows a unification of faith and imagination in both his preaching and writing. If anyone of these priests turns useless, exclusive of the Call, the

solution to any problem in his life is achieved by a proper correlation of faith and imagination, a delineation of which is the main thrust of this work.

Faith in the title is not, in its wider perspective, any particular faith, though Catholic faith would be its immediate reference. Since faith always has a universality it is extendable to any belief-system/myth without which no person can meaningfully survive various crises in this world. Faith, to be useful, needs to be dynamic and creative. Such a faith has to be transformed as imaginative. Let it be made clear that though imagination is presented in this initial chapter in its general literary aspects, as the analysis advances, it will be confined to the 'Catholic imagination'. Various components of Catholic imagination will be examined as inseparable constituents of the various ministries of a Catholic priest as presented in Greeley's fiction.

The presentation of faith and imagination, here, is made as a preliminary step to highlight various aspects of and approaches to Catholic priesthood. This is done in the light of a survey of the priestly characters figuring in the selected novels of Andrew M. Greeley, a leading American novelist and living Catholic priest who has to his credit about fifty novels, all abounding in priestly characters and saturated with Catholic imagination. The priest in Greeley's novels is not any particular priest, not necessarily even himself, though a reflection of autobiographical contours in such novels as his can hardly be ignored. But when a character is conceived in a world of art and delivered in media, it becomes universal, in other words, metaphysically human. Greeley's priestly characters are pioneers of Catholic imagination and representatives of his own Catholic faith and evangelical commitments to the Church as well as the society. Hence, this research attempts to formulate an innovative understanding and depiction of how the correlation of faith and imagination enables Greeley to portray priesthood, in his novels, in a Catholic perspective. Consequently, his characters appear to successfully exercise the

prophetic dimension of priesthood in the contemporary world. Greeley as a Catholic priest and writer not only did not find it a problem to combine faith and imagination, but has also always maintained the conviction that combining the two, constitutes the very foundation of his vocation to priesthood which in turn seems to have resulted in the success of his literary career, as well.

Besides providing a better comprehension of the interrelationship of faith and imagination, this research is expected to be not only a fillip to the literary appreciation of Greeley but also a noteworthy contribution to broaden the general understanding with regard to the approach of the Catholic Church to literature. It is hoped that this study will enable research scholars to review the popular fiction in a new light as well as to define adequately the literary genre of Catholic fiction, which remains hitherto poorly explored .

The introductory chapter, which forms the detailed conceptual part of this research work, first endeavors to introduce and elaborate the meaning and usefulness of faith and imagination, and upholds the richness of a merging of the two which reaches its culmination in Catholic imagination. The major portion of this chapter is a portrayal of the chief components of Catholic imagination presented as a part of the ministries of a Catholic priest. The merging of faith and imagination is essential for a Catholic priest in responding to the demands of his vocation, in discharging his prophetic, preaching and sanctifying ministries, in observing the vows/virtues of chastity, obedience and poverty. Thus, this study is expected to show how rewarding the combination of faith and imagination is to the priestly life. The following chapters will examine how these claims and insights are realized fruitfully in the lives of priests, depicted by Greeley in his novels. End of each chapter focuses on a few of his non-fictional writings, as well, just to realize how Greeley exposes his preoccupation with the merging of faith and imagination in all his writings. The thesis begins with a brief survey of the major theories of

imagination in literature, with special emphasis on the meaning and function of the imaginative faculty of human mind. Despite the different opinions of the experts it is everybody's experience that the mind is a vital force in our personality and that it has various faculties like fancy, imagination, memory, reason and judgment. It is relevant to give a few important definitions on the worth and the workings of imagination before going into details of how various authors in the course of history have understood and employed imagination in their compositions.

One reads in *Family Word Finder* (2006) edited by Shandy Shepherd that 'to imagine' is to form a mental image. Both 'imagine' and 'imagination' come from Latin 'imago', 'image', 'imitation' (417). Lots of studies have been made to distinguish imagination from other mental faculties. J. A. Cuddon makes such an attempt in his book entitled, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1980) in which he explains that in general it seems that "imagination is regarded as the superior faculty, the transubstantiator of experience, while fancy (a contraction of Fantasy; L. Phantasia, a transliteration from the Greek) is a kind of assistant to imagination" (263). *Rutledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1980) provides a very convincing picture of the faculty of imagination:

The word imagination has a family of meanings. We may use 'imagination' to indicate the ability to form images of things. Alternatively, 'imagination' can take on a more normative use, to indicate a measure of inventiveness, as when we say that something was done with imagination. (705-706)

Effectively merging these ideas, one can safely hold that imagination is the potential, creative mental power that pertains to the ability to visualize, foresee and to generate ideas. All the definitions generally agree that imagination is the image-forming capacity of the human mind. The faculty of imagination plays a decisive role in individual's psychological growth, personality development, leadership formation, crisis

management, spiritual and moral life. Stating briefly the influence of imagination in these and similar areas the present study tries to discuss how writers across the world understood, employed and depicted their imagination in literature down through the ages. This attempt shows how their strong faith in imagination moulded their literary personality and enabled them to create immortal characters.

Maxwell Maltz argues in his book *Psycho-Cybernetics* (1969) that imagination is the key to human personality and individual excellence. He calls it creative imagination, which according to him, is not something reserved to the poets, the philosophers and the inventors. In his own words, imagination sets the goal “picture” which our automatic mechanism works on. We act or fail to act, not because of “will”, as it is so commonly believed, but because of imagination”(31). As Tony Burzan writes in *Master Your Memory* (2000) while knowledge is limited, imagination is unlimited. Burzan declares, “The more you apply your imagination to memory, the better your memory will be” (27). According to Burzan the prime engine of our creativity is the imagination. Explaining how imagination favours and fosters memory, Burzan reminds us in another book, entitled *Use Your Head* (2000) that Albert Einstein played imagination games and that to his imagination, he gave credit for many of his scientific insights (24). All these suggest that imagination and memory are very closely related. Both are essential for the smooth functioning of our personality. Imagination is also associated with intuition. About the correlation between imagination and intuition, in the book: *Intuition: the Inside Story- Inter Disciplinary Perspectives* (1997) jointly edited by Robbie Davis-Floyd and P. Sven Arvidson, one reads, “Imagination is a form of thought associated with mental images. Imagination typically refers to the appearance of the images in the mind, sometimes intuitively received, which can be manipulated and require translation into words...Imagination shares the global, non-rational nature of intuition and is a close

cousin to it” (105). Imagination also helps us to know more about ourselves and other people. As David Jasper, the author of *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics* (2004), writes, “This requires an act of the imagination, a transporting or transposing of oneself into the mind and the life of the other” (96). Thus imagination increases one’s knowledge of one’s own behaviour and that of others.

Appreciation of aesthetic works, literary as well as theoretical, is part and parcel of human life and in this regard, imagination is a must. *Imagination-Art in Theory 1815-1900. An Anthology of Changing Times* (1998) is a book jointly edited by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger. This contains the statements of many eminent persons all of whom profess the essential relationship between imagination and beauty. For example, Friederich Theodor Vischer (1807-1887) writes in his *Critique of My Aesthetics* (1866), “What we term as natural beauty already presupposes the imagination. The imagination is the venue of the psychical existence of beauty, whose physical existence is in nature. The inner creation of the beautiful and the imagination are inseparable” (686-687). Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) writes in *Salon of 1859* that the imagination is the queen of the faculties and truth. It is mysterious and marvelous. Baudelaire thinks that there could be no warrior, no diplomat, no scholar without imagination (490-491). These are expressions of artists’ faith in imagination without which neither a writer nor an artist can ever contribute to an aesthetic product and they also reveal the centrality of the imagination.

Those who become successful in life have trained themselves to make use of their inborn talents with the help of their imagination. Maxwell Maltz writes in *The Magic Power of Self-Image Psychology*, “It is imagination which gives us the goal for which we head. We act or fail to act; our acts are accelerated or frozen because of imagination”(22). Maltz is of the opinion that the imagination can trigger off our success

mechanism, the great creative mechanism within us that can bring about success in life (28). The power of the imagination is so tremendous that it acts in the form of faith in us and maintains a positive self-image in us. Hence Elliot W. Eisner makes an appeal in the book *The Educational Imagination* (2002) to students that they have to develop “an ability to allow one’s imagination” (101) to appreciate life and literature. These demands of Elliot W. Eisner are quite justifiable because the ultimate purpose of education is formation of responsible personalities, and as has already been stated, imagination possesses a prominent position in our personality.

The discussion on the general characteristics of imagination can be summarised by briefly stating the views of Wittgenstein, the greatest logician of the twentieth century, as formulated by Hacker PMS in the book *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind Volume 3* (1988). Wittgenstein maintains that 1. the concept of imagination is associated with the concept of a mental image referring to the phenomenon running through one’s head, 2. Imagination is connected in various ways with perception of, for example, a piece of music, 3. The faculty of imagination is associated with artistic creativity and no less with intellectual activity, with originality, insight etc., 4. ‘To imagine’ is connected not only with intellectual creativity but also more generally with conception or supposition, 5. It is also associated with false belief, mistaken memory and misconception, 6. Imagination is related to make-believe, pretence, play-acting or idle fancy (186-188). One must conclude that nobody can lead a meaningful life without having faith in and making use of the vast possibilities of one’s imaginative faculties.

Having observed some common aspects of imagination, the discussion proceeds to literary criticism in order to know more about its nature, function and significance. Here, some of the important literary figures belonging to various ages and their understanding of the imaginative faculty are examined. The most ancient record of literary criticism is

seen in Greek literature. Plato (427 B. C.-347 B.C) was the first to attempt the classification of arts and poetry. In *A History of Philosophy* (1969), B. A. G. Fuller explains that in Plato's view all art is intrinsically a poor stuff. It imitates the sensible world which in its turn is but an imitation of the ideas. Its productions are a third step away from reality and so belong to the world of illusion. Imitative art is an inferior who marries an inferior and has an inferior offspring. For Plato, poetry is particularly low-born (142-43). In his *Poetics* (25, 1460b8-11) Plato writes, "The poet is an imitator like the painter, and other makers of images; necessarily the imitated object is of three kinds and of this number is always one". Again he writes in *Philebus* (39B), "A painter, coming after the writer who makes images of those assertions in the soul which are like those written."

R. L. Brett the author of *Fancy and Imagination* (1998) asserts that Aristotle (384 B. C.-322 B. C.) is the first great thinker to concern himself with literary criticism and a systematic theory of poetry. His literary views are presented in his *Politics* and *Poetics*, a short philosophical treatise of literature, which serves as the foundation of all subsequent literary criticisms. He rectified Plato's condemnation of poetry and improved upon it. If Plato represents the assault on poetry, Aristotle, his disciple, took the role of its defender. According to Aristotle the poetic imitation is an imitation of inner human action. According to Aristotle the first source of poetic inspiration is the power of imagination. The art of poetry imitates the imaginative inspiration in language, which is the medium of poetic imagination. For him pleasure that the art affords is the end of any art. In his book entitled *On the Art of Poetry*, Aristotle writes, "Epic poetry and tragedy, as also comedyare all, viewed as a whole, modes of imitation"(23).

The fullest and most authentic account of Elizabethan literary theory is found in Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586). His masterpiece, *An Apology for Poetry* (1580) gives a

synthesis of the views of Plato and Aristotle. For Sidney, poesy is an art of imitation and it gives both knowledge and delight. Poets lead individuals and society to an ideal world. As one finds in *English Critical Texts* (1962) edited by D. J. Enright and Ernst De Chickera, Sidney writes in his apology, “ Poesy, therefore, is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word *Mimesis* that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting or figuring forth; to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture, with this end, to teach and delight”(9). He argues that poets are neither “pipers and jesters” nor “caterpillars of the commonwealth” nor “enemies of virtue” as Stephen Gosson had accused them of in the book *The School of Abuse* (1579).

The works of William Shakespeare, the literary master of the same era, abound in reference to imageries and imagination. For example, one reads in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600):

The lunatic, the lover and the poet

Are of imagination all compact; (V.I.7-8)

A quick glance at the *Annotated Shakespeare* (1978) edited by A. L. Rowse teaches a lot about Shakespeare's recurring views on imagination. In *Richard II* 1. iii. he writes about cloying “the hungry edge of appetite by bare imagination of a feast”(volume 2. 306); in *Hamlet* III. ii. one reads, “My imaginations are as foul as Vulcan's stithy”(Volume 2. 229); in *Macbeth* I. iii. the hero confesses, “Present fears are less than horrible imaginings”(volume 2. 424); in *King Lear* IV. vi one finds, “Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination”(volume 2. 396-397). These references amply substantiate the fact that Shakespeare had a fertile imagination and that he made abundant use of the same. The promptings of the imagination had a major share in shaping the destinies of his characters in their struggles.

John Dryden, the presiding genius of the first phase of Neo-Classical Criticism displays his views on the imagination mostly in his *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) and *A Defense of An Essay on Dramatic Poesy* (1668). Dryden teaches that imagination helps the poet in the process of creating just and lively images of human nature. Imagination for him is the creating faculty in a poet. One reads in *Dryden: An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* edited by Thomas Arnold, "A Poet in the description of a beautiful garden, or a meadow, will please our imagination more than the place itself can please our sight"(48). As Arnold points out, in *Defense of the Essay of Dramatic Poesy* Dryden argues that the foundation of his *Essay* is the imitation of the nature or a just and lively image of human nature(115). In the book *John Dryden : Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays* (1912) the editor George Watson explains that for Dryden fancy is the faculty that decorates the poet's first invention by appeal to the memory, and imagination is the faculty that stores and uses the images (298-299). Fancy and imagination are not commonly distinguished in Dryden's writings.

C. M. Bowra at the outset of his scholarly book *The Romantic Imagination* (1996) makes it clear that for the Romantics, imagination is fundamental without which poetry is impossible. For and while writing, the Romantics explored the unfamiliar and the unseen and at the same time indulged in personal whims. They revered imagination as a source and expression of divine energy, divine and eternal, and the most vital activity in the mind. According to Bowra, the Romantic poet was "confident not only that the imagination was his most precious possession, but that it was some how concerned with a supernatural order"(4). William Wordsworth and his collaborators had great faith in imagination and it had indelible and ineffable influence on their writings. The Romantics as a whole combined imagination and truth because they believed that their creations were inspired and controlled by a peculiar insight.

William Wordsworth has defined poetry as “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility”, in his *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (1800), included in *English Critical Texts* (1962) edited by D. J. Enright and Ernst de Chickera (180). For Wordsworth, imagination meant operations of the mind upon objects, and process of creation and composition. In his *Preface* one reads, “Poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure”(178). In his opinion the faculty, which reconciles opposites, is the imagination. Unification and consolidation are the marks of the imaginative process.

Like Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) also had great faith in imagination. Coleridge’s views on the imagination figures mostly in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of his *Biographia Literaria* (1817). For him imagination is that which shapes or structures our life. The imagination is an agent of reason and it operates under the direction of the will. According to Coleridge, imagination is the power, which enables us to relate the two worlds of mind and the world. He terms it as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite ‘I am’. Imagination is nothing but a dim analogue of creation. The artistic imagination is rather a creative principle and not a mere mirror. Coleridge concludes his first volume of *Biographia Literaria* distinguishing between the primary and secondary imagination. In *Biographia Literaria* published by Oxford University in 1907 one reads, “The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime Agent of all human Perception and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite Iam’. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will...”(202). According to him Milton had a highly imaginative and Cowley, a very fanciful mind (73). He remarks that the Greek writers were poets of fancy where as the Hebrew poets were poets of imagination.

Imagination was held high by German Idealists. Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804), the Patriarch of Idealism regards imagination as an intermediate faculty between sensible intuition and understanding. The work of imagination is a preliminary synthetic activity. In his *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant explains, “Imagination is the faculty of representing in intuition an object that is *not itself*” (13). The imagination, for Kant, is the ‘formative centre’ of both intuition and thought. He also upheld the correlation between imagination and time. He considers imagination as synthetic or transcendental or productive. Later the German Idealists suffered a setback in the works of the existential philosophers, and lost its apogee. As Richard Kearney states in *The Wake of Imagination* (1988), “The collapse of imagination’s dreams before the encroaching realities of historical existence, is the point where romantic idealism ends and existentialism begins”(188). The existentialists tempered and clipped the wings of romantic and transcendental claims of the imagination. In the words of Kearney, “Existentialism speaks of the creative imagination less in terms of a plenitude than of a predicament”(198). It brought imagination back to earth and saturated it with a note of irony, even pessimism.

The first name the twentieth century literature recalls to one’s mind is that of T. S. Eliot who never endorsed didacticism as a purpose of poetry. As a writer he attached great importance to poetic drama, and as a critic he always advocated the need of a strict application of the method of science to the study of literature. He draws imagery from contemporary life and the language that is born, of colloquial speech has a rhythm and music of its own. Of course Eliot has not written much about imagination but he has developed a peculiar concept of the auditory imagination. F. O. Matthiessen reviews this as a separate chapter entitled, “The Way Poet Communicates His Meaning: The Auditory Imagination”, in his book, *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot* (1959). According to him, Eliot holds that for a poet who wants to communicate rhythm and music of his verse are of

utmost significance. A gifted poet is one who shares newer and deeper perceptions, and extends and refines the readers' sensibility. Eliot's conception of the auditory imagination refers to, as Mattheissen elucidates, his understanding of the fact that poetic rhythm by means of its power of incarnation is able to renew one of the most primitive elements of man's experience at the same time that it gives expression to the last subtle nuances of civilized feeling (89). Eliot's success as a writer is to a great extent due to his ingenious exercise of the power of his auditory imagination. A concern with the beauty of sound and the richness of connotation are the main aspects of the auditory imagination. Appreciating Eliot's charisma with regard to this, Mattheissen writes that one test of a poet's skill lies in the degree of his awareness of what effects he has caused in his lines, of what forces the flow of his rhythm has made his words release (84).

One finds that all the leading, modern American writers, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, have acknowledged their indebtedness to the imagination. To cite an example Joseph N. Riddle has an article titled "Walt Whitman and Wallace Stevens: Functions of a Literatus", included in Marrie Borroff's book, *Wallace Stevens - A Collection of Critical Essays* (1963). Comparing Stevens and Whitman, Riddle writes, "Each rejects reason for imagination as a way to truth, but where as Whitman celebrates the poet's spiritual flights, Stevens can offer only his single vision"(33). Again Richard Gray, the author of *American Poetry of the Twentieth Century* (1990), writes in the article, "From Imagism to Discovery of the Imagination: Stevens", "Stevens believed in the power of the imagination. In his view reality is not something given to us, which our mind receives passively, but is something made, resulting from the interchange between our minds and our given circumstances" (89). Thus we find that both the Western and the American writers attribute great significance to imagination.

The major concern here is to establish a correlation between faith and imagination. So far this chapter has been dealing with various aspects of imagination, mostly from the literary point of view. It has also presented how many writers maintain that imagination has a religious dimension and that faith is the high form of imagination. Ofcourse, all important writers and literary movements have not been referred in this presentation, for fear of lack of space. The next attempt is to delineate the meaning and role of faith with special emphasis on the Catholic understanding of it. Because Greeley first and foremost, is concerned with preaching Catholic faith and portraying Catholic priesthood.

In common parlance, faith is just another word for belief, trust, and confidence. It connotes adherence to duty and promise. It is in this sense that people are advised to put faith in certain ideals or ideologies. A decent and responsible person ought to be faithful to his commitments. Faithlessness- breach of faith – is universally condemned as an abominable crime. Faith implies safety and hope whereas having no faith makes people ignoble. Explaining various aspects of faith in *A Dictionary of Canon Law* (2004), Jose Pulickal writes that faith is the assent given to a truth. Theologically faith is the supernatural gift and a theological virtue by which man ascends and submits himself to the revealed truth revealed in Jesus Christ who is the ultimate truth. Juridically, faith is the assent to the dogmas as believed and taught by the Church (192). Faith, by and large, is a religious term. But it benefits not only the spiritual aspects of the human person but also all realms of human personality. Rabindranath Tagore regards faith as the greatest of all creative forces in human life. In his opinion, faith refers to a spontaneous response in our being to the voice of the all-pervading 'Yes'. It enables the devotee to attain harmony with truth and peace. As one reads in *Thoughts from Rabindranath Tagore* (1929), faith is "a spiritual organ of sight which enables us instinctively to realize the vision of

wholeness when, in fact, we only see the part”(31). Hence, it must be said that faith as a creative and motivating force is advantageous even to a non-believer.

Human nature is such that it is impossible for a human being to live without faith of some sort. Of course there are different ways of explaining the meaning and scope of the faith. Both faith and imagination are integral parts of the composite being that man is. The faculty of imagination enables man to understand and present the content of the faith and regulates the life of human beings, individually and collectively, in accordance with the code of faith. A detailed study of faith will make it clear that as the title suggests imagination has a decisive role in faith i. e. in assimilating faith as well as in living up to one's beliefs. Let it be stated at the very outset itself that faith is not a mere feeling or pious wish that something is true and that some thing better is to come. As Joseph Mc Sorely expounds in *Common Sense* (1957), faith is not as some persons imagine, a credulous acceptance without adequate motive, a comfortable attitude of the mind that excludes fear of the future, hardship or suffering. Neither does faith consist of oral recital of a prescribed formula or many formulas. Nor is it exact theological knowledge, nor intellectual appreciation of abstract truth, nor ability to answer difficult questions (31). As Henri de Lubac writes in *The Christian Faith* (1986):

In its fullest meaning, faith presents an ensemble of characteristics that distinguish it from simple belief of all modes of knowing, it is in itself, paradoxically, the firmest and most assured, even though it always remains free and threatened. Whereas belief, whatever it be, can only possess a greater or lesser degree of firmness, faith as such is always capable of having very diverse degrees of depth. (145)

One cannot grasp the essence of Catholic faith without referring to the Sacred Scriptures and the teachings of the Church. According to the Catholic Church faith is

essential for salvation. In the light of the Sacred Scriptures, She teaches how Jesus Himself preached the inevitability of faith. In the New Testament one reads that He applauds the faith of the Cananite woman (Mt.15: 21-28) and that of the Centurian (Mt.8: 5-13). Jesus wonders at the lack of His disciples' faith (Mk. 6: 4-6). After appeasing the storm, He blames their lack of faith. Lk. 7: 36-50 presents the story of how faith saves a sinful woman. One finds many a passage in Pauline Epistles as well, which highlight the necessity of faith. According to Saint Paul we are put right with God through faith (Rom.1: 17). He speaks about justification by faith in Rom. 3:27-30. According to him salvation is guaranteed for all through faith (Rom.10: 1-17). In Gal. 2: 13-21 Paul writes that the Jews and Gentiles are saved by faith. In his Epistle to the Ephesians he writes, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"(2: 8-9). Thus all these and a lot of similar Biblical passages reveal in unequivocal terms the inevitability of faith, the possibility of loss of faith and the bad consequences of lack of faith.

The Catholic Church upholds Abraham and Saint Mary, the Mother of Jesus as models of perfect faith. Abraham who volunteered to sacrifice his own son (Genesis 22: 9-11) is considered to be the father of all believers. Mary volunteered to be the Mother of Jesus in spite of her state of virginity (Luke 1: 38). John Paul II presented Mary as the perfect realization of faith in his encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, promulgated in 1987. Both for Abraham and Mary believing or obeying God's will was a very difficult task (17). Viewing the uncertain and humanly speaking, impossible nature of God's plan, their's was a leap into the dark. However, as in the case of the true believers, they believed that God was almighty and benevolent, and that nothing would be impossible provided they had faith. In this sense, for a believer there is nothing as either insecure or indefinite.

In his book *What Is Faith?* (1958), Eugene Jolly presents the views of the Fathers of the First Vatican Council held in 1870, regarding the inseparable bond between faith and revelation in these words, “Faith is supernatural virtue by which, guided and aided by divine grace, we hold as true what God has revealed, not because we have perceived its intrinsic truth by our reason but because of the authority of God who can neither deceive nor, be deceived”(130).

In his introduction to *The Catholic Faith* (1997), compiled by John Med, George Plathottam writes that it is God’s gift, a gift, which needs to be constantly nourished by sincere effort. One finds in the same book, another definition of faith. Faith is “the supernatural gift of God”(68). The idea that faith is God’s choicest gift to man is well expressed by Father Faber in his book *The Creator and the Creature* (1961). Faber thinks that faith next to the beatific vision of God in heaven is the “ Greatest gift, which God can give to His creatures. In some respects it is greater than sanctifying grace. We should not only guard it most jealously, but we should also increase it by exercise” (288).

In order to make oneself worthy of accepting this gift of faith and to make use of it in daily life a person needs the imaginative skills, the extent of which varies from individual to individual. This accounts for the differences in the individual’s response to the challenges of faith. Without imagination nobody can even appreciate the richness of the gift of faith. And the Magisterium of the Catholic Church has made it very clear that faith cannot be made or claimed, and that no one can have it without an intimate and personal experience of God, the loving father, through Jesus, His son.

Faith basically involves an intense relationship between God and the believer. Rene Latourelle commenting on *Dei Verbum*, one of the Constitutions of Vatican Council II (1962-65), writes in the book *Theology of Revelation* (1968) that faith is a living person to person relationship between God and man which culminates in one’s committing the

whole self to God. Faith is not the simple result of human activity, but a gift of God (469-470).

When an individual understands faith as surrender to God's plan and lives accordingly that will transform his or her life. Thus understood, faith is a transforming reality. It results from revelation through God's word and leads to personal transformation. Thus the Catholic faith is an ever-rejuvenating force. It keeps believers always committed and responsible. They are people 'born anew'. So, faith is a living reality, a powerful experience necessitating a total transformation.

Man being a social animal his faith though, is basically, a personal and interior experience, requires itself to be expressed in public. Faith finds its expression in prayer, worship and in the life of individuals. It cannot be isolated from the practical life of the believer. The Catholic Church teaches that prayer is an essential activity of a believer. Prayer and faith are inseparable. As B. Edwin writes in his book, *Points Worth Pondering* (1961), "The absence of prayer or its falling off in person's life is at once a sign or cause of weakened faith; if not remedied, this absence can lead to the loss of faith"(26). According to Edwin the first exercise of faith, the primary form of contact with God, is prayer. Hence, liturgy is the official expression of faith. But it should not be mistaken that faith is to be confined to the four walls of the Church. The Catholic faith, in this sense, cannot be viewed as a mere set of cults and rituals.

Faith must express itself, and take, the form of action. If liturgy is the manifestation of faith inside the Church, life is its manifestation in action, outside the Church. Liturgy proclaims faith as well as binds the faithful to fight for justice and lead a better spiritual life. John J. Egan's essay "Homily", included in the book *The Future of the Catholic Church in America* (1991), edited by John R. Roach and others convey this idea very convincingly. In Egan's words, "Authentic Liturgy will always nourish faith, by

challenging it. Authentic liturgy will always move us into the world to engage there in the struggle for justice”(118). As a result the faithful ought to become more active. Of course there are people who think that adherence to faith makes people inactive and irresponsible. But the Church always teaches that faith implies not only deep meditation and silent prayer, but also selfless charity, loving service and concern for the poor, which takes, the form of struggle for bringing about a just and human society. To believe is to love and serve the other. To be a believer is to be a fighter for peace and justice. The Catholic Church is bent upon founding basic communities based on the principles of love, justice and equality.

Faith by its very nature has to be proclaimed. Promulgation of the faith is the most prominent activity of the Catholic Church. Church is essentially missionary and its primary duty is evangelical. She is called and sent to preach. Regarding the obligation of preaching or the evangelical mission of the Church St. Paul writes to the Romans, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10: 14-15). Commenting on the importance of his own preaching, Paul writes to the Corinthians, “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1Cor. 9: 16).

The duty of preaching the Good News is the existential task of the whole Church. It is not the exclusive right or responsibility of priests and nuns. The Church officially teaches that the lay people also have the responsibility to spread the message of the Gospels. The Fathers of Vatican Council II specially emphasized the obligation of the lay people to fulfill their missionary and witnessing role. Article II of *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (1963) empowers all the faithful to Christian religious worship and states, “They must profess before men the faith they have received from God

through Church". (*Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, 333). Article 33 of the same Constitution also demands that the laity must work in no less degree than the members of the hierarchy, for the spread of the Gospel message. All the laity, then, have exalted duty of working for the ever greater spread of the divine plan of salvation to all men, of every epoch and all over the earth (359).

After having presented the various aspects of imagination and faith separately and observed the scope and usefulness of a harmonious cooperation of these two, now it is time to examine what the Catholic view of imagination is. The focus here is to highlight how much imagination is relevant to theological discussions, Biblical exegesis, liturgical celebrations and the understanding of the Catholic faith. It is not intended here to present the entire Catholic view of imagination. This discussion is confined to those aspects of Catholic imagination, which are relevant for the priestly function and only those ideas relevant in the context of the portrayal of priesthood in Greeley's novels under study. This inquiry into the possibility and relevance of having a Catholic imagination is all the more important because of all the living Catholic writers, Greeley's novels are best known as studded with the undercurrents and insights of the Catholic imagination.

The enquiry into the realm of imagination has already shown that it is an image-forming, coordinating and constructive element in one's personality, and that it has a unique place in literary composition as a tool concerning writers. The theme of imagination is as relevant as it was to the disciples of Socrates. As stated above, for any writer the imagination is the most vital equipment in his or her literary arsenal. One striking characteristics that has been made clear during the course of this study is the strong faith all the writers of the past and the present have had, though in varying degrees, in imagination. For them imagination has been the source of their inspiration, their guide, their solace, their justification, their supporter, their counsellor, their strength, and all that

writers aspire for their existence and performance. Even those who did not have faith in God enjoyed and employed allegiance to imagination. It is imagination that enriched, embellished and directed their works and made them beautiful and eventful.

Many writers have experienced and witnessed to a close association between imagination and faith. Their trust in imagination has attained a religious dimension. In their opinion the imagination has great significance in spiritual and religious life. It enables the faithful to meditate and pray effectively. For example, Philip Sheldrake, the author of *Images of Holiness* (1987) maintains that the imagination is the medium by which the Lord Jesus makes the salvific mysteries present to the people during prayer and meditation. Sheldrake writes about “imagining scenes from the Gospels as a process of making present what is at the deepest level a mystery”(114). Louis De Thomas advises the application of the imagination in bringing about changes in religious life which presupposes “new visions” that can be suggested by the imagination alone. In the book *Blessed Ambiguity: Brothers in the Church* (1993) edited by Michael F. Meister, Thomas introduces a challenging paradigm of “Imaginative Dynamic” which he claims, is different from the usual “Transformatal Principles”(227).

At the same time it must be admitted that a few spiritual fathers in the past exhorted others to avoid excessive use of imagination in prayer. For instance, Canon Francis V. Tiso in the book *The Sign Beyond All Signs* (1997), appeals to the faithful to beware of uncontrolled imagination in prayer. He cautions them, “Otherwise you may find that you have become a fantasist instead of a hesychast”(120). One finds in *Faith Extenders- Everyday Ways to Increase Your Faith* (1998) how the author, John F. Avanzini values the imagination as a God-given apparatus and at the same time warns that God wants us not to misuse it (21). Saint Paul himself has instructed his followers to cast down particular imaginations that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God (2 Cor.10: 5).

But religious thinkers in general agree with the idea that a diligent use of imagination makes prayer, meditation and liturgy more acceptable to God, and more appealing to the community of worshippers.

As one traces the history of literature he/she can distinguish a group of writers and artists who believed that their literary imagination was not different from divine inspiration and so inseparable from their religious life. They believe that imagination is God's favourite gift. They maintain that faith is the high form of imagination. The so-called Cambridge Platonists, prominent among whom are Addison, Earl of Shaftsbury, John Milton, and Ralph Cudworth, belong to this group. One finds that all of them had great faith in their imagination, which they took for granted as God's gift. For them, their artistic works were the manifestations of God's will. They believed in a God who Himself is imaginative. So imagination was one of His attributes. A short review of the ideas of these prominent Christian Platonists concerning imagination is given below.

In his *Spectator*, Addison published a series of essays on "The Pleasures of the Imagination". What Addison wrote in *Spectator* No. 417 about unbounded operations of the imagination has been quoted by Brett in his *Fancy and Imagination* (1998) as, "Any single circumstance of what we have formerly seen often raises up whole Scene of Imagery, and awakens numberless. Ideas that before slept in the Imagination...Our imagination takes the Hint and leads us unexpectedly into Cities or Theatres, Plains or Meadows" (17).

Shaftsbury holds the view that the mind is creative and that this power comes from God who created man in His own image and likeness. He approached nature not as machine but as an organism. As Brett explains, Shaftsbury thinks that the poet, like God, creates his world not by assembling mechanically the raw material on which he works, not by stamping, this material as wax is stamped by a seal, but by an organic

process corresponding more to gestation (25-26). For Shaftesbury, this active principle is the shaping spirit of imagination. Thus by drawing an analogy between the mind of God and the mind of the poet and presenting the nature as an organism instead of a machine, he anticipated a Romantic conception of poetry and of the poetic imagination. Actually these words do not suggest merely the author's awareness of the analogy but proclaim his faith in the imagination as a sharing in one of the attributes of the imaginative God.

John Milton and Ralph Cudworth are the two other writers to be referred to. John Milton, the celebrated author of *Paradise Lost* (1667) believed that his work was prompted by God's spirit. All Christian Platonists were of the opinion that poets were inspired by the imagination, which they took for granted as God-given gift. For all of them, exercise of their imagination was a kind of evangelical proclamation of their Christian faith. The significance of these Platonists in the history of Philosophy consists in the fact that they refuted the claims of Empiricists like John Locke and David Hume who claimed that mind /imagination was a mere associative process of perceptions.

An overview of literature convinces that most of the Catholic writers seem to have been gripped by a peculiar sense of a prophetic mission. One finds that Catholic imagination is always prophetic in its nature, expression and implementation. They appear to be as zealous, committed, constructive and challenging as an Old Testament prophet. In this context it is very significant to refer to *The Christian Renaissance* (1962), a book written by G. Wilson Knight, one of the best-known Shakespearean critics. According to Knight the Renaissance poets-Dante, Goethe and Shakespeare- had religious interests and were moved by prophetic imagination. By means of their writings they were witnessing to their religious faith. Any poet, worth the name, ought to be imaginative and prophetic at the same time. In the words of Knight, "Imagination is always prophetic because it is creative; and it is creative because one of its parents is love"(20). Knight

argues that these Christian writers were really expressing their faith by means of their literary creations. They seem to have believed that faith is the high form of imagination.

We also come across a group of theologians who maintain that imagination is to be perfected by faith and that faith has to be expressed imaginatively, with a prophetic purpose. Thus literary imagination reaches the realm of religious imagination and at that level the writer assumes the role of a prophet. For example, Walter Brueggemann argues in his book *The Prophetic Imagination* (2001) that religious imagination must necessarily possess the aspect of a prophetic imagination. Brueggemann instructs that only by coupling religious imagination with prophetic imagination one can save people from religious triumphalism, economic exploitation and political oppression (6-7). The language of a prophet like Moses or Jesus ought to be critical and energizing and amazing. It is the task of prophetic imagination and ministry to bring people to engage the promise of newness that is at work in our history with God (59-60).

Among the Romantics, William Blake is undoubtedly the strongest supporter of the view that faith is the highest form of imagination of all others. Blake appears to be the most vigorous in the theory of imagination. The only power that makes a poet, is the divine vision or the imagination, is his conviction and experience. The living power of the imagination was the beginning and end of Blake's poetry. In his manhood Blake had frequent and fantastic visions, which played a prominent role in moulding his literary creed and views on imagination. He was also a visionary for whom all knowledge came through the exercise of imagination. Blake believed that imagination is a divine power and everything real came from it. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1965) edited by Alex Preminger, has recorded Blake's belief that ultimate reality is spiritual, and that the imagination is the organ of its perception. "Imagination is spiritual sensation. It is the first principle of knowledge and all others are derivatives"(373). For Blake

imagination is the divine body in everyman. God and imagination are one. God is the creative and spiritual power in man and apart from man the idea of God has no meaning. The imaginative man has his one foot in the spiritual world, but, the other remains firmly rooted on the earth.

In many quarters of the world one can observe a brewing awareness that religious imagination, a combination of both faith and imagination is the need of the hour. Not a very few people think that such an imagination can solve many of the discords and disorders which torment the modern world. Jacques Haers expresses this view in his paper, "Imagination in Narratives as A Tool to Heal A Broken World", presented in *Faith and the Religious Imagination*, which is an account of the Theological Symposium held in Katholieke Universiteit Luven, Belgium (2001). In Haer's opinion the problems we face in the world are mainly due to the neglect of religious imagination and the consequent lack of commitment. Hence, he calls for reinstating the religious imagination as a tool to heal our broken world. According to him the world needs "a vision relying on a powerful imagination as to what the future could look like' (3). For him the dream and the promise of the Christian faith and Church ought to be at the service of the global holistic reconciliation, the execution of which is impossible without the dynamism and energy of religious imagination (4). He defines Christian imagination as "Enacting in and for this world the image of God, thereby committing oneself profoundly to this world and discovering God in his relationship to the world at the same time"(12).

Catholic imagination essentially means acceptance of faith as revealed by God who is the fullness of truth and as interpreted by the Catholic Church. Catholic imagination derives its inspiration and justification from the example of Christ, which the Catholic Church is obliged and expected to follow. Christ's teachings are replete with parables and stories, which ought to nurture the Catholic imagination. He used them as the most

effective means of communicating the mystery and myth of God's love to the masses. Hence, the writers who employ the Catholic imagination and narrate stories are continuing the same mission of Jesus and His Church. As Louise Shottroff writes in the book, *The Parables of Jesus* (2006), He is "A master of public parable discourse" (106). In the book *New Testament Introduction* (2002) Pheme Perkins writes, "One of the most popular forms of Jesus' teachings remains the parables. Jesus' parables range from very short 'one-liner' comparisons and analogies to miniature stories in which one or more characters take part" (83). As a whole, all spokespersons of Narrative Theology uphold the relevance of parables and stories in religious preaching. For example, David Tracy, whom Andrew Greeley greatly respects, writes in his book, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (1981), "The story form is indispensable. It carries a distinctive, disclosive and transformative power" (142).

Keeping in line with David Tracy, the author of *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Plurality of Cultures* (1981), Terry A. Veling discusses the analogical and dialectical aspects of the imagination in the book, *Practical Theology* (2005). Veling maintains that analogical imagination is the way of wonder or curiosity whereas the other one is of transformation. The first one sees the natural and human world as a reflection or mirror of God's creative hand and His gracious goodness. It appreciates everything as God's creation, lovingly crafted in God's image. This imaginative vision enables us to regard the world as a 'correspondence of heaven' or an 'analogy of heaven'. On the other hand prophetic or dialectical analogical sees the world as marred and distorted by sin and therefore distanced and estranged from God (205). In order to highlight the uniqueness of the Catholic imagination, it is desirable to anticipate some ideas from Greeley's book, *The Catholic Myth* (1990). In his opinion, the Catholics do have an imagination different from that of the Protestants. The Catholic imagination

tends to see society as a sacrament of God, a set of communitarian relationships governed by both justice and love, revealing God's loving and graceful presence. The Protestant imagination tends to see human society as both unnatural and oppressive, over against which the individual must break away. According to Greeley, while the Catholic imagination upholds the sanctity of communal relationships, the other one emphasizes the individual freedom and is more concerned about the oppressive social aspects (48). In his article, "The New and Old Anti-Catholicism and the Analogical Imagination" published in *Theological Studies* (2001), Mark S. Massa advises both the Catholics and the Protestants to learn from the other, and not to fight. The Protestants who follow the dialectical method need the analogical to disclose and name the presence of the Holy One in this world. The Catholics who favour the analogical need the healthy negations of the dialectical imagination (568-569).

The soul of Catholic imagination is the analogical language. Cyprian Vaggagini writes in the book *Doing Theology* (2003) about the analogy of proportionality and the analogy of attribution. The word 'analogy' is composed of *ana*, which means according to, and *logos*, which means reason or proportion or speech. Analogy stands for the likeness between things different in other respects, similarity, and parallelism. There is analogy between love that one experiences in his/her daily life and the love of God. These two loves are alike. But the proportion is different. This is the analogy of proportionality. When one says, "In God is good" he/she attributes to God the goodness that one experiences in the world. These two goods are neither identical nor contradictory. This is the analogy of attribution. These two analogies can be said to be based on the analogy of being. Vaggagini continues to explain that Catholic imagination is analogical. The essence of Catholic imagination is a new insight that everything in this world is God's tool in bringing the universe back to His plan. The whole creation is the

“art work” of God (15-16). A Catholic develops and uses his imagination analogically. It is this human capacity inspired by God that guides one to reach out in faith.

According to Richard B. Hays, St. Paul employs religious imagination as a means of conversion in 1 Cor. 5:1-13. Hays writes in the book *The Conversion of the Imagination* (2005), that the apostle is challenging the early Christians for an imaginative paradigm shift. The Jews who had already been saved in the Old Testament are now to be reconfigured by the cross and resurrection of Jesus (24). This change is the result of a new conversion of the religious imagination. Referring to the paradigmatic aspect of analogical imagination, Garret Green teaches in the book *Imagining God: Theology and the Religious Imagination* (1998), that religious imagination analogically represents the ultimate realities, ethically illumines the meaning and value of human life and paradigmatically regulates the life of the believers. Thus religious imagination becomes “a normative model” (54) for human endeavour. Thus religious imagination can enter and enrich one’s faith commitments.

Another advantage brought about by the Catholic imagination is that it has helped the Catholic Church improve her attitude towards other religions. In his article, “Religious pluralism and Religious Imagination”, contained in *Faith and the Religious Imagination* (2001), Paul Knitter argues that religious imagination tells us that mine is not the only story, mine is not the final story and that it is not the full story (8). This view opens provision for dialogues among different religions.

According to some theologians, Catholic imagination serves great ecumenical impact and it makes strong healing appeal to the broken world. In his article entitled “Ecumenism, Vatican II and Christology” published in *The Critical Spirit: Theology at the Cross –roads of Faith and Culture* (2003), Dermot A. Lane considers religious imagination as “A unique capacity of the human spirit that is able to unite what is divided,

to heal what is wounded and to gather what is scattered”(152). He regrets that the Catholic Church has not been able to tap fully the unifying and reviving strength of this religious imagination. He urges the Church to fulfill the task of being the face or the sacrament of Christ more credibly, more effectively and more imaginatively

Having highlighted some common features of Catholic imagination, what follows is an account of the five chief components of Catholic Imagination. These components are presented as part of the duties of a Catholic priest. So the following presentation is a combination of the Catholic views of priesthood and Catholic views of imagination, in concurrence with the five fold responsibilities of a Catholic priest. As already mentioned what is presented below is not the comprehensive Catholic view of imagination, but only those relevant for the priestly ministry and only as far as they are significant to Greeley’s portrayal of priesthood in his novels under study. The ensuing chapters will be patterned after these five components, which will serve as models and criteria of the discussion how Greeley’s priestly characters live up to these ideals of Catholic imagination and demands of their priestly profession.

As the first component of Catholic imagination this study deals with the mutually supplementing relationship that must exist between faith and reason. As far as a priest is concerned one of his fundamental duties is to arrive at and maintain a healthy balance between faith and reason. Both faith and reason are God-given talents and gifts, which all human beings are endowed with. To make a personal search for God, the ultimate truth is the fundamental call of every human being, especially that of a priest. This being a philosophical search one cannot do away with reason. This being a theological or spiritual experience, one cannot give up faith. Faith and reason collaborate in this pursuit after the Truth. Such a search becomes impossible without hope in the things to come and this kind of an enquiry necessitates the play of imagination.

As one finds in *The Acts of the Apostles*, “The God that made the world and all things therein ...that they should seek the Lord... and find him...”(17: 24-27). According to this teaching, God has empowered His children, the human beings, with powers of reason and imagination which will assist and guide them in their search for the Almighty. God who always remains as a mystery may not be fully comprehended even by the great theologians. Even then, religious faith is intelligent and sensible. Thus Catholic Imagination is just a matter of training of the mind in the light of revealed truths, that is, in the light of faith, which is impossible without imagination – Catholic Imagination is a training of one’s own mind to imagine the eternal truths in the light of the revealed precepts of faith.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (1995), an official teaching of the Church presents faith as God’s gift, a supernatural virtue infused in man by Him. Article 159 of this *Catechism* asserts, “Though faith is above reason, there can never be any more discrepancy between faith and reason” (35). A priest must consider it as his unforgettable duty to be aware of this fact. He should always teach that religious imagination can be formed neither by reason alone nor by faith alone. Hence it is wrong to think that religion is a business exclusively of the intellect and reason and that the contents or tenets of faith are best expressed in theological treatises. As William J. Bausch argues in his *Story – telling, Imagination and Faith* (1999), any religion pertains more to emotions, and depends more on stories for its expression. He quotes William James’ words, “I do believe that feeling is the deeper source of religion, and that philosophical and theological formulas are secondary products like translations of a text into another tongue” (10).

There are some people who think that religious faith, Catholic faith included, is blind, superstitious and that it is against reason. There are others who still maintain that religious faith is against the progress of humanity. According to some people, reason is

secular and faith is spiritual and so these two cannot be reconciled. The Catholic priest has to teach that no real contradiction or conflict can exist between faith and reason. Actually, religious faith is sensible and justifiable. For example, St. Thomas Aquinas is the best philosopher and greatest theologian of the Catholic Church. For him, faith and reason is not an instance of dualism. Not only did he ever regard it a problem to combine faith and imagination but also did combine both of them in his priestly life, and philosophical and theological thinking.

On this occasion, it is a must to turn to the relevant teachings of the Catholic Church and understand what her attitude regarding the relationship between faith and reason is. The official Church never approves of any dichotomy between faith and reason. Instead the Magisterium officially teaches that philosophical thinking is a strong support to justify one's belief in God's existence. In the year 1998, Pope John Paul II published an eminent document entitled, *Fides et Ratio* which has had tremendous appeal to the intellectual world. The Supreme Pontiff is of the opinion that there is no reason for competition or hostility between faith and reason. They are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to and reaches the contemplation of truth. This document reminds the intelligentsia of how Fathers of the Church like St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas were great theologians and profound philosophers at the same time. In article 6 of *Fides et Ratio*, the Pope cautions the intellectuals that "with its enduring appeal to the search for the truth, philosophy has the great responsibility of forming thought and culture; and now it must strive resolutely to recover its original vocation" (19).

The quality and success of pastoral ministry will be proportionate to the level of Catholic imagination the priest possesses. Without Catholic imagination the priest cannot but fail to grasp the correlation between faith and reason. Each Catholic priest is an authorized teacher called and appointed by Jesus, the Master. He is responsible for the

faith-formation and intellectual growth of the lay people. That is why a presentation is given on faith and reason as the first component of Catholic imagination and one of the most important ministries of a Catholic priest.

Blending of faith and preaching is the second component of the Catholic Imagination. Without Catholic imagination neither can a priest deepen and express his faith nor can he embellish his preaching and satisfy his listeners. This component assumes great significance because, preaching or teaching is an essential part of the priestly vocation. In fact, one title of a Catholic priest is that he is a prophet, a teacher. The role of the Catholic priest is nothing but representing and continuing the salvific plan of God, the Father, after the model of Christ Himself. In his public life Christ appears like a teacher endowed with a prophetic mission. He is a master storyteller. His frequent use of parables and myths has merited him the title of a 'parabler'. During His ministry one sees that Jesus called, trained and sent his apostles to go, preach and make disciples (Matthew 28: 19-20). Hence, the Catholic Church attributes great importance to priests' preaching or teaching.

In this context, all priests must abide by the advice of Pope John Paul II. He promulgated *Catechesis Tradendae* in 1979, in order to highlight the importance of imparting catechesis. The Pope makes an earnest appeal to all the clergy not to neglect their preaching obligation. He writes, "With all my strength, I beg you, ministers of Jesus Christ: Do not, for lack of zeal or because of some unfortunate preconceived idea, leave the faithful without catechesis. Let it not be said that the children beg for food, but no one gives to them"(85). He asseverates that homily is an effective medium for catechesis. Priests are duty- bound to respect the right of the people to listen to God's Word. As James Gilhooley advocates in his book *Priests and Other Heroes* (2001), "There is no substitute for preaching. I don't care what else a preacher does in the community or what

cause he promotes. The people want to know on Sunday morning whether there is a word from the lord”(318).

Another important area where Catholic imagination always operates is the correlation of faith and love. This can be dealt with as the third component of Catholic imagination. Faith is fundamentally a surrender. The believer offers in faith his/her life for the glory of God and to realize His will. Life of faith assumes the nature of love for God and service for the people. The first point to note is that faith should not be confined to mere recital of certain prayers and observance of certain rites. When faith expresses itself in action one calls it love and service. Faith and love cannot be separated. Likewise, love of God and service for the people are inalienable. Faith and love of this kind, totally different from the carnal and temporal expressions of love, have their origin from Catholic imagination. To recall Andrew M. Greeley’s position as revealed in his fiction, one cannot have faith without Catholic imagination nor can anyone love God and all others selflessly in the absence of Catholic imagination.

If the component of faith and preaching refers to priest, the prophet/teacher, that of faith and love has its focus on priest, the shepherd. The Catholic priest stands for Christ who came to the world in order to serve others and not to be served. Hence, an important aspect of priestly personality is that he is a king or a shepherd bound to serve his fellow men. The service rendered by a Catholic priest is not mere social service. His work is urged by pure love. He acts on account of and almost on behalf of Christ Himself. In other words, his service is based on love and his love emerges from his faith experience of a loving God. Such faith and love can be motivated and justified only by Catholic imagination. Devoid of Catholic imagination neither a priest nor a layperson will be able to love and serve others gratuitously.

From a Catholic point of view, love is a matter of understanding the other person for God's sake and as His children, which is a component of faith as well as imagination. Understanding and acknowledging the other as God's child presupposes Catholic imagination. None other than an imaginative mind supported by Catholic faith can understand the other person in the light of faith and serve him or her with the spirit of love. As one looks closer into this basic principle of the Catholic respect for the other, he/she finds the justification for the triple vows or virtues which the Catholic Church commands her priests to follow. Obeying one's superiors is a sober expression of respect for the other. It is called the vow or virtue of obedience. Respect for the other enables the Catholic priest, also to refrain from desiring the body of a woman. This is the basis of the virtue or vow of chastity. Respect for the other also makes the priest concerned about the dire necessities of the poor masses. In order to redress their problems the priest opts for a life of poverty. One cannot arrive at nor can one hold on to this kind of an approach to the triple virtues without developing a Catholic imagination.

Unlike most of the priests belonging to other Christian denominations, the Catholic priests, endowed with Catholic imagination, are said to be more free, serviceable and available in their shepherding the flock. It is mainly due to the prevalence of the triple virtues in the Catholic Church. As already mentioned, celibacy, obedience and poverty are the virtues which every priest must practise. The observance of these triple virtues liberates priests from earthly and familial attachments and makes them full-time workers of Christ for God's glory and sanctification of His people. To put in brief, celibacy makes a Catholic priest bound to all, but to no one in particular; obedience makes him God's servant in spite of his ministerial powers and pastoral rights; poverty makes him rich in holiness and grace, totally dependent on God and fully committed to His people.

It must be remembered that the religious priests profess and practise these three virtues as vows.

Cyriac Kanichai explains in his book *Sannyasa* (1975), how sacerdotal virtues correspond to the three 'yogas' or 'margas' of the Hindus. 'Yoga' means a spiritual technique or way (*marga*) of union with God. The three yogas are *Jnana-yoga* (way of knowledge), *Bhakti-yoga* (way of love) and *Karma-yoga* (way of action). There is perfect co-relation between 'Bhakti' and chastity. Both of them demand undivided love and living for God alone. 'Karma' corresponds to poverty. These two urge the devotees to offer and share in action all what they have for God and society. *Bhakti – yoga* leads the faithful to God through love where as *Karma –yoga* aims at God realization through action. *Jnana-yoga* means uniting oneself with God by knowing Him spiritually and mystically. "Jnana" is same as obedience. *Jnana-yoga* makes one addicted to the Word from within. For the believer, Word is the only source of his inspiration (knowledge), aspiration (love), and operation (action). The life of the one who practises this, is Word-bound, Word-directed, and Word-oriented. And obedience means nothing but obeying God's Word or will. Thus there is a perfect agreement between the Hindu 'yogas' and sacerdotal virtues (19).

The three sacerdotal virtues described above enable priests to love God with an undivided heart, to share everything with all, and to work for God's kingdom on earth as responsible servants. This is what the practice of the chastity, poverty and obedience demands of priests, respectively. Besides these, priests must have all the humane, moral and religious qualities like faith, honesty, compassion, frankness, credibility, punctuality and availability as they have to deal with all sorts of people. For example, in his book *Priest As A Man: Counseling for the Clergy* (2006), George Manalel reminds that to become a good pastor one must have unconditional positive regard for the people and

empathic understanding of the person. He should be loving, caring and genuine (113-118). In the light of this discussion, it can be deduced that each Catholic priest must be endowed with Catholic imagination. Otherwise, he would not be able to shepherd the flock nor would he be able to practice these triple virtues/vows, without maintaining a harmony between faith and love.

Another important component of Catholic imagination is expressed in the correspondence between faith and administration of sacraments. It is in administering sacraments in the Catholic way that a Catholic priest realizes the title of a “priest”. Any priest who is not endowed with Catholic imagination may officiate sacraments mechanically and ineffectively. One with Catholic imagination makes it a celebration of the community and religious experience, in anticipation of the celestial glory. By virtue of baptism every Christian is a priest. Besides this initial participation in baptismal priesthood, ‘priests’ are specially trained and authorized to offer sacrifices on behalf of the community.

Jose Tharayil describes in his book, *Priests of Christ: Unity, Fraternity and Spirituality* (1995), various titles of priests such as mediator, servant of God and His people, shepherd, prophet, ambassador of Christ, man of prayer and leader (168-174). When he preaches, the priest is a teacher, a prophet. As he administers a parish, the priest is a leader, vicar or ambassador of Christ and a servant of other people. The priest becomes a mediator between God and people while performing the sacraments. A priest is at his best as a man of prayer mostly as he officiates the sacraments. This mediator’s role of the Catholic priests is beautifully portrayed by Fulton Sheen in his renowned book *The Priest is not His Own* (2005). Referring to Genesis 28: 12-13, where one reads about Jacob’s ladder connecting heaven and earth, Sheen writes that the position of priest is the same as that of Jacob’s ladder is mediating between God and man. Every priest knows

himself, by divine election, to be a mediator between God and man, bringing God to man and man to God.... Every priest is like another Jacob's ladder"(31). As the celebrant of sacramental administration, a priest carries prayers and offerings of his people to God and returns with God's favours for the people. Thus, he assumes the role of a bridge-builder. As Pope John Paul II writes in his *Gift and Mystery* (1996), "The priest receives from Christ the treasures of salvation, in order duly to distribute them among the people to whom he is sent. These treasures are of faith"(66). Thus, priests hold a key position as persons who work out reconciliation between God and His faithful. They attain this mostly by means of offering sacrifices and leading prayers and administering sacraments.

Sanctifying is one of the triune duties of a Catholic priest, the other two being teaching and leading. Sanctifying is in no way less important than the other two. He does this sanctification mainly by means of administering the sacraments and preaching the Word of God. Hence, a solid spiritual life is essential for a priest. He has to sanctify himself and others. What one doesn't have in oneself, one cannot give others. A priest who doesn't possess holiness in him cannot give it to others. In this regard, priests must obey Jesus' command, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5: 48). They must be holy because, it is proverbially true that "as the priest is, so the people are".

Why is it said that the Catholic priest should have Catholic imagination in order to be an efficient celebrant and communicator during liturgical sessions and sacramental administration? The very nature or essence of a sacrament necessitates symbolic language, which in its turn demands imaginatively rich utterance. Sacraments are symbols. To comprehend the message and implications of symbols one needs fertile imagination. In the Catholic context, this is impossible without Catholic imagination.

Here, a brief explanation regarding the meaning of symbols and the role they play in the performance of religious rites in general and sacraments in particular, is needed.

According to Karl Rahner, one of the greatest Catholic theologians, symbols and images are essential elements of religious imagination. They have to be explained to the people. It is one of the primary duties of a Catholic priest who is in possession of Catholic imagination, to let the lay people know the meaning of various symbols and images. Those who are devoid of the sensibility of Catholic imagination might undervalue their importance. Hence, comes the relevance of Rahner's views figuring in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner* (2005), edited by Declan Marmion and Mary E. Hines. One reads in it, "Images, therefore, also have a didactic role....Images have an aesthetic, epistemological, mediatory, and meditative function, not only in the more secular spheres of life but also with regard to the Christian message thus they are not to be undervalued" (228). To possess Catholic imagination as far as a Catholic priest is concerned, is as important as he has to officiate the celebration of the sacraments.

Hence, it is clear that the coupling of faith and administration of sacraments is undoubtedly an unavoidable constituent of the Catholic imagination. Since, all sacraments are symbolic in words as well as gestures their meaningful celebration presupposes a fair play of Catholic imagination. Administration of sacraments being an important ministry of priests and also because they have great scope for pedagogy and formation of the community, the priests cannot but equip themselves with rich religious imagination, and in the case of a Catholic, Catholic imagination.

As the last component of Catholic imagination, the analysis passes on to the importance of the mutually supplementing nature and function of faith and suffering. In spite of the multifarious comforts and conveniences with the help of science and technology, the prevalence of natural, physical and moral evils makes one prey to

suffering. Any number of philosophical and medical explanations have not provided with a totally satisfactory answer to the problem of suffering. Even the theologians and theodicians do not claim to have arrived at any conclusive solution to this problem. Since, priests are public figures they will have to encounter a lot of questions related to the problem of suffering which apparently contradicts the omniscience and omnipotence of a loving God. So, one has to inquire how a Catholic priest can counsel and console his people as they frequently bother him with this problem. The contention here is that a Catholic priest cannot tackle this problem without resorting to a proper understanding of suffering in the light of Catholic imagination.

No one can be a true priest, worth the title, without associating himself with Jesus, the ideal and perfect priest. *The Holy Bible* presents the life of Christ as that of the suffering servant of Yahweh. And we know, for certain, that His life was never free from suffering. Even Christ finds it very difficult to bring about a correspondence between His Father's loving promises to His chosen people and the only begotten son, and his excruciating agony in Gethsemane. And He asks pitifully, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou *wilt*"(Matthew 26: 39). There is no one who has not reflected on his heart-rending cry on the Cross, at the time of His death, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"(Matthew 27: 46). In his book *Why do We Suffer* (2000), Daniel Harrington draws our attention to Jesus' suffering in these words:

For Christians, Jesus is the best summary of all the biblical approaches to the suffering. At the time of his death Jesus recites the great lament psalm of the righteous sufferer (Psalm 22)...He dies on the cross "for us" and "for our sins" and so fulfills his mission to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). As the great high priest he is able to sympathize with our

weaknesses”(Hebrews 4: 15), because he has been tested in his own sufferings (143-144).

Jesus’ crucifixion is a historical event as well as a constituent of the Catholic creed. But, the message of His death on the cross cannot have either relevance or application at present without using Catholic imagination. When one turns to Jesus, to His life and words in faith and interpret them using his/her own imagination, he/she can find some meaning to the problem of suffering. Jesus tells His disciples, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit...and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (John 12: 23-25). An explanation of this kind is unthinkable without coupling faith with religious imagination. Hence, it is the duty of every Catholic priest to approach the problem of suffering from the point of view of Catholic imagination, otherwise, he is sure to end up in despair. Catholic imagination enables the believers to take up the cross to save oneself and the world, with enthusiasm and a sense of meaningful commitment. As St. Paul rightly says, the cross which symbolizes suffering is a stumblingblock unto the Jews and foolishness unto the Greeks (1Cor.1: 23). The very same cross, when approached with Catholic imagination, becomes the sign of life, joy and hope.

As one looks at the suffering from the angle of Catholic imagination he/she sees that it is not a damned or doomed end but the beginning of a new life. As Good Friday ends in Easter the resurrection demonstrates that suffering can have some purpose or meaning. It has a transforming and redemptive value in the history of salvation. According to Felix M. Podimattam, if suffering is born rightly, it sanctifies and saves. In his book, *Where Is God When it Hurts: Spirituality of Suffering* (2005), Podimattam advises how a Catholic shall endure the suffering, “You can do it like an animal; you can howl and flee. You can do it like a mere man. You can grit your teeth and bear it. You

can set your face like steely Stoic. Or you can suffer gladly and thus be what God made you to be...it is something you should gratefully and gladly embrace” (161).

A Catholic priest has to instruct the people how to sanctify their daily life, which is rooted in the mystery and misery of suffering. He has to find comfort for himself and grant solace to others at the time of suffering. Jesus, his model, seems to ask him exactly what He asked Nicodemus, “Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?”(John 3:10). Hence, the priest has the right and duty to know how to deal with the problem of suffering. In this regard nothing is going to help him more than the insights of his Catholic imagination. For this, he has to combine his Catholic faith and his Catholic imagination.

Greeley’s priestly characterization presupposes and necessitates a detailed account of concepts of faith and imagination. The presentation of these two topics have been made both from purely literary and Catholic perspectives. This is because Greeley is mostly concerned with Catholic faith and Catholic imagination and his ultimate aim is portraying Catholic priesthood. The analysis of the merging of faith and imagination is divided into five parts corresponding to the five components of Catholic imagination. This major section establishes the correlation between faith and reason, faith and preaching, faith and love, faith and administration of sacraments and faith and suffering.

This inquiry is proposed to reach the conclusion that without developing and maintaining Catholic imagination no Catholic priest can fulfill his responsibilities either to God or the Church or the society. As this study is to make clear, faith and imagination are factors which envelop the total person, so the Catholic priest who has to guide individuals and the community of believers ought to be able to interpret the contents of faith and mysteries of life by means of a comprehensive Catholic imagination.

This being the introductory chapter to the whole thesis, an account of the personality and literary merit of Andrew M. Greeley is a must. Hence, the attempt made here is to place on record Greeley's importance in the context of the topic to be discussed. Greeley is a living and leading writer in the United States of America. Born in 1928, of Andrew Thomas Greeley and Grace McNicholas, he has to his credit about one hundred books. Half of them are novels and the rest are non-fictional works, mostly theological and sociological. As the best-selling priest/novelist Greeley has few parallels in the history of literature. In fact, Greeley's fiction is peopled with all kinds of characters, the heterogeneity of which is comparable to that of writers such as Geoffrey Chaucer. In addition to the above-mentioned books, he has contributed hundreds of articles to various publications, religious as well as secular. Roughly, he has so far sold more than twenty million copies of his books. Greeley claims that he satisfies a core readership of 250,000. His books on sin, sex and salvation instantly and almost miraculously addict lakhs of perusers, all awaiting his next book. As in his article, "Pop Culture Evangelist Still Telling Stories of Sin, Sex and Redemption", published in *National Catholic Reporter* (1999), Allen L. John writes, "In a time when the Church has never been more estranged from the dominant myth making systems in the culture, he's proved that the Gospel sells. He's exposed millions of people to the themes of sin, grace and redemption, and left them clamouring for more" (14).

Greeley has made his presence felt in the secular as well as the religious fields both as a priest and professor. As a priest ordained on May 5, 1954, he has served the Archdiocese of Chicago for more than half a century, adorning various responsible positions. It suffices to note that despite a lot of publicity as to his having left priesthood or about to do it immediately, Greeley still remains a Catholic priest, proud of his

priesthood and of what he has achieved as a priest. He is hardworking and successful and one who loves his priesthood.

As a professor of social sciences Greeley divides his time between the University of Chicago and the University of Arizona. He also serves as Research Associate at the National Opinion Research Centre at the University of Chicago. He has established a Chair in Roman Catholic Studies at the University of Chicago.

Greeley is, at once, most widely read as well as the most neglected writer in America. He is marginalized by a highbrow academic community in American (hence, world over) universities and has been denied the critical acclaim he rightly deserves. And an exposition of Greeley's own literary and artistic uniqueness has hardly been done. Yet, distinctions and recognition have not neglected him altogether. He has already received many such awards and honours from universities, academies, associations and the press.

The chief hallmark of Greeley's novels is that they are all inspired by Catholic imagination. In fact, all his works are literary manifestations of the interaction between faith and imagination. As Greeley himself claims, his success as a Catholic author consists in harmoniously blending the forces of faith and imagination. His basic assumption is that a Catholic priest, as part of fulfilling his mission, has to preach, his faith and in understanding and interpreting faith and the Word of God he needs the assistance of imagination. His novels display religious views characteristic of a theologian/priest writer. They reflect intellectual insights expected of a professor author. Above all, even a cursory glance at Greeley's works convinces one how faith and imagination instead of supplanting one another, jointly supplement each other in them. It is because of this fact (that Greeley's works are enactments of the mutually enriching

interplay of faith and imagination) that I have selected and presented this author as a model.

As far as Greeley's novels are concerned, as will be made clear in the following chapters, almost all the prominent characters in them are either a bishop or a priest. His portrayal of the priesthood is such that these characters find their identity, reach their fulfillment, solve problems which are moral or mental or social and give guidance to others by making use of their Catholic imagination. Greelean priests do not consider it a problem to combine faith and imagination, but they seem to take pride in the conviction that combining the two constitutes the very foundation of the exercise of their priestly call. The analysis here, is to prove that Greeley's own love and appreciation for his priestly vocation, an estimate of the unique identity of Catholic priesthood, and the intermediary role of priests between God and his people, a comprehensive portrayal of the various roles of priests - preaching, interpreting the challenges of the time, safe-guarding the interests and teachings of the Church with a view to her renovation, pastoral necessity of unifying and motivating the lay community with special insistence on women empowerment, socializing the new generation through storytelling , fighting against the forces of secularization, teaching the importance of the human body with special reference to the sacredness of the sexuality, an assessment of the relevance of priestly celibacy and problems related to it and the like - are some of the themes recurring in his novels.

As already mentioned, himself being a hardworking and successful priest, Greeley is one who loves his vocation. His evaluation of priestly identity and roles is in accordance with the Catholic understanding of priesthood, of course, coupled with a few exceptional and controversial views. Greeley's ideas on Catholic priesthood are capable of motivating the entire clergy to perform the duties of their ministry with greater

conviction and efficacy, after the model of Jesus Christ, considering the challenges of the Church in the third millennium. The following chapters will examine in detail how the priestly characters in Greeley's novels represent and reassert the author's views on Catholic priesthood, and how they live up to the demands of Catholic imagination.

With regard to this preoccupation with Catholic imagination, as Greeley himself has stated, he has been greatly inspired by Henry Newman (1801-1890), G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936), and Graham Greene (1904-1991). For all the writers who give prominence to the Catholic faith through the literary medium, these three figures are their models and precursors. So, one cannot do justice to the study of how the Catholic imagination is made use of in Greeley's novels without examining how Newman, Chesterton, and Greene have done the same in their creative works.

Newman a convert to Catholicism from the Anglican Church is considered to be the best interpreter of the Catholic Church during nineteenth century. His views on the Catholic imagination are codified in his masterpiece, *An Essay in Aid of A Grammar of Assent* (1870). He had great admiration for the imagination even in its ordinary sense. Newman illustrates how a motion of faith works revolution in the mind and brings about a transformation in the life of a believer. According to Newman faith is an existential 'grasp' (or being grasped) by Christ and belief is the expression of that experience in stories, rites and doctrines. They modulate into each other and share a common grammar. He believed that the religious imagination was the only way to have a real hold and instruction of the objects of revelation. A dogma, which is essentially a proposition, is discerned, rested in, and appreciated as a reality by the religious imagination (93). Without this religious imagination nobody can interiorize the theological proposition. For example, he writes in the *Assent*, "A theological formula, 'the Messiah is God', will not vivify in the religious mind, unless it appealed to the imagination" (122). In his opinion,

religion lives and thrives on the contemplation of the images. For a Catholic, the most powerful or central image is thought on image of God.

Besides elaborating on the centrality of imagination, Newman has also dealt with the relationship between faith and intellect, the overtones of which can be felt in the works of Greeley. In his book *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford* (1872), Newman attributes a supervising role to man's rationality. In his own words, "Right faith is the faith of a right mind. Faith is an intellectual act, done in a certain moral disposition. Faith is an act of Reason, viz. reasoning upon holy, devout and enlightened presumptions" (239).

An awareness of the need for updating the Catholic religion seems to have haunted Newman's thinking. It is noteworthy that Newman's anxiety regarding how to save the Catholic religion has been wholeheartedly incorporated by Greeley into his imagination and literary contribution, as some titles of his books indicate, e.g. *How to Save the Catholic Church* (1984), a book published in collaboration with Mary Greeley Durkin.

G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936) one of the most prolific writers of the first half of the twentieth century is another author whom Greeley greatly admired and emulated. Chesterton is known for his style and religious imagination. His treatise, *Where All Roads Lead* (1922-23) proclaims his absolute fidelity to the Catholic Church and the pride of his Catholic identity. He firmly believes that the Catholic religion is one which always remains young always refusing to grow old. He writes, "At the moment of history it is a very young religion; rather especially a religion of youngmen. It is much newer than the new religions" (5). He is very confident that the Catholic Church is able to provide the world with joy , peace and right direction. He goes to the extent of writing, "In other words, the only way really to meet all the human needs of the future is to pass into the possession of all the Catholic thoughts of the past; and the only way to do that is really to

become a Catholic” (11). In short, to be a Catholic in thought, word and deed was the main preoccupation of Chesterton, as his writings amply substantiate.

Chesterton has to his credit a number of detective stories. For anyone who reads these stories Chesterton’s basic assumption seems to be that imagination is God’s gift to man and that must be used in understanding, presenting and preaching one’s Catholic faith. Father Brown considers it his duty to purify the false beliefs, to eradicate superstitious elements from the practices of the Church. What motivates Brown to undertake detective investigation is his priestly and professional commitment to truth and nothing else. Chesterton is definitely insisting on what should be the right attitude of the Church and the priests towards truth. This Brown who is the hero of all the detective stories written by Chesterton, is actually the author’s mouthpiece into whom the latter has put his deepest Catholic conviction and philosophical insights. In other words, Father Brown is a personification of Chesterton’s Catholic imagination. That Chesterton’s detective stories have influenced Greeley is quite evident. Greeley’s detective Bishop Blackie is, in reality, the American counterpart of Chesterton’s English Father Brown.

Greeley has great fascination for the American novelist, Graham Greene whose masterpiece *The Power and the Glory* (1940), he thinks, is the best book ever written on Catholic priesthood. Hence, we look into some conspicuous aspects of Greene’s person and his novels. All critics agree with one accord that Greene is a Catholic novelist and that his best-known characters are priests with their own characteristic follies and failures. His novels are expressions of the conflict between his own modern ideas on sex and his loyalty to the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church. All his novels evince a unique blending of religion and psychology, which is essential for screening the inner tensions of his characters. Greene’s protagonists proclaim the loving mercy of God, the Father. According to Adele Kings, who has made a study of *The Power and the Glory*, bearing

the same title (1982), though priesthood has its power and glory, the priest is a fragile person in flesh and blood. By means of this priestly story Greene tries to show both “that the weakness of the man does not detract from the power of the priest and also that the sinner is close to God”(53). Most of the Greene’s characters struggle with the Catholic teachings throughout their lives. In sheer despair almost all of them at one time or the other question God’s providence and the relevance of the Catholic teachings in the modern world. At the same time, it must be noted that despite their disapproval of some of the Catholic principles and practices none of them deserts Catholicism. Instead, all of them cling to their faith, undergo a renewing experience, and remain as Catholics with increased interest and vitality.

In writing like the spokesman of the Catholic Church, Greeley can be said to be a continuation and culmination of Greene’s literary mission. Both of them have depicted a lot of priestly characters most of whom in spite of their weaknesses keep their loyalty and fidelity to the Catholic Church. For both these writers there is no guiding principle more powerful than Catholic imagination.

All the three writers discussed above share a few common characteristics. Firstly, despite their criticism, all of them are loyal and proud of the Christian Church and her message. Secondly, they are all storytellers who tried to divulge their religious faith. Thirdly, they seem to aim at transforming individuals spiritually and remoulding the society morally. Finally, all those writers appear to be prophets of their respective era, apostles of love, joy and peace. Proceeding further, this study will try to make clear that Greeley participates in all these characteristics, but on a larger scale and with greater popularity.

To sum up, the main focus of this introductory chapter was, to elaborate on the triple concepts of imagination, faith and Catholic imagination from literary, religious, and

theological perspectives. This is followed by a brief account of the five components of Catholic imagination, namely, Faith and Reason, Faith and Preaching, Faith and Love, Faith and Administration of Sacraments, and Faith and Suffering. A succinct statement of Greeley's bio-data and a short survey of three writers, who have influenced him most, also form part of this chapter. This introduction proposes that a Catholic priest cannot fulfill his pastoral commitments without following the combination of faith and imagination or the different components of Catholic imagination, in deeds and words.

The following five chapters try to present how Greeley's priestly characters, including a few lay persons, by virtue of their Baptismal priesthood, perform their duties in accordance with Catholic imagination. Each component of Catholic imagination is analyzed in the light of five selected novels each, in every chapter, as it pertains to the various pastoral obligations of a Catholic priest. After the detailed study of the novels in each chapter, there is also a very short look into some of the non-fictional writings of the author. This is done with the intention of verifying whether the same ideas and ideals highlighted in the novels, find a proper place in the non-fictional works, as well.

The second chapter is entitled as Faith and Reason. Here an attempt is made to prove that faith and reason are not mutually contradictory but mutually complementing. No one can attain truth without combining faith and reason. A priest can conceive and express the ultimate Truth only by the correlation of faith and reason. The five novels we are going to enumerate in this chapter are *Ascent into Hell* (1984), *Patience of a Saint* (1987), *Happy are Those Who Mourn* (1995), *Irish Gold* (1995) and *White Smoke* (1997). The search for truth, realization of one's true vocation, transparency in administration and witnessing to truth are not possible if one neglects the correlation between faith and reason. This chapter deals with the identity of a priest.

The correlation of Faith and Preaching is the component exposed in the third chapter. This aims at how much a priest is bound to preach the Good News which is impossible in the absence of the combination of faith and imagination. Preaching is one of the prominent obligations of every priest. Faith, by its very nature, has to be proclaimed and a priest has to do it abiding by the qualities and demands of Catholic imagination. The five novels selected for special scrutiny in this chapter are *Happy are the Peace-Makers* (1993), *The Bishop and Three Kings* (1998), *Irish Eyes* (2000), *The Bishop and the Beggar Girl of St Germain* (2001), and *September Song* (2001). The analysis of the priestly characters figuring in these novels will make sure that the pulpit is not the only medium of preaching for the priests, and that lay people are not exempted from the duty of spreading the Gospel message. Each priest is called and sent to preach. So, the correlation of faith and preaching are of great importance in the priestly life.

The fourth chapter, Faith and Love, upholds the primacy of the Sacrament of Marriage which presupposes an awareness of the sanctity of the human body. It is a basic tenet of Catholic faith that God is love which is best experienced in and through human relationships, especially, the sexual relationship of the parents, in the context of the family. One can never know the meaning of love nor can he respect the body of the other except through the eyes of Catholic imagination. *The Cardinal Sins* (1981), *Thy Brother's Wife* (1982), *Virgin and Martyr* (1986) *An Occasion of Sin* (1992), and *Summer at the Lake* (1997) are the five novels to be discussed in this chapter. A study of these novels is expected to convince all that all women characters are not modern counter-parts of Eve. A woman, leading an exemplary life, can be a sign of God's grace, a sacrament. Apart from the correlation of faith and love it will be impossible to appreciate forgiveness which is essential for conversion. This chapter explicates how a priest fulfills his shepherding or

leading office giving the people guidance, especially, in matters of sex and problems related to family life.

Faith and Administration of Sacraments is the component, presented in the fifth chapter. The priestly role of sanctification is done mostly by means of administering the sacraments which, essentially, requires a merging of faith and Catholic imagination. The five novels to be evaluated in this chapter are *Angels of September* (1987), *Happy are the Oppressed* (1996), *Irish Mist* (1999), *A Christmas Wedding* (2000) and *Irish Love* (2001). These novels, as their analysis is to prove shortly, maintains that when a priest offers sacrifices and officiates sacraments he is purifying himself and others. Thereby he becomes a mediator between God and man which presupposes that the priest has to be a man of prayer. The priest who administers sacraments ought to realize that he himself is to be a sacrament of God's love and grace. In Greeley's opinion, anybody who leads an exemplary life, whether it be a priest or a lay person, is a sacrament. Holy Matrimony, Reconciliation and Holy Mass are the three sacraments which Greeley portrays at length in these novels. He warns all priests to prepare the faithful for active participation in the liturgy and not to ignore the role of imagination.

The sixth chapter is on the correlation of Faith and Suffering which is an important component of Catholic imagination. Like all others, priests are not immune to suffering. They have to bear with suffering in personal life and they must give consolation to all those who suffer. So, the exposition of the correlation of faith and suffering is very significant to both the clergy and the laity. *Wages of Sin* (1992), *Fall from Grace* (1994), *The Bishop and the Missing L Train* (2000), *Irish Stew!* (2003) and *The Priestly Sins* (2004) are the remaining five novels chosen for the detailed analysis in this chapter. Greeley portrays two kinds of priests; on the one hand one finds some priests who are responsible for the suffering of others and, on the other hand, one comes across priests

who always try to console and strengthen the suffering people. Greeley is appealing to all priests to correlate faith and suffering and to belong to the second group. Without abiding by this component of Catholic imagination, one cannot be a genuine pastor.

The last chapter, the conclusion, will be a recapitulation of all the important themes enumerated in the thesis. It will examine how far the claims made in the introductory chapter have been realized in this work. The concluding chapter will analyze how the research leads to the conviction that a combination of faith and imagination is essential for understanding the under-currents of Catholic literature, in general and Greeley's novels, in particular. It will examine how the merging of faith and imagination enable Greeley's priestly characters to perform their pastoral obligations more effectively. Chapter VII is also intended to be a summarized statement of the identity and the ministries of a priest as revealed in the detailed study of his selected novels.

Chapter II

FAITH AND REASON:

*Ascent into Hell, Patience of A Saint, Happy are Those Who Mourn,
Irish Gold and White Smoke*

In the introductory chapter, which forms the theoretical part of this thesis, an attempt was made to identify the combination of faith and reason as the first component of the Catholic imagination. From this discussion of the first chapter, it is clear that a Catholic priest cannot fulfill his ministry without maintaining this correlation between faith and imagination. As established earlier, faith and reason are not contradictory, but complementary. Reason is that faculty which enables the human being, the rational animal, to find out justification for what s/he believes. At the same time, as a priest, one essentially needs Catholic faith. It is equally true that a priest can neither conceive nor express what he believes without using his Catholic imagination. If the priest fails to arouse his own imagination and that of his audience neither the liturgy nor the preaching will be effective. Hence, one realizes that the functioning of the Catholic imagination is a constitutive feature of one's priestly personality and ministry.

What the mixture of faith and reason achieves is nothing but the realization of the ultimate Truth, i. e. God Himself. It also aims at the truth regarding one's own self, the meaning and goal of life, the relevance of one's vocation, the finding out of solution to the problems in life, the explanation of a mysterious experience and the correction of misinterpreted historical events. As one turns to Greeley's novels, he/she finds many priestly characters who do justice to this aspect of truth, making use of their Catholic imagination. What is attempted in this chapter is a detailed analysis of five of his novels in order to evaluate how the priestly characters in them live up to the demands of this

component of the Catholic imagination under consideration. *Ascent into Hell* (1984), *Patience of A Saint* (1987), *Happy are Those Who Mourn* (1995), *Irish Gold* (1995) and *White Smoke* (1997) are the five books to be discussed in this chapter. This does not mean that rest of Greeley's fictional corpus is totally devoid of all dimensions of faith and reason. Nor does it mean that one finds in these five novels nothing but an exclusive presentation of this component. These five novels have been selected only because of the predominance given to them by the author concerning faith and reason.

The correlation between faith and reason is that part of the Catholic imagination which enables every person to embrace the fullness of truth. Realizing one's vocation is an essential aspect of arriving at truth. One's fulfilment in life is dependent on whether the person ever reaches the vocation destined for him or her by God and how far one lives up to the demands of that vocation or walk of life. Greeley develops this theme in the novel, *Ascent into Hell* (1984), which is the first novel to be elaborated in this chapter. Set against the period of post Vatican II, and marked by an appalling number of drop-outs from the priesthood and religious life, this novel narrates the story of Father Hugh Dunlon who leaves active ministry, marries an ex-nun named Elizabeth but finally is united with Maria, his first and best lover. Neither Hugh as a priest nor Elizabeth as a nun does find satisfaction in life. In the case of Hugh he never feels happy either as a priest or as the husband of Elizabeth. But, the same Hugh experiences fulfilment in life when he launches on a new life i.e. as he marries Maria, his real lover. *Ascent into Hell* highlights the importance of struggling for realizing one's real vocation and remaining faithful and responsible in one's own life situation. Unless and until one settles down in one's walk of life God has predestined for him or her human soul will be restless. In Greeley's opinion, every Catholic must be guided by Catholic imagination in the pursuit after one's true, God-willed vocation. Both the spirit of faith and the power of reason are necessary for

each individual to understand the meaning and functions of one's vocation and to perform them effectively.

As one reads the bio-data of Hugh, it is interesting to note that it is his father, Tom Donlon, who decides that his son must become a priest. Hugh's father prays to God, "Look, if you want the boy to be a priest, I won't oppose that. I promise you. Leave me Peg [the wife] and you can have Hugh"(6). This is a fundamental violation of the Catholic Church's view that vocation is not from within or one's family, but from above. Hugh as a boy never cares for this divine origin of vocation. In spite of his flirting with lovers, Maria in particular, he joins the seminary, mostly out of fearful respect for his father, and somehow gets ordained and appointed in parishes. His option for priesthood is not substantiated by Catholic imagination. His decision is not justified by his reason nor is it rooted in faith. He easily feels frustrated and falls from grace easily. Elizabeth whom he marries is an equally dissatisfied person who has left her convent for good. Here is a blind man leading another blind person, a woman. They are doomed to descend into hell. And their married life does not last for long. In Greeley's opinion, the vocation one follows is not true or genuine if it is not in accordance with God's Will. Vocation is neither meaningful nor rewarding as long as the person is not faithful to its demands. Hence it is necessary that one must pray faithfully and consult reasonably before deciding one's vocation. That is why *Ascent into Hell* teaches that no Catholic person can choose a vocation without Catholic imagination.

As Hugh leaves priesthood and marries Elizabeth, Maria marries one Steven. After a few years Elizabeth and her children get killed in a plane crash leaving Hugh free and alone. When Steven is killed in action, in Vietnam, Maria, too, becomes lonely. Both these marriages cannot but fail, for, there is no proper merging of faith and reason in any of them, but there is unforgivable violation of Catholic views and values. Hugh's

affairs with one Helen, already married to Ben Fowler and later with Helen's daughter, are all clear indications of his deeper descents. Thus this novel teaches that a person finds happiness in life only when she or he has the proper vocation, which one must find out following the precepts of the Catholic imagination. No way of life assures automatic fulfilment. One needs God's assistance, together with perseverance and faithfulness to the commitments of one's vocation.

Towards the end of the novel, Hugh is torn between two forces. Cardinal Cronin invites him to resume active ministry in the Church. At the same time, Maria claims him for her husband. Cronin tells Hugh, "You're a priest. The choice is between active ministry and being a priest in some other way no one has yet quite figured out—representing the Church and, yes, ministering the Church in whatever world you're in"(480). Hugh decides to be a priest in the second sense i.e. representing the Church and ministering for the Church, but, without the official garb or the title of a priest. Hugh prefers to be an 'unpriestly priest'. Hugh marries Maria, and inaugurates his second priesthood in the married life. Thus Maria who had always been "a distraction to his priesthood"(446) becomes his priestess. He realizes that for him Maria is a sign of God's will, grace and salvation. Maria herself tells that she is not standing in God's way to him(460). He begins to put into practice the promise he had made to Maria in their young days, "I'll love you always and I'll make you happy every day of your life"(55).

Greeley seems to argue that Hugh even after leaving the active ministry in the Church, performs the duty of a priest in the married life and that he is still serving the Church. That means, the priestly role of the married people in the family and the services they render to the Church are to be appreciated as the official duties of the ministerial priests. The primary duty of any Catholic priest is revealing God's will to the people and radiating his love both in deeds and words. This is what is expected of a true

priest who has known the true nature of God, no matter however, imperfectly. In the words of Greeley, God and Maria correlates, one revealing the other. Hugh experiences grace in the presence of Maria who saves him from shame, despair and death. He realizes that God, like Maria, is “illusive, reckless, vulnerable, joyous, unpredictable, irrepressible, unremittingly forgiving and implacably loving”(492). In other words, in his second priesthood, i.e. after his descent, the unpriestly priest Hugh shows in his life who God truly is. He is not a God of rules but a God of love, a God whose forgiveness cannot be earned since it is always given. The traditional Catholic faith has been insisting on the judging character of God. The systematic theology is more at home with an intelligent and all-knowing God. To believe in a loving God, the true God, as Greeley presents in *Ascent into Hell*, the priest really needs Catholic imagination, without which he can never communicate such an idea about God to his and His people.

By no means, Greeley entertains any laxity with regard to the celibacy of the Catholic priests. According to him celibacy is as important to Catholic priests as sexuality is to married people. The partners must not deceive the other in married life. So also priests should be faithful to their Church. As per the existing rules in the Church, a Catholic priest ought to prove that he is a true one by remaining celibate. When Marge, Hugh’s mother comes to know that her son, a priest, committed adultery with Maria, she comments, “I think it’s disgusting. I like changes in the Church, but if I have to keep promises to Liam [her husband], I don’t see how they [the priests] don’t have to keep the promises to God”(214). It is very contextual to refer to Greeley’s own views in this regard. Endorsing celibacy in the Catholic Church, he writes at the end of the novel, “I do not intend to resign from the priesthood, nor will I leave even if the powers-that-be try to throw me out...finally I am in favour of celibacy”(489). It is in accordance with the Catholic faith that the Church reveals God’s Will and the believers are bound to abide by

her teachings. It is in full agreement with reason that the practice of celibacy makes Catholic priest more available to God and to the community. A combination of faith and reason, hence, justifies the prevalence of this law of celibacy in the Catholic Church and stipulates that in order to find the fulfilment of his vocation the priest must do justice to the observance of celibacy.'

Now, one has to analyze if Greeley's approval of celibacy in the Catholic Church is incompatible with his appreciation for Hugh's leaving active ministry and marrying Maria. Greeley is known as a spokesman of the married clergy which he thinks is the remedy for the problem of the shortage of vocation through out the world. His argument is that celibacy must be made optional. Another reason drawn from the past, which Greeley presents in the novel under study is that "The married parish priest has been more typical and more common in the history of Christianity than the celibate priests" (196). It must be added that most of the contemporary theologians in the United States as well as elsewhere are in favour of married clergy. So, in all probability, Greeley's ideas will have more acceptance in years to come. In other words, Greeley's preference of celibate clergy and tolerance of married clergy are justifiable.

In order that a person derives self-realization from one's vocation, the most important condition is that the decision to choose a particular vocation should be one's own and that it should be in concurrence with God's call or plan. It is equally important that the person must coordinate both faith and reason in choosing the vocation and living it or fulfilling its tasks. As one probes into Hugh's life what surprises is that all his decisions, except, the last one to marry Maria, are not his own. Hugh's mother sarcastically comments on how he owes to other people for all his earlier decisions. In Marge's words, "You become a priest for Mam, so you could take care of God, and a trader for Dad, so you could take care of Tim, and a husband for Liz, so you could take

care of her baby. I don't think you wanted to do any of those things"(349-350). If so, Hugh has been living vocations not of his own. His marriage with Maria after leaving active ministry is quite different. It is his own decision and he is fully involved in it and is fully committed to it. He is convinced that it is God's Will. He enters it only after experiencing God's forgiving love, and only after confessing all his past sins. And thus, he deserves and enjoys self-realization by performing the obligations of the family life.

In Greeley's view, the activities of the married people are in no less degree as sacramental as the professional and official works of a Catholic priest. The basic condition is that the decision of one's vocation must not be contradictory to one's own religious faith, and human reason. The decision ought to be one's own and that should be taken after making sure that it is an agreement with God's Will. Nothing will help a person to choose the right vocation more than the Catholic imagination. Both faith and reason, demands that the individual needs due preparation for choosing the right vocation and continuous training for persevering the same. The absence of this preparation leads to descent and despondency where as the proper formation before and after choosing one's vocation results in an ascent and fulfilment in life.

Of the five novels to be scrutinized in this chapter, the next one is *Patience of A Saint* (1987). In this novel Greeley is exploring the truth of Redmond P. Kane's religious experience which when properly interpreted by Bishop Blackie in the light of Catholic imagination results in the transformation of the individual's life as well as joy and peace in the family. Without the insights of Catholic imagination nobody can either understand or explain the significance of God's interventions in human lives, as in the case of Red Kane. When such an experience embarrasses the person concerned and when he is misjudged by others as an abnormal person, it is the duty of a Catholic priest to find out truth about such occurrences and to guide persons in their distress. In order to observe

how God interferes in our lives through His Holy Spirit we need Catholic faith. Transforming oneself into a new style of life necessitates Catholic imagination. A justifiable presentation of such an experience will not be appealing or convincing to an intelligent person if there is no merging of faith with reason. In other words, *Patience of A Saint* intends to teach that recognition of truth of one's religious experience is impossible without Catholic imagination, which presupposes priestly assistance.

The leading roles in *Patience of A Saint* are shared by Red Kane, a journalist, and Eileen Ryan, his wife, a lawyer by profession. In the combination of Red Kane, an imaginative writer, and Eileen, a vindicating lawyer, one finds the mutually complementing interplay of imagination and reason. At the same time they are united not only in the marital bond but also in their Catholic faith. Red Kane fights for truth in the media. Eileen fights for truth in the court. Both of them equip themselves, the husband with his pen and the wife with her tongue, with the light of faith and reason. Both these characters are bent upon finding out, promulgating and witnessing truth with assistance of their faith and reason. They are very much committed to their respective professions. At the same time, the protagonists remain as one in the common profession of proclaiming truth always and everywhere.

Though, Red Kane proves his skill incriminating Harward Princeton Gunther, a murderer, and succeeds in finding out the mystery with regard to the disappearance of Paul O' Meera, Gunther's stooge, he fails to understand that it is God Himself who intervened in his life. But for Blackie's timely encounter and proper explanation, Red Kane might have ended up as a mental patient in an asylum. The religious experience when perceived from the point of view of Catholic imagination helps him to acknowledge God as love, confess his guilt, forgive his wife wholeheartedly, and resume his career as columnist. Blackie enables him to forgive and forget the past and to appreciate marriage

as a sacrament. Red Kane is no more ashamed of having left the seminary. In the words of Blackie, when the Lord God “who is a comedian hit Kane over the head with His cosmic baseball bat”(451), he becomes a new man. He is endowed with perception of truth. As he claims, he perceives, “The unity of everything in the universe and his own place in that unity, the certainty that everything would be all right”(14).

As a person reborn, Red Kane looks at his literary career and parental role from a new angle. He believes that the vocation of a journalist is as much sacred as that of a priest. Both the writer and the priest ought to witness to truth, the writer in the media and the priest in the pulpit. The Catholic imagination empowers every Catholic, no matter whether a priest or a layperson, to sanctify the daily life, performing the duties of one’s vocation truthfully in accordance with God’s Will. It is imbibing the spirit of this Catholic teaching that Red Kane instructs the other journalists, “We reporters must realize that even more important than winning prizes is telling the truth”(126). As already stated, it is the combination of faith and reason alone that qualifies a person to make an advice of this kind. Accordingly, he has a better attitude towards the married life than others who do not possess Catholic imagination. Regarding the sanctity of family life and the uniqueness of the laity Red Kane declares, “The priesthood is more important, may be, but that does not mean that the other vocations are any less Catholic or Christian. The new generation of Catholic laity understands that just as the priest’s mission is to the Church, our mission is to the world”(125). It is the obligation of every Catholic priest to cultivate a proper Catholic approach to various walks of life, the truth of which he must derive from Catholic imagination.

When one probes into this novel, he/she comes across two types of priests and two mutually contradictory attitudes towards sex and marriage. The priest who represents those who do not possess the true Catholic imagination tells Eileen in the confessional,

“She [Eileen] is Satan’s instrument of temptation. She wants to drag your soul down into hell”(156). At the same time, Blackie the ideal representative of the Catholic clergy assures Red Kane, “Husband and wife are sacraments of God for one another, the best hint each will ever have in this world for what God is like”(452). Blackie can be seen as a great model for Catholic imagination. He teaches that marriage is a sacrament and it sanctifies both the partners. In order that marriage be a life-long commitment, each partner must practise the ‘patience of a saint’. If priests are saints in the Church the parents are saints of the same status but in the world. God’s design is such that all are called to be saints and this saintliness is to be acquired and perfected through the sanctification of one’s daily duties as ascribed to his or her vocation. When Red Kane realizes that the experience he had is of divine origin, as interpreted by Blackie, his whole life and attitude change completely. As a result, he becomes the resourceful platoon leader, brilliant journalist, fearless crusader, dedicated idealist, zealous Catholic, comforting and challenging father, and loving and demanding husband. Blackie tells this ‘new’ Red Kane, “You are doing the things that a saint does i.e. excelling in the demands of everyday life....If one party in a relationship undergoes a transformation then the other party in that relationship must be transformed too”(449). Truly, one finds Red Kane assuring his wife that “She would try the patience of a saint”(481), without being “afraid of much love”(469), as is the case with many of the inhibited Catholic couples.

Greeley wants all Catholic priests to place on record how and why Blackie conveys flames and fragrance of joy and peace to the family of Red Kane and Eileen. He does this spontaneously and generously, for the Catholic imagination has urged him to appreciate the romantic aspects of life. It is unfortunate, Greeley thinks, that nothing appeals to some priests. They are people who do not possess Catholic imagination and have lost the ability to enjoy anything that “involves joy or pleasure or fun”(330). Hence,

it is very important for the Catholic priests that they remain happy in their ministry and in their dealings with people. Without being a happy person no priest can meaningfully officiate a liturgical celebration, which ought to be a jubilant function. According to Greeley, the priest is a representation of God who is a comedian. To believe in such a God and to be happy in both deeds and words, he needs Catholic imagination. A Catholic priest who fails to realize that the correlation of faith and reason is constituent of Catholic imagination also misses and misunderstands the truth about God and His nature, the sanctity of matrimony, and the worth of his own vocation. This is likely to impoverish the community and incapacitate his own storytelling ministry as an authentic as well as imaginative interpreter of truth.

A very significant insight a Catholic priest has to draw from the study of this novel is that ever since his realization of God, in other words, his recognition of truth in its entirety, Red Kane loves God and his Church. Now, the 'new' Kane goes to St Peter's Church almost every day. He is guided by Catholic imagination and he feels proud of his Catholic identity and the Church for him is at present, a source of inspiration and consolation. Greeley depicts Kane's renewed awareness of the Church in these words, "The only institution in the world that would help him now was the Roman Catholic Church – the real Catholic Church" (444). He almost falls in love with the truth aspect of the Catholic Church and this experience is the product of Catholic imagination, which is composed of, besides other elements, faith and reason. All the parishners whom the Catholic priest has to lead to holiness have the right to be and the possibility of becoming Church's lovers and Christ's partners. A priest cannot do this if he himself is not endowed with the blessings of the merging of faith and reason which alone enables him to be true to his vocation and to be creatively responding to the dictates and challenges of Catholic imagination as one finds Red Kane doing in the novel.

The next book, the third one to be studied, in detail, is *Happy are Those who Mourn* (1995), a novel in which Greeley presents his chief protagonist Bishop Blackie Ryan, the auxiliary of Cardinal Sean Cronin, as one who struggles hard in his search for truth and one who will never rest, nor will he ever relent, until he finds out truth. In his pursuit after truth he never yields to favouritism or any temptations. Besides being a successful Bishop beyond any allegation, Blackie as a detective of high reputation, is an expert in unfolding mysteries. As a priest committed to God, the Ultimate Truth, Blackie considers it his duty to fight against falsehood, to eradicate misunderstandings and establish truth, and thereby bring about fulfilment in individual's life and better relationship among individuals. Monsignor Charles P. McInerney, who has been priest in charge of the parish for Saints Peter and Paul belonging to the Archdiocese of Chicago, is found lying dead in his own room. Apparently, it is just a case of heart attack. At the request of the Cardinal Sean Cronin, Blackie launches on his own investigation and comes out with shocking results. Blackie proves that McInerney is murdered by another resident priest, Joe O' Keefe. In Joe's case, one finds a priest going after wealth instead of God the truth, and eventually, becoming a murderer. His moral deterioration is the proclamation of the evangelical truth, "No man can serve two masters,...you cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6: 24). Blackie the Catholic priest, by means of his rational investigation arrives at truth, vindicates that truth will win in the end, and thereby preaches the Catholic faith that God is truth. In all his ventures and calculations as Greeley's ideal portrayal of the priesthood, Blackie is moved by his Catholic imagination. Blackie is Greeley's spokesman as well as the loudspeaker of the Catholic Church. He seems to preach that a Catholic priest must always be searching after truth and in this endeavour he is best supported by a merging of faith and reason.

Technically, priests are ministers of the Word of God. At the same time they are not only preachers of the Gospels, but also, the custodians of the property of the parish. They are accountable before God as well as men with regard to the proper utilization of the assets of the parish. It seems that McInerney is not serious about the financial affairs of the parish. He entrusts everything with the trustees. His friends handle the money. Being blowhard investors (60) they make enormous profit. Seeing them misappropriating Church money, one cannot but accuse McInerney of irresponsibility and lack of involvement in the parish activities. Blackie's investigation brings to light some more facts about this priest. The most shocking one is that while serving as a Chaplain in the United States Navy at Pusan, he loved and impregnated Lynn (169). One has serious doubts about the authenticity of McInerney's vocation. Lynn reveals to Blackie, "He did say once that he had never wanted to be a priest, but he had no choice" (172). The fact that McInerney is a priest is against both faith and reason. He does not seem to have faith in the meaning and efficacy of the sacraments. For, once to Lynn, who confesses her sins, McInerney gives permission to commit adultery (173). All these considered together, one must conclude that this priest is not fully faithful to his pastoral duties, to his law of celibacy and other priestly responsibilities. In short, he is lacking in the combination of faith and reason. For long years, McInerney does not have good contact with his Archbishop, which prompts one to think that he is unmindful of the demands of obedience. McInerney is always deadly against changes in the parish. He enjoys the company of a few rich and selected families. The vast majority of the people remain neglected and frustrated. Greeley comments that this priest is, perhaps, a great man with a tragic flaw (64).

Blackie reveals a lot about the character of Father Joe, who murders McInerney, his life-long friend, striking at the head with a candlestick. Blackie recovers the two

wills, prepared by McInerney. In the first one, he assigns all possession to McInerney Trust and a half million dollars to Joe. Later, he finds that Joe is taking bribes and getting pay offs from the trustees. So, in the second will, he denounces Joe to the Cardinal and recommends him to jail. This provokes and disappoints Joe so much that he murders his all-time priestly friend in the most 'unpriestly' manner. Joe is so fond of making money that he encourages the trustees to misappropriate the property of the Church. He does not submit accounts, records and taxes to the Chancery. Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus, his master, only once. Here is a priest destined to serve the Church and protect her interests including the property, joins hands with the trustees, knowing that they are plundering the Church. Joe is not in possession of either Catholic faith or Catholic imagination. He does not have 'truth which will set people free'. Joe is a mere slave of money which turns him to be a murderer, that too, that of a priest. In the absence of truth, he has forged money, faked accounts and finally, spoilt his life. Greeley warns all priests that those who undermine the triple priestly virtues/vows, as it happened in the lives of McInerney and Joe, are likely to go astray from the path of truth which is sustained by Catholic imagination.

Blackie finishes his investigation successfully. He is an embodiment of faith and reason fused together in the right proportion. He is Greeley's ideal priest. His awareness of Catholic imagination and employment of faith and reason enable him to trace the murderer and succeeds in making Joe confess his sins. Blackie manages things in such a way that Joe has no escape. Blackie is so truthful that the due amount of money is returned to the Chancery. When everything is settled, the poltergeist phenomena, too, come to a pause. There are many complaints against McInerney and Joe. They never love and serve the people. The faithful cannot love these priests. Just to cite one more example, as Sister Mary Rita informs Blackie, McInerney never permitted his people to

love him (141). But Blackie has intimate relationship with his people. He is a graceful and prayerful priest and, at the same time, an able administrator and truthful investigator. He marvels at the amount of trust the lay people put in a priest. After listening to Lynn, he says, “Not for the first time in my years as a priest did I marvel at the ease with which married women will entrust the most intimate details of their lives to a celibate priest” (179). He is very careful to maintain a healthy relationship with women and is always a supporter of women empowerment. Blackie loves women, for, God loves them. And his attitude to them is evident in what he tells Lynn, “Do you not think that God, like any lover, enjoys your attractiveness?...Because She made you to look beautiful” (203).

As a priest, Blackie loves his parishioners so much that he misses them intensely whenever he has to be in other places as part of his investigations. In his own words, “I suddenly realized how much I missed my own parish and my own people” (132). These words remind one of what Greeley writes in *My Love: Prayer Journal* (1971) about his relationship with his own parish. In his words, “But I do record here how much I like the parish and how much I admire those who work in them with patience and grace” (50). In short, Blackie is one who has imbibed the spirit of the correlation of faith and reason. In other words, Blackie remains as an exemplary and successful priest due to the Catholic imagination which accompanies his pursuit after truth. The power of imagination which is guided by the forces of faith and reason, dictates answers to him for mysterious questions. For instance, he senses where the wills are, even before he sees them. In his words, “I was also fairly certain I knew where the wills were” (258). This is because there is a merging of faith and reason in Blackie’s personality. What Greeley writes about his own priestly life in *Priests: A Calling in Crisis* (2004) seems to be equally applicable in the case of Blackie, namely, “In the interest of full disclosure I am a

heterosexual celibate, happy in the priesthood, and with no intention of leaving, not even if (when) they try to drive me out” (13).

Towards the end of the novel, at Blackie’s insistence, Joe confesses his murder. Blackie has no other interest except that truth must succeed. He tells, “The truth had to be told Joe. The truth that makes all free, the truth which enables God’s love finally break into your bitter heart” (284-285). Blackie never wants Joe to be punished. What he aims at is truth and not revenge. In Blackie’s words, “He has no right to demand vengeance. That right ...is reserved to God. The Monsignor has the right to truth”(270). Greeley’s message seems to be that any Catholic priest must be motivated by pure thirst for truth and he should always remember that because of his sinful nature he is prone to go astray after money, fame and bad company. And in this task the Catholic priest is empowered and guided by nothing but Catholic imagination.

An immediate inquiry into McInerney’s death/murder is urged by the poltergeist phenomena. When Blackie unveils the mystery behind this, all such signs come to a cease. Along with falsehood, chaos and disturbances of all kinds prevail in this novel. But as Blackie establishes truth, in Greeley’s words, “The room is filled with sensations of relief, peace and gratitude” (288). Blackie is Greeley’s portrayal of an exemplary Catholic priest who appears to be a source of joy and happiness to all those who are in distress. The duty of a priest is continuing the healing and consoling ministry of Jesus, the Son of God, who is, in Greeley’s words, “really a nurse” (285). Even today no one either expects or respects a priest who is not a source of solace and strength to others. For this, he needs his reason to probe into the problems, and faith to arrive at solutions from a Catholic point of view, which is impossible without Catholic imagination.

In Blackie’s search for truth, he is amply helped by some priests like Finnegan. The Chancery provides him with all the documents and relevant records. The collective

activity of the Church personnel bears fruit. The result is that finally even Joe, the murderer regains peace and dies in reconciliation with all. Blackie also succeeds in retrieving ten million dollars missing in the Church funds, which he truthfully returns to the Archdiocese, in tact. The person who helps Blackie best is the woman character, Lynn Reed, who in Blackie's words is, "One of the most remarkable women I have ever met. I am sure God is very proud of you as a brave and resilient daughter" (208). When McInerney, the priest, neglects all accounts and makes the parish sleepy for three decades, and Joe the priest-murderer misappropriates money, Greeley's ideal woman, Reed, remains always an honest person and shines like truth itself, and redeems all others reminding us of God Himself. Greeley attributes the failure of both McInerney and Joe, the priests, to their neglect of Catholic imagination, but, he highlights the figure of Reed as fulfilling the priestly role of finding out the truth which she does better than many priests, and may be, only, second to Blackie, the auxiliary Bishop. Thus the novel presents Reed as God's sign, a happy sign too, for all those who mourn, for various reasons, justifying Greeley's title, *Happy are Those Who Mourn*.

Every Catholic priest has an added responsibility to tell the truth and to exhort others to be truthful. "Thou shall not tell lies" is one of the Ten Commandments. Unfortunately, both history and tradition have been polluted by elements of falsehood, exaggerations and prejudices. Some historical facts are either misunderstood or falsely recorded or misinterpreted. Hence, the Catholic Church according to Greeley has the duty and right to purify these distorted areas. One finds Dermot and Nuala, the hero and heroine of all his Irish novels, highlighting and re-interpreting some tragic episodes from the Irish history in the novels, *Irish Whiskey* (1978), *Irish Gold* (1995), *Irish Lace* (1996), *Irish Mist* (1999), *Irish Eyes* (2000), *Irish Love* (2001), and *Irish Stew!* (2003). They act jointly, assisted by a priest, by name George, who always struggles for seeking truth.

Each of these novels is a dual success in the sense that not only do they unveil a past mystery but also they do solve a contemporary problem. In addition to their detective intuition, dedicated collaboration, relentless and adventurous spirit, both Dermot and Nuala are moved by their Catholic imagination. The analysis of the fourth novel, *Irish Gold*, will convince one how Greeley's protagonists, no matter whether one is a priest or a lay person, perform their prophetic role of knowing, loving and promulgating truth by rectifying historical errors and misunderstandings.

Irish Gold is an inquiry into identifying the real murderer of Michael Collins, the Head of the Irish Free State, Commander of the army and undisputed guerilla leader, who has been killed ironically on a peace mission in his own place, on August 22, 1922. One month later, another leader by name Daniel Kelly gets killed. Immediately after Kelly's assassination, Dermot's grandparents, Liam O' Riada and Nell Pat leave Ireland forever. Dermot and Nuala are destined to find out whether their grandparents were involved in any or both of these murders. They play their respective roles of Watson and Holmes to assess the association of their grandparents with the Irish rebellion especially, the tragic deaths of Collins and Kelly. The couples arrive at the truth mostly guided by Dermot's brother George, the priest, and the clipping got from his grandmother's archives. They discover that Collin's death was ordered by none other than Churchill himself who always wanted to aggravate violence, problems and riots in Ireland so that the Irish people would always feel the need of English hegemony over them. When they go on with their probe into Irish history most of the people cherish the idea that Collins is killed in an encounter between various rebel groups, and nobody suspects the direct involvement of Churchill. Hence, the couples are torchbearers who shed light into the hidden historical events enshrined in ignorance and mystery. They succeed in correcting the misinterpreted episodes in history. They regard it as an essential duty of their Catholic call.

Another finding of great significance made by the protagonists is that Dermot's grandparents are directly responsible for the murder of Kelly, which they did, when they realized that Kelly was really a traitor. Both of them leave Ireland for Chicago, as it was dangerous for them to remain there after having killed Kelly. To their great pride and joy the couples realize that Dermot's grandparents are real patriots who risked their own lives to make Ireland free. Visiting Liam and Nell Pat at home, General Mulcahy comments "Its no exaggeration to say that you have played an important and critical part in winning Ireland its freedom"(412). At the outset of the novel, Dermot fears that the disappearance of his grandparents is a cause of shame and sign of being traitors. When the novel reaches its climax, as truth is revealed, the same grandparents assume the position of a heroic and patriotic pair. Thus, truth sheds new light and it transforms our attitude to people and things around us. It enables one to approach history from a new angle. In the face of truth ignorance disappears and people are freed. For example, Nell Pat feels greatly relieved from the sense of guilt as Dermot and Nuala prove that Churchill himself is responsible for murdering Collins and that the grandparents are totally innocent.

For their discovery of truth, the couples feel mainly indebted to priest George and in the end, to the Bishop of Galway, named Edward Patrick Hayes. It is George who provides investigators with necessary documents and relevant books. It is Edward, the Bishop, who takes steps to handover the criminals who were trying to endanger the couples, to the police. Both Edward and George are custodians of truth. Both of them manifest a healthy mixture of faith and reason in their pastoral ministry as well as their dealing with Dermot and Nuala. In the words of Nell Pat, George, the young priest is, "so kind and understanding"(344). After their encounter with Edward, the Bishop, Nuala asks Dermot, "If all the priests were like him, we'd have a grand Church, wouldn't we now?"(434). In these words Greeley is making an earnest appeal to priests all over the

world to equip themselves with faith as well as reason, the combination of which forms the first component of Catholic imagination. Each Catholic priest who is endowed with this Catholic imagination ought to emulate George, the priest, who enables the couples to know the truth and Edward, the Bishop, who takes the criminals to task for trying to do away with the truth-finders.

Together with unfolding the mystery regarding the murders of Collins and Kelly, the protagonists also recover the gold collection in accordance with the instruction of Nell Pat who had seen it, seven decades ago, near the crevice, at a cave, in an old shrine called 'The Little Cell of Patrick'. Liam and Nell pat learn that Kelly gets money from England for perpetuating violence in Ireland. They leave Ireland after killing Kelly but without taking the collection of gold. They fear that if the freedom fighters get it, they will use it for making guns. Now, Dermot and Nuala recover this collection of gold disarming all enemies. What is more significant about this treasure hunt is the way in which they spend this huge amount of money and that is what relates it to the title of this chapter. They decide to donate the whole amount for educational needs and employment purposes. Education aims at attaining truth, appealing to reason. Catholic education presents God as the Ultimate Truth and gives great importance to faith. In other words, it can be rightly said that Dermot and Nuala spend the money to promote truth, in general, and faith, in particular. They are moved by Catholic imagination. That is why they promote education in order to propagate the merging of faith and reason. Money is to be spent for the right and noble causes. There is no cause greater than education because it is pursuit after truth.

Many youngsters take to arms, quit truth and degrade themselves as followers of falsehood, for temporary motives mostly when and because they are unemployed. So, the problem of unemployment is instrumental to many of the anti-social activities.

Employment makes the people goal-oriented, responsible and it keeps people engaged. They feel committed to their family and a factory or to their work-site. Such persons are not easily drawn to be bloody revolutionaries as the unemployed ones who being aimless and hopeless, are ready to undertake any mean means. Greeley never supports the violent bloodshed that marks the history of Ireland, though he is of Irish origin. He seems to believe that if youngsters are aware of their true identity, they will be responsible and useful to the Church, the society and the family. And a work-culture teaches all to be true to one's profession and to be honest in all transactions. Greeley expresses his sympathy for the unemployed young people in these words, "Still there's all those poor kids with their college degrees and no work. May be the money would help some of them"(468). Hence, the decision of Dermot and Nuala to spend the treasure for the employment purposes is an avowal of the value of truth in all human relations and institutions, and at the same time an expression of Greeley's own disapproval of violence in Ireland.

Irish Gold does not teach the value of gold, rather, it upholds the excellence of truth. Whereas, Kelly and other traitors cover up truth, and betray their own country for accumulating wealth, Dermot and Nuala never care for money and do not make any claim for the treasure they have discovered. One finds them selling gold and using the money for educational needs. Thus Greeley, the priest, is actually preaching the idea that truth is superior to money and what is needed is to give education in order to divulge truth and not to store gold. Without possessing Catholic imagination, it is possible that the priest, like any other person, may prefer worshiping wealth and enjoying the worldly pleasures to following honestly the path of God and truth.

Greeley presents Collins "as a man sent by God to free Ireland" (182). Since truth is liberative in nature, each person to be true to oneself ought to stand for freedom and fight against dictatorship and all kinds of oppressive forces. In Greeley's opinion, all

those who believe that God is truth, and especially, the Catholic priests who have to teach this theological truth must join hands with others for establishing and preserving peace and freedom in the country. As George, the priest, assists the hero and heroine in finding out the truth and to the police, the couples are in fact taking part in the process of making Ireland free from the clutches of England. But, Greeley never makes any of them taking a leading role in the violent uprising.

In a way, *Irish Gold* is an exposition of what Jesus has taught, namely, God is truth. Hence, the novel refers to the nature of that God who is truth. The faithful have to believe in a true God, to be true believers. Such a faith should not be contrary to reason. As has already been stated, Greeley with the help of his Catholic imagination presents some aspects of God's nature, that too in a very unconventional manner. Though God is the source of all wisdom and truth, and He takes great interest in His creatures despite their ignorance and weaknesses, He is beyond human understanding. While talking in the pub near Trinity College Dublin, Nuala asks Dermot, "What kind of a God would it be that would waste His time on the like of us? God if there is God, shouldn't give a good fock about us silly humans" (19). This and similar questions emerge from their reason. Then, faith provides them with the answer that God actually cares for them in spite of their unworthiness. It is the Catholic imagination, which relates faith and reason, and gives them a satisfactory solution in such a situation.

According to the Catholic Church, the Omniscient God is Almighty, as well. If so, it is reasonable to ask why such a God permits evil and misery. The priest, usually, finds this question almost embarrassing. In the novel under study, Dermot raises the same question, why God lets these things happen. Then George, his brother priest, gives this answer, "One thing you can count on, however, is that God hurts for as much as you do. More, in fact"(77). In these words, Greeley portrays God as a vulnerable one, a suffering

one. One who does not believe in the crucified Christ or one who is without Catholic imagination cannot agree with such a picturing of God. Again, *Irish Gold*, very daringly holds the view that God, who is truth, is also pure goodness and totality of gratuitous love. Dermot tries to convince Nuala of this tenet of Catholic faith that God is loving and lovable, in these words, "My brother George, who is a priest, says that God is as much womanly as manly" (84).

The Catholic Church teaches that God, who loves us, also forgives all our sins. True love is indeed, always forgiving. As Saint Paul teaches, "Charity suffereth long and is kind, ... but rejoiceth in the truth" (1 Corinthians 13: 4-6). This forgiving aspect of God is powerfully presented by Greeley while depicting the murder of Kevin O' Higgins, a great leader of the Irish civil war. At the time of breathing his last, Kevin tells his murderer, "I understand why you had to do it. Don't worry about it. I forgive you" (475). These words remind one of what Jesus said, while dying on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34). Thus, it can be said, as already hinted more than once, that *Irish Gold* is more about God than about gold. It is an exposition of God as truth and that of His nature as loving and forgiving. The contents of Catholic faith are presented before human reason in an attractive manner, using Catholic imagination without which neither a priest nor a layperson can believe and claim who God is and what His nature is. That is why Greeley always insists on the correlation between faith and reason.

The combination of faith and reason should not be regarded as the only one idea Greeley presents in *Irish Gold* and other novels in which Dermot and Nuala are chief protagonists. For the success of the novel and that of the couple's mission many a combination is at work. As Greeley himself is a merging of a priest, who is characterized by spiritual powers, and a professor, who is marked by rational faculty, and one is

imperfect and insufficient without the other, the Catholic imagination demands that the right and the right woman must get united in marriage. Ma says in the novel, “Dermot Michael will be a great man, but only if he meets a right woman”(467). Both Dermot and Nuala are invested with Catholic faith. Compared to Nuala, Dermot has more reason and physical strength. Nuala has more imaginative and intuitive gifts than her husband. None of them can win any race in isolation, but united, they are perfect and they achieve everything. It is the unifying strength and the comprehensive vision of the Catholic imagination that make Greeley, one person in whom all his ministerial and professional talents merge together. The same Catholic imagination holds the couples together as one in all their endeavours. And they cannot but be victorious.

As in the case of Dermot and Nuala, there is a harmonious blending of two elements, in the life of a Catholic priest. There should be a proper merging of both faith and reason, saturated with Catholic imagination in a right proportion. As far as Greeley is concerned, the union of Dermot and Nuala is so intense and inseparable that it is suggestive of divine, Trinitarian love. In the words of George, the priest, human love, as in the case of Dermot and Nuala, “Gives us a hint of God’s love” (261). The mutual inevitability of faith and reason also must be of the same intensity and when seasoned with Catholic imagination the priestly life will be a manifestation of God’s love. This idea portrayed in *Irish Gold* is reflected in all other Irish novels of Greeley in which Dermot and Nuala play the main roles.

The last novel to be studied, at length, in this chapter is *White Smoke* (1997) which is one of the novels written by Greeley on Papal election, the other one being *The Making of The Pope* (2005). In *White Smoke*, Greeley is apparently concerned about the events which culminate in electing Emilio Menendez Garzia as the new Pope who assumes the name John XXIV. The basic message of the novel is that truth will surpass all set backs

and that what the Catholic Church needs at present is transparency in everything. This novel highlights the victory and glory of truth and predicts the doom of all evil forces bent on destroying or obstructing truth and it is precisely because of the emphasis on truth an analysis of *White Smoke* is included in this section.

The appearance of white smoke announces the emergence of a new Pope and it symbolizes a new Church, a transparent Church that necessitates a transformation from black to white, or from old to new. The first address of the Pope John XXIV is vibrant with newness and an air of renewal. He is determined to give utmost priority to truth. He knows truth, he loves truth and he will see to it that truth prevails in the Church for which he will put an end to all the old practices, which were against the spirit of truth. The first point he insists is transparency in everything. In the Church there will be no more secrecy, which perpetuates abuse of power and corruption. He will not rest till he terminates vicious backbiting and defamation in the Vatican Curia. The new Pope confesses that the Church's secrecy in the past has proved to be counterproductive. He will never tolerate any intrigue or cut throat politics in the Curia. He is determined to action against all the officers in the Curia who have been making enormous profit investing in foreign banks, incurring huge loss to Vatican. By presenting the new Pope, Greeley is challenging all Catholics, especially, all the clergy to be transparent in everything so that they can represent God who is truth itself; which is possible only when they enrich their deeds and words with the combination of faith and reason.

White Smoke presents the new Pope who proclaims the message of love and forgiveness. Greeley is hopeful that the world will listen to the words of the new Supreme Pontiff. He gives the example of Dennis and Patty, the latter of whom is the Chicago anchor to Vatican to cover the conclave. Now, they remain divorced. But, they happen to stay at the Hassler, during the conclave, and get an occasion for them to come

together. Surprisingly, they ask pardon and launch a new life. She tells him, “Lovers should always be ready to apologize” (59). As the world gets a new Pope, a loving reconciliation and a new life take place between Dennis and Patty. Later, Dennis tells about Patty that she is, “My guardian angel” (154). Though late, the reunited lovers begin to realize in their new life, God’s great love as assured by the new Pope, John XXIV (436). Greeley wants to convince the readers that the papal election is the inauguration of a new era not only for the Church but also for all the families and the individuals residing in it. What the Church teaches officially has to be put into practice by the community of believers. Family is the place where the children train themselves how to be loving and forgiving in daily life. The parents have to set a good example for their children. In this respect, Greeley appreciates the decision of Dennis and Patty to live together and to practise and teach the truth about the loving and forgiving nature of God as revealed by Catholic imagination. It is the duty of each Catholic priest to motivate the parents to be good examples in their families.

As declared by John XXIV, the new Pope, in his inaugural address, the most basic message of the Church is God’s love and His infinite forgiveness, which is in perfect agreement with Catholic faith and imagination. *White Smoke* reveals that this essential truth is violated in Vatican itself. Instead of witnessing to the truth, the kingmakers in Vatican, ironically and unfortunately, seem to be spreading falsehood. For example, Don Louis is really, a pioneer of decentralization and pluralism for the Church. But, they distort facts, manipulate things and, as a result, the media project him as a bad administrator. This is inhuman and totally uncatholic. Criticizing this corrupt situation, CNN comments, “Catholics believe that the Holy Spirit influences the outcome of conclaves. Just now it would seem She has Her work cut out for Her if She is to overcome Vatican corruption” (55). A corrupt system cannot be expected to preach the

ideals of truth and honesty. Hence, the insistence of the new Pope on transparency is the need of the hour. It is really marvelous that Don Louis survive all the allegations and false propaganda against him, and comes out victorious. It is to be noted that he never harbours any hostility against those who involved in nasty politics in connection with his election. Since he is determined to renew the face of the earth, he puts into practice the ideals of love and truth which he stressed in the maiden address. He deals with all of them, with dignity and nobility, radiating the true nature of the loving God.

As Greeley repeatedly claims, it is the combination of faith and reason that enables a human person to arrive at truth. Most of the Greelean characters are in possession of a high degree of imagination which acts in agreement with Catholic faith, and also some special insight or inspiration or revelation dawns in their minds. There are plenty of such instances in the lives of Dermot, Nuala and Bishop Blackie. These gifts empower them to find out truth and to solve mysteries. In *White Smoke*, Dennis exhibits similar skills. For example, towards the end of the novel, he suddenly feels that something is wrong. He says, "Something gnawed at my mind. Something was wrong. What was it? What the hell was wrong? Then I realized what the hell was wrong" (429). In no time he alerts others, and Mark who was about to trigger his rifle at the new Pope is disarmed, and a tragedy is averted. Thus Catholic imagination provides Greeley's favourite characters with clues and suggestions which assist them in the process of recognizing truth and solving problems. These insights spontaneously flow from the imagination of the character, which is always guided by the Catholic faith. Hence, the Catholic priests who advise the people not to tell lies, must also motivate them to develop their imagination together with their rational faculties, but, in the context of Catholic faith.

There are many people who wrongly think that the Catholic Church is opposing all progressive ideas and modern ways of living. Of course, the Church cannot give up her

fundamental theological teachings and her universal heritage. But, it is unjust to argue that Church will never change. According to Greeley, if the Church does not change, as fast as the people expect her, it is not exclusively owing to the unwillingness and orthodoxy of the Pope. It is not because the Catholic message is irrelevant to the contemporary world. He draws our attention to some individuals and institutions in and around Vatican who are deadly against all changes, as part of perpetuating their own vested interests. *White Smoke* mentions Corpus Christi Institute, a secret ultraconservative Catholic society which is involved in large financial enterprises. It is a rich, secretive and reactionary organization of priests and lay people. Their primary aim is nothing but maintaining their business empire. They see to it that the new Pope never changes the policy of the Church. This institute holds a great say in deciding and directing the policies of Vatican and its relationships with other countries. Greeley explains in *White Smoke* how they do it.

As one finds in the novel, Corpus Christi Institute influences the media and it even tarnishes the personality of the papal candidate, who, it fears, if elected, will not comply with its views and intentions. It does not hesitate to deny the basic human rights to a candidate if he is unacceptable to the Institute. One must also remember that the Pope's physician, his press spokesman and many of his financial advisors are members of this Institute. The new Pope will have to struggle hard to make those big-shots accountable and honest, which is possible only by a truthful combination of faith and reason, in the context of Catholic imagination. That means, it is neither truth nor faith that motivates them, rather, it is money. Yet, Greeley hopes that John XXIV will be able to introduce some drastic changes to the structure and the administration of the Church.

This analysis of *White Smoke* becomes all the more relevant when one considers the vision and mission of the Catholic Church. As the new Pope explains, the Church is

not an end in itself but a means of spreading the message of love (436). The Church must promote both the faith and reason. She is the custodian of truth as well as its interpreter. Church is the terrestrial sacrament of God who is truth itself. Hence, it is a must that the Church has to be transparent in everything as the new Pope pledges to. But, fact is stronger than fiction. Sometimes, one finds less of truth and more of falsehood in some areas of Church, which is possible because she is run by human hands. As Patty, one of the leading characters in the novel, regrets, “The Church doesn’t need truth. It needs faith and obedience” (223). In the words of Dennis, Patty’s husband, for too many centuries Catholics have hidden the truth in the name of protecting the Church and maintaining discipline in the Church. Hence, Cronin and Dennis, the trusted collaborators of the new Pope, declare that the challenge before the Church is that “the truth must be told” (243). Because, the Church has been founded by Jesus Christ in order to preach the Gospel truth all over the world.

When the leaders of the Church in their craze for law and order forget the message of love they make the Church an object of idolatry. Such people are not guided by Catholic imagination. Rather, they are carried away by the enticements of money and power and not by the requirements of faith and imagination. And as everybody knows power corrupts and absolute power absolutely corrupts (6). This is a favourite description of Greeley figuring in many of his novels, and was originally uttered by Lord Acton. Referring to this counter-witnessing plight of the Church, Bishop Blackie, Greeley’s Sherlock Holmes, comments, “The Church is more often good theatre these days than good religion” (80). Any way, the new Pope’s first priority is remedying this situation by resorting to the employment of the merging of faith and reason, one of the important components of Catholic imagination.

In the Catholic Church both the clergy and lay people have the obligation as part of their prophetic role in the Church to abide by the truth and fight against all evil forces which try to obstruct the truth. In the pursuit of establishing truth both prayer and work are necessary. This is how the new Pope outlives various setbacks both before and after his election to Papacy. Dennis and Patty are media persons. They are lay people. But they play a decisive role in the election of John XXIV. Cronin and Blackie are mainly instrumental to his success as well as the victory of truth. Laura Silvestri, who saves the life of the new Pope, and thereby, the Church, from the telescopic rifle of Mark, the murderer, is a laywoman. According to Greeley, these people are guided by their Catholic imagination and that is why they risk their lives and fight for truth virtuously and heroically. Timothy Ignatius Williams, the rival candidate to papacy and his allies resort to all mean methods and manipulations both inside and outside the conclave of the Cardinals. In spite of the false propaganda and physical assaults organized by this evil group for their own vested interests, Menendez is elected because he is on the side of truth. He and his fans give importance to faith and reason. *White Smoke* is intended to teach that by a right combination of faith and reason every person can disarm the forces of darkness and lead a righteous life. In perceiving the problems and providing solutions for them the new Pope is inspired by his Catholic imagination.

Pope John XXIV who upholds transparency as the best policy first applies it to his own life. His opponents accuse him of having married in younger days and demands that he must be disqualified. A married Pope is “a disgrace to our Church” (295). Menendez calls a press conference and makes a public confession and he makes it clear that his legally wedded wife and their children died in a plane crash at the Madrid airport. Thus, all others realize his transparency and assure their sympathy and support. The Curia people are backfired. Any authentic person if he/she is true to oneself cannot but be

transparent. This should be an ideal for all people especially, the Catholic priests. As Greeley repeats in this novel, one can be in error at times, but never in doubt. The Catholic priest has to be a lover of truth by living the truth, never leaving it. It is his duty to train others to do the same, by his own exemplary life. In accomplishing this task the Catholic priest must find essentially the correlation of faith and reason. Without this, no one can realize how grave a sin it is, not to know the truth and not to tell the truth. This recalls to one's mind the comments of Dennis, as Cardinal Fletcher who heads the Vatican's Prefecture of Economic Affairs denies even the possibility of a financial scandal. He says, "Either the Cardinal is not telling the truth...or he doesn't know the truth"(397). Greeley's message seems to be that the Catholic priests should know the truth and tell the truth for which they essentially require the blessings of Catholic imagination.

White Smoke also contains detailed discussions on the necessity of Catholic imagination. Some of the questions dealt with in this novel are how the Catholic Church conveys truth, how the Catholic imagination works, and why Catholics stay in the Church despite all the scandals. Greeley's oft-repeated stand-point figuring in this and many other novels can be summarized as, "Once a Catholic, always a Catholic". Blackie tells Cronin that the Catholics like being Catholic and what they most like in the Catholic Church is the stories or the Catholic sensibility that begins with the Christmas crib. He concludes, "But if you want to understand Catholics – and if Catholics want to understand themselves – the starting point is to comprehend the enormous appeal of that sensibility. It's the stories" (458). In short the truth of Catholicism cannot be grasped except by Catholic sensibility or Catholic imagination. And this assimilation is impossible without making use of the correlation between faith and reason, which expresses itself in the name and form of truth of which the hallmark is always transparency.

The very first page of this novel alone is sufficient to convince the readers of the pedagogic interest of Greeley, namely, stating that the priest has to preach truth and that he must witness to transparency and that the Church has to be true to Christ and transparent in all her dealings. With this end in view Greeley cites two statements; one belongs to Pope Leo XIII who said, “The Catholic Church has nothing to fear from the Truth” and Pope John Paul II owns the other statement, “The Catholic Church should be made from Walls of glass”. The novel makes it clear that the Catholic Church has suffered a lot in the past for neglecting faith and reason, which was equal to denying the role of Catholic imagination. *White Smoke*, hence, is a warning given to all Catholic priests not to repeat the same mistake in the contemporary period.

Before winding up this discussion on *White Smoke*, I am bound to make a casual reference to three other books of Greeley because of the similarity of ideas presented in them. One is *The Making of the Pope* (2005), which is Greeley’s account of the proceedings of the papal election of Benedict XVI on April 19, 2005. The first Encyclical Letter of the new Pope, published on December 25, 2005 is entitled *God is Love*. His first Apostolic Exhortation, published on February 22, 2007, is on the Eucharist and it is named *The Sacrament of Love*. It means the message of the Pope of *White Smoke* that the Church is a means for spreading the message of love, holds good even now. The other books mentioned here are two novels, *Fall from Grace* (1994) and *The Priestly Sins* (2004), in which Greeley makes a strong appeal to the leaders of Church to be transparent in one particular area. Both these novels are analyzed in the last chapter. Written against the background of child abuse cases against some priests in America, these novels compel the authorities not to deny and cover up these cases in order to protect the alleged priests. In Greeley’s opinion, such priests must not be assigned in new positions without

undergoing proper treatment. Anyway, these books uphold the necessity of having a truthful or apparent attitude to reality and condemn the policy of secrecy.

White Smoke can also be said to be a manifestation of Greeley's own expectation of a renewed Church. A causal reference to some of the non-fictional works of Greeley reveals how much he is always preoccupied with ways and means of saving the Church from the chain of her current crises. In his book, *How to Save the Catholic Church* (1984), written in collaboration with Mary Greeley Durkin, one reads, "Catholicism will be saved when we all realize that the local church be it a parish, a college, Newman Center, or a young-adults religions community- is the heart of Catholic Church for most Catholics" (165). About the bright future of the Church, Greeley writes in *The making of the Pope* (2005), "A church that, according to his [Pope John Paul II] teachings and example, looks with serenity to the past and is not afraid of the future. With the Great Jubilee the Church was introduced into the new millennium" (202). One of the recent studies conducted about the religious attitude of the Americans has proved beyond doubt that Greeley's claims are well founded. *Time*, published on November 6, 2006, reports that more than 85% of Americans follow a Christian faith and that only 5% do not believe in anything beyond the physical world (32). Hence, as the novelist dreams, the new Pope has, certainly, immense scope for better service in brighter future.

Having made an analysis of all the five novels, now a recapitulation is to be made. *Ascent into Hell*, the first novel discussed in this chapter proves that one cannot embrace the fulness of truth without finding out the genuine vocation which God has destined for each one. The attainment of truth and the acceptance of the vocation are possible only through the correlation of faith and reason. This theme is illustrated in the story of Hugh Dunlon who leaves priesthood and marries Maria, his real lover, and experiences

fulfilment in life. This novel appeals to all priests to highlight the necessity of the correlation between faith and reason in their preaching.

The second novel *Patience of a Saint* narrates how Redmond P. Kane realises truth by means of a religious experience through the priestly assistance of Blackie. Kane is transformed into a new person in the light of Blackie's interpretation of his strange experience. All operations of Blackie, especially his investigations and interpretations, are motivated by the correlation of faith and reason, and oriented towards grasping the truth by solving the mysteries. This novel teaches that no one can comprehend truth without employing the correlation of faith and reason. Hence, in order to be an ideal one like Blackie, each Catholic priest shall make use of this correlation at all realms of priestly ministry and also enable the lay people to lead a life in accordance with the same correlation.

Happy are Those Who Mourn is an account of Blackie, Greeley's ideal priest, resorting to the correlation of faith and reason, arrives at truth and solves the mystery regarding the murder of Monsignor Charles P. McInerney. The novelist regrets and condemns how Father Joe Keefe, who is ordained to be an interpreter of truth and is assigned to assist others to find out the Ultimate Truth God or as God, degenerates to be a murderer as a result of his neglect of faith, truth and Catholic imagination. This novel illustrates that Blackie, the priest who follows the correlation of faith and reason is a blessing to the clergy, whereas Joe who does not abide by the demands of this correlation is a shame to all the priests. In short, to be in possession of truth and to be a truthful priest, one must faithfully follow the way of the correlation of faith and reason.

Irish Gold, the fourth novel, is a successful attempt of Greeley to trace the real villain behind the murder of Michael Collins. The investigation launched by Dermot and Nuala is accelerated by the proper combination of faith and reason, and they attain truth.

During the course of their inquiry, both the protagonists appear to be strong in Catholic faith and faithful to Catholic imagination. The novel reveals that the treasure of gold, they have recovered, will be spent for educational and employment purposes. The novel thus is a glorification of truth, for recognizing which there is no better method other than the correlation of faith and reason. Greeley, hereby, is exhorting the Catholic priests to give due importance to this component of the Catholic imagination in their ministry.

The last novel analyzed in this chapter is *White Smoke*. In and through reporting the election of Pope John XXIV, Greeley is upholding the supremacy of truth and the inevitability of transparency in everything. The novel is nothing less than a ban on all evil practices that have obstructed or disfigured truth in the history of the Church, especially, in her administrative realm. Blackie, the ideal priest, and Dennis and Patty a pair of ideal parents, known for their commitment to the correlation of faith and reason supercede all back biting and partialities as practised by some top figures in Vatican, and succeed in getting Emilio Menendez Garcia elected, who assumes the title, John XXIV. The new Pope inaugurates a new era of renewal, dedicated to truth and transparency. This priority of truth over everything else and the proposed revival can emerge only out of the correlation between faith and reason.

To conclude, one must say that the Catholic priest is the Vicar of Christ who says, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14: 6). Since, Christ has preached the truth and died for the truth, the identity of the priest consists in being with the truth and for the truth. A priest is a seeker and interpreter of the truth. In order to be true to his vocation, the priest has to witness to the truth. In attaining and proclaiming the truth, he is to be guided by Catholic imagination or its components of faith and reason. In this sense, priesthood is a pursuit after the truth and a life-long struggle against falsehood and

ignorance. In this respect, as just analyzed in the novels, Greeley gives the examples of Blackie and George to priests for emulation.

The detailed analysis of these five novels proves the fact that the correlation between faith and reason is an unavoidable component of the Catholic imagination. This survey has also made it clear that a Catholic priest cannot fulfill his priestly ministry without promoting this correlation. Before switching on to the next chapter, let me very briefly describe how Greeley maintains the necessity of this correlation in his non-fictional writings. It is the combination of faith and reason that enables a person to know truth. It may be the truth hidden in a mystery, it may be the truth of one's own identity or the God-willed vocation. Since the purpose of this paper is presenting how the five components of the Catholic imagination help a priest perform his ministry, here I try to examine Greeley's understanding of truth about priesthood, his uniqueness of his vocation and his mission. This reference to the role of the priest will serve as a basis for delineating his various obligations, virtues and the like, in the following chapters.

With regard to the identity of a Catholic priest, Greeley writes in *The Catholic Imagination* (2001), "In the Catholic tradition, the priest is more than merely a preacher of the Word. He is a sacrament" (147). In his opinion, even corrupt priests are metaphors. They are poor metaphors of God's love, but metaphors just the same. Each priest is a sign of God's loving and forgiving presence in the given community. A priest is ordained to work for the Church and on behalf of Jesus Christ, the High Priest. He is a link in the apostolic tradition. Greeley writes in one of his prayer journals, *My Love: Prayer Journal* (1971), "I ought not to live for myself, but for others" (136). He appeals to God, "Help me to understand more clearly during this week that priests exist for people, not for themselves, and that I must be always as generous as I can to people" (208). In view of the social commitment of the priest, he writes in the book, *The Friendship Game* (1970),

“I suppose it is a built-in trap for the clergyman whose mission it is to be available for others when they need to lean on” (105). In response to the question of Lawrence Grobel, as to the identity of a priest, as one reads in the article, “Andrew Greeley”, published in *Modern Maturity* (1996) by the interviewer, Greeley replies, “A priest is someone who stands between God and human kind, directing humans to God and trying to reveal God to humans” (62). In another book entitled, *A Future to Hope in: Socio-Religious Speculations* (1969), Greeley explains what the role of a priest as a religious functionary, is. He is called, as Greeley writes, “To be God’s man – to be the one others can ‘turn to’ - for care and love” (266). Again, in another book, labelled as, *The Persistence of Religion* (1979), Greeley shares with his readers, the truth he has found, as a sociologist, about the unique services, the priests all over the world have been rendering to the Church and to the secular world. He feels proud of the fact that the Roman Catholic priesthood has always been one of the most powerful and organized religious leaderships in the world. It has always provided the society with not only the cultic service, but also intellectual, social and moral captaincy and guidance (213-214).

This is a brief statement of how Greeley views the identity and relevance of a Catholic priest, as expressed in his non-fictional works. This is a true picture of priesthood and it is in perfect agreement with the teachings of the Catholic Church on this subject. This truth about the priestly life has dawned in the novelist’s mind as a result of the correlation of faith and imagination without which no one can arrive at truth. That is why, Greeley insists in all the novels analyzed in this chapter, that each priest must abide by this component of the Catholic imagination. How, according to Greeley, the priest has to perform his manifold duties, as found in his non-fictional works, will be referred to the end of all the ensuing chapters.

Chapter III

FAITH AND PREACHING:

Happy are the Peace-Makers, The Bishop and the Three Kings, The Bishop and the Beggar Girl of St. Germain, Irish Eyes and September Song

As Jesus commissioned His priests/disciples to go and preach, preaching is one of the important duties of every Catholic priest. The Catholic Church expects her priests to preach the Word of God on all solemn occasions, especially, on Sundays, during the Holy Mass. The laypeople have a duty and right to listen to the preaching priests. If the content of the sermon is not seeped with both faith and imagination, the preaching will not reap the destined effects. In Greeley's opinion, it is Catholic imagination alone, which enables the preacher to inspire the body of listeners with the evangelical aim of transforming their lives. The attempt in this chapter is to analyze how Greeley's characters, both clerical and lay, fulfill their priestly role of preaching in deed and word, and how they are assisted by the merging of faith and imagination in doing it.

With this end in view, the selected five of Greeley's novels and this study will confirm, as anticipated in the introduction, that this merging is an essential component of Catholic imagination without which it is impossible for both the priest and the married person to perform their priestly duties. The novels are *Happy are the Peace-Makers* (1993), *The Bishop and the Three Kings* (1998), *Irish Eyes* (2000), *The Bishop and the Beggar Girl of St. Germain* (2001) and *September Song* (2001). Of course, there are preaching scenes in other novels also, priests officially preaching on the pulpit and the laypeople preaching by means of leading exemplary lives, but, these novels have been selected due to the prominence of the priestly and the lay characters in them who preach the Word of God, more effectively through their exemplary lives.

Happy are the Peace-Makers (1993) which is the first work to be discussed in this chapter can be summarized as the life-long struggle of Nora MacDonaugh for finding peace and making peace in her own personal life in the family as well as in her native Ireland, now, given to violence of all kinds. This novel reaches its climax as Nora who is alleged to have murdered both of her former husbands, finally, consents to marry Tim Mac Carthy, a retired police officer. A probe into the novel convinces that preaching is not the monopoly of a Catholic priest and that it should not be confined to interpreting God's word contained in the Sacred Scriptures. Greeley does this by portraying Blackie, the ideal priest and investigator and Nora, the silent sufferer. Blackie interprets God's Word in life-context. Nora realizes it and follows it in her life, which is nothing but a life long sermon. As preachers of God's Word, both of them excel the other and witness to the effective interplay of faith as well as imagination both of which are essential for a Catholic. When the two protagonists employing Catholic imagination find out the truth, peace is established. Greeley's message is obvious that all Catholic priests ought to enact Blackie in their preaching ministry and that the married people have to do the same role of preaching but through their exemplary lives like Nora, which is impossible without Catholic imagination.

One finds in the novel, Blackie preaching during the Mass, on 'happy are the peace-makers', and giving a warning that "Our happiness does not dispense us from the same diligence and prudence as war makers" (172). Not only does he interpret the Word of God recorded in the Holy Bible but also does he apply it to the individual's concrete life situation. For example, as he proves that Nora is innocent and that she has not killed either of her husbands she regains her lost peace of mind and reunites with her broken family. What Blackie does is what all Catholic priests have to do, and the reunion that occurs in Nora's family is precisely that must take place in all families, in each parish.

Blackie succeeds in the role of a peace-maker, when Nora who has repeated many a time, "I will never marry again...I won't destroy another man" (139), finally, concedes to be the wife of Tim. How much he is moved by Catholic imagination is evident from his comments on the Catholic orientation of James Joyce. One reads, "He was one of the greatest theologians of all times, as I presume is patent to you. And the story has a happy ending, as all good Catholic stories must"(77). Without blending faith with Catholic imagination, Blackie cannot have said, referring to the graceful and peaceful life of Tim and Nora, "The emptying of self in erotic love is a revelation, a hint, a metaphor for the self-emptying of God in the incarnation of Jesus"(79). Giving blessing to the new couples and appreciating Nora's patient suffering, his comment is, "Happy are the peace-makers"(293), a comment that brings beauty and breeds meaning to the title of the novel. Referring to their decision to marry, when Greeley comments that it "was the same response of Mary to Gabriel"(300), the reader is again, reminded of the novelist's intentions which ought to be an eye-opener to all Catholic priests in improving the quality of their preaching.

On the other hand, Nora too, preaches the necessity of peace in her own way, though she is not, and cannot be a priest by profession. She sets apart the substantial wealth, inherited from her former husbands who died under mysterious circumstances for the sake of bringing peace to Ireland. She says, "I don't think you can buy peace. I want to do all I can for my poor native land to find peace. I want to be one of the peace-makers" (55). In doing so, Nora is actually serving the Catholic Church, which always clamours for peace, and condemns bloodshed. Greeley wants the Catholic priests to enable the married people to emulate Nora. They must promote peace, joy and love to the detriment of the evil forces, which thrive on violence, and destruction of life and property.

This novel also upholds the truth that reunion and forgiveness are the necessary conditions as well as the results one experiences and gathers in the pursuit after peace.

The Catholic priest can derive a lot of inspiration from this novel with regard to his ministry of preaching. A sermon is of no use if it is full of theory. It is of no appeal to the community if it is mere faith. The Word of God becomes relevant to the people at present only if the priest gives some practical guidelines as to how God's message can be applied to, outside the Church. Hence, there should be a correlation between what a priest preaches inside the Church and how the listeners live outside it. As already hinted, in Greeley's opinion, the Catholic priest is a narrator of stories, a story-teller. That means he has to accommodate imagination in his homilies. All human beings are inclined to drive home to their memory, the message contained in each story. Stories capture their attention, appeal to their hearts and accordingly listeners become transformed. For this, Catholic imagination is the best tool each priest must be equipped with. A sermon devoid of imagination can only be a dry exposition of abstract theological concepts, and it will not yield the desired renewal of life. Then, the sermon has no more value than the verbal exercise of the preacher. So, the Catholic priest must not be immune to myths and stories, and he should not be indifferent to the various problems brewing in the society.

Happy are the Peace-Makers makes it clear that preaching is not an isolated function of the Catholic priest, rather, it is very much related to his other prophetic, shepherding and sanctifying functions. Greeley's Blackie is not only a speaker but also a person who interferes in the lives of his people and from their service he derives immense job satisfaction. He listens to his people sympathetically; he guides them prudently, and solves their problems effectively. As a priest, Blackie takes pain and spends time to unveil mysteries in order to liberate the victims suffering from their sense of guilt, shame and confusion. In other words, the Catholic priest, to be an effective preacher has to be

available to his people in their distress and at their service. A sermon not accompanied by practical implications and imaginative insight can only be confined to the four walls of the Church. Such a sermon neither motivates the people nor does it empower them to fight against the social evils. That is why, Greeley has always emphasized that priests ought to improve their quality of preaching, and that they must give due regard to Catholic imagination. Besides acquainting his people with Jesus' teachings and official views of the Church, the Catholic priests have to make them responsible citizens. This is how the priests assist the Church in fulfilling her obligation to the world. Hence, the Catholic priests have to make themselves more aware of the significance of their preaching ministry. In Greeley's fictional empire, Blackie is the priest *par excellence*, who performs his duties to the Church as well as the society by using the Catholic imagination, as this novel under study amply proves.

A closer look at the novel reveals Greeley's appeal to all priests that they ought to give priority to the theme of women empowerment in their preaching. Blackie, first of all, is a confounded celibate, without any prejudice against women. He respects them as co-peace makers after the model of Nora, the silent sufferer, thought to be a killer by all, who never reveals her husband's impotence, "out of exemplary respect for her husband's memory and for the feelings of his mother and father while they were alive"(276). Blackie is assisted by two very attractive women, Brigid Murphy, his niece, and Patricia, his sister. He is the one who establishes Nora's innocence beyond all doubts. The special power of imagination helps Blackie foresee the attack and the face of the killer (258, 264). Added to this, he has a strong Catholic faith, characteristic of a priest. This combination of faith and imagination is shared by Nora without which she might not make Tim declare that sex is a hedge against death, and a hint that something is stronger than death (104). The novel reaches its zenith as Greeley compares Nora to Mary, the

mother of Jesus. As the Word of God makes Mary the co-redemptorist, Catholic imagination empowers Blackie, Nora and Tim to be redeemers in their fields as peacemakers. Bearing it in his mind the Catholic priest must become a redeemer and make many redeemers in his community. With this intention, he has to preach and nothing helps him more than Catholic imagination, in achieving this goal.

The second novel proposed to be studied in this chapter is *The Bishop and the Three Kings* (1998) which is an account of how Bishop John Blackwood Ryan, known as Blackie, successfully investigates and solves two mysteries; one regarding the scandalous disappearance of the relics of the Magi or the Three Kings from the great Cathedral of Cologne, in Germany, and the other regarding the patricide of Cindausue Mc Clored, the Coast guard officer, by his own wife. An analysis of this novel, once again reminds how a priest like Blackie, when assisted by proper Catholic imagination, works wonders in the parishes, in his dealings with others and attracts others to the Catholic Church and solves many a mystery. Through this novel, Greeley provides Catholic priests with a lot of practical ideas with regard to what and how they have to preach, which must be endowed with both faith and imagination for its perfection and efficacy. This novel is an earnest appeal to all Catholic priests to realize the importance of their preaching ministry and the role of Catholic imagination occupying in it. A priest who preaches Catholic faith to the faithful ought to love the Church and her teachings. First, she must know what she believes and be proud of that. Then only, he will be able to preach from his heart. The relic of the three kings, is never lost forever but is misplaced for a temporary period. As Blackie states, "Patently the Shrine of the Magi did not ever leave the dome" (295). Greeley seems to suggest that it is the same case with the Catholic faith and the Church. No one can destroy either the Church or the faith forever. Though faith is handed over by human beings, though there have been mistakes during the course of the journey of the

Church on earth, the Church survives all the struggles and prosecutions. The primary duty of every Catholic priest is to protect faith or never let the relic get lost. An important purpose of preaching is promulgation of faith. He is also the custodian of faith. By virtue of his ordination he is committed to the cause of safeguarding the Church and her interests. This spirit of dedication and love for the Church and the faith must be part and parcel of the identity of a priest.

Instead, if the priest does not have love for the Church and faith in her teachings, he will not hesitate to sell the properties of the Church. He will cause scandals to the people and make the Church the sinkhole of corruption and favouritism. This is what Bishop Frederick Heidrich, the Dompfarrer does in the novel. Though he is the vicar of the Cologne Cathedral where the relics of the Magi is kept and venerated, he joins hands with Heinz Zellner, the art hoarder and together they design a plot to plunder the relics. The priest who is professionally expected to protect the Church and everything it contains takes the lead to steal valuable statues in order to misappropriate money for himself unmindful of the consequences of the scandal. The Dompfarrer has neither faith nor imagination. Blackie who is moved by Catholic imagination saves the Church whereas Frederick who attempts to sell the relics is sure not to possess Catholic imagination. As a priest, Frederick ought to be an example to the lay people and has to correct them incase they go wrong in their words and deeds, or in other words, in deviating from the path of Catholic imagination but, here is a priest in Frederick's person who instigates a lay person and his associates to drain property that belongs to the Church.

While preaching the Gospel, the priest usually exhorts the community to abide by the rules of the Church and that they must always obey the hierarchy as the sheep follow the shepherd. Surprisingly, Frederick never obeys his Cardinal Graf von Obermann but, challenges him and tries in vain to occupy his position. It is with the hidden agenda of

discrediting and dethroning the Cardinal that he is organizing the stealing of the relics. The novelist surely has clear-cut views in portraying the character of Frederick. Every priest who asks the people to be obedient must be loyal to his own superiors. The priest who demands the cooperation of the parishioners must, first, cooperate with his bishop and thereby set an example. If he advises his faithful to be holy, he should be holier in his own life. Here precisely comes the relevance of the role of the Catholic imagination. The priest cannot be a Catholic preacher without possessing in himself a merging of faith and imagination. Without leading an ideal life no Catholic priest can be an effective preacher. As one cannot be a priest without being a preacher of God's Word, he cannot be a preacher without being inspired and guided by Catholic imagination.

A priest, not following the ways of Catholic imagination can only be a threat or a headache to the authorities, and a scandal to the people who look for priestly models whom they rever as replicas of Christ. For example, Greeley comments that Frederick's relationship with Zellner, the hoarder, is "a grave danger to the Catholic Church"(189), and that his conspiracy against the Cardinal "is a threat to the welfare of the Church and the faith of the people"(190). At the same time, there are many good priests known for their meritorious services. In the same novel, it is a priest, by name Kurt Klein who removes the original shrine when he comes to know the plan of Frederick, and saves it under a canvas cover in the workroom of the studio. Zellner and his gang attach the dome not knowing that the original shrine is replaced by a duplicate one, a temporary substitute. Thus, Greeley clearly distinguishes a group of good priests employing Catholic imagination from the other group of priests who never care for either faith or imagination. The Catholic Church will have a bright future only if she has at her service more priests like Blackie or Greeley himself both of whom claim that not only did they not feel any

problem between faith and imagination but also did gain a lot from the merging of these two forces in their sermons and priestly duties.

As one probes into the secret of the success of Blackie, the priest and investigator, s/he finds that the credit goes to his faith and imagination. In unveiling mysteries and arriving at right solutions, imagination helps him to a great extent. As he says, "I believe the solution came to me several times in my dreams"(266). Solution to each problem owes to "a lot of grace and a huge amount of luck"(266), Blackie admits. The same imagination coupled with faith enables him to appreciate the beauty and the worth of women. For example, Blackie tells Peter Murphy, the lover of Cindausue, "You must pursue her, Peter Murphy, like God pursues us, implacably but tenderly" (140). God pursuing man comes under the purview of faith but, a man chasing his beloved pertains to one's romantic imagination. Again Blackie's comment that women, of course, are "the braver of the two genders"(238) cannot be justified without reference to his Catholic imagination. The same spirit of the Catholic imagination is at the root of Church's tolerant attitude towards non-Catholics, which is very relevant to our pluralistic culture. This is very evident in the Cardinal's words addressed to Cindausue, a non-Catholic, "We must all be what we were and are. That is the nice thing about being Catholic. People do not have to give up what they are. Rather, they bring it to us and enrich us with their own heritage"(71).

Next to Blackie, Cindausue appears to be mostly influenced by and drawn to Catholic imagination. Even as a non-Catholic, Cindausue is able to understand the uniqueness of the Catholic Church and she is well aware of how a person who is endowed with Catholic imagination has to behave with women. She is so much impressed by the personality of Blackie and the beauty of the Church, he serves, that Cindausue tells her lover Peter Murphy, "If I ever become a Catholic, I'll go to him for confession. He'll

know my sins without my telling them” (285). Again, she assures Frau Strauss the former Senior Assistant at the dome, “Well, you are at least a Catholic and know that the body of a woman is not evil” (158). Actually, Greeley, the Catholic priest, through the examples of Blackie and Cindausue, is upholding some of the important themes which all the Catholic priests must do justice to in their preaching, if at all they want to be significant to the modern times. In doing so, they must incorporate into themselves and their sermons the insights of faith and inspirations of imagination as fused into one, i.e. Catholic imagination. In Greeley’s opinion, what Blackie, the male priest preaches is important and useful, but, what Cindausue, the female lay person and initially a non-Catholic, teaches is also of same value, as both of them are performing their priestly functions in their respective walks of life, as ordained by Catholic imagination.

As already mentioned, Blackie interferes in the family of Cindausue, which is an essential part of the pastoral life. He inquires into the whereabouts of the murder of Cindausue’s father and asserts her innocence. Greeley intends to maintain that an irresponsible woman like Cindausue is as scandalous to the family as a degenerate priest is to the Church. The family ought to be as important a place of experiencing God’s love and forgiveness as a parish headed by a priest. Cindausue’s father is murdered by his wife and Frederick is punished by the Church. Due to the fear of her father’s ill treatment Cindausue is afraid of all men and any dating. Blackie’s timely assistance empowers her to be a person and even as a non-Catholic, she is better than many Catholics. The newly born Cindausue appreciates men. For instance, she praises her lover, “He is an angel, and a wise man and a star all put together” (176). It is to be noted that Frederick being a priest is a teacher and Cindausue’s father is also a teacher by profession. Both of them fall from grace whereas Cindausue who volunteers to follow Blackie, who is always motivated by Catholic imagination, reunites her broken family and abundantly experience

God's love and mercy to the great appreciation of Blackie. Hence, a Catholic priest has to take into account the moral and spiritual needs of the families residing in each parish, when he preaches. Likewise, he shall not neglect his commitment to educate and empower the womenfolk, who once awakened, will heal and save others very much like Cindausue does in this novel.

Another point Greeley seems to emphasize in this novel is the corrective dimension of preaching. It is impossible to eradicate social evils without taking punitive steps or remedial measures. The ultimate aim of a sermon is that the individuals have to correct their lives and shift to a new mode of life. The preacher has to undergo the process of purification. Very often priests are unwilling to take decisive steps for fear of incurring the displeasure of his people. Many malpractices prevail in the Church mainly, because the authorities are scared or ignorant of the perpetrators of various crimes. But, at Blackie's insistence, one finds the Cardinal in this novel, vacates Frederick from the Cathedral, sends three young priests accused of pedophile charges to treatment centers, and entrusts Zellner and his gang with the police. These corrective steps taken by the cardinal prove that there will be more justice and impartiality in the Church and her institutions, in years to come.

At one time, pulpit was the only means for the Catholic priest to preach the Good News. Since the invention of the television and the computer, one cannot but marvel at the explosion of a variety of the media to evangelize the world. The Catholic priest has a duty to make use of the media to evangelize the world. At the same time, they should beware of the risks involved in handling the media. This is precisely the prominent theme, Greeley presents in his novel, *The Bishop and the Beggar Girl of St. Germain*, which is an awe-inspiring detective story in which Bishop Blackie Ryan, solves the mystery involved in the sudden disappearance of Father Jean Claude, a television

superstar, celebrated preacher and confessor from Paris. Though people suspect suicide or murder or some kind of mishap, Blackie finds out that the real priest Jean Claude died five years back in Italy, of tuberculosis, in the presence of a priest and receiving the last sacrament and that the priest who has recently disappeared is, in fact, Claude's twin sister named Chantal who has been enacting the role of a priest very resourcefully, herself being a good actor. This novel gives an irrefutable lesson to all Catholic priests to undertake necessary preparations for communicating God's message through the media.

As every one knows, preaching is a priest's important function. The essential theme of any priestly preaching is that God is love. If the preaching is made through the media befitting the present electronic age, this message reaches more people, more powerfully, and more rapidly, than it did in the past. Jean Claude is one who does it superbly. And he says about the genuineness of his preaching, "I just try to tell people how much God loves them.... I merely preach about God's love as revealed in Jesus and the Church" (97-98). No priest is an exception to what Claude does. As Claude is instrumental to conversion of many, a Catholic priest has to provide his people with God-experience resulting in joy and peace, by means of preaching Good News. Shortly, Claude realizes that preaching is not that easy. He has to suffer from the envy of the other media people, jealousy of his fellow priests and his own fatal disease on account of which he quits to die in peace, with the help of his twin sister. But, he has the satisfaction that he did as much as he could. According to Greeley this is what every Catholic priest has to do, preach the Word of God despite opposition and personal discomforts. The intention of the preacher ought to be the spreading of God's love and should not aim at one's own fame or popularity.



NB 5822

The Catholic priest who preaches must be a man of integrity. There should not be any dichotomy between what he believes and what he preaches. Again, the way he lives

and what he advises others to follow must not be mutually contradictory. Greeley expects all priests to be endowed with strong faith and imaginative skills. A merging of faith and imagination is what makes their sermon appealing and convincing to the people. Sometimes, the way some priests preach, makes the people doubt whether they really believe what they say. Priests are not immune to crises in their spiritual life. Greeley calls priesthood, 'a call in crisis', and it forms the title of one of his books, *Priests: A Calling in Crisis*(2004). Very often the priest is torn between belief and non-belief. In Blackie's words, "Most priests, if they have any sense and imagination, wonder if they truly believe all the things they preach.... They both believe and not believe at the same time" (181). On another occasion, Chantal, Claude's sister asks Blackie, "Priests do lose their faith, do they not Monseigneur?" (152). When battered by tension and insatiability with one's own spiritual life no priest can preach gracefully and peacefully. It is in such a situation that Greeley presents Catholic imagination as a panacea for the priests, which will help them cling to the meaning of the priesthood and performance of their duties. When he writes, "In France you could be a Catholic and not a believer" (147), priests must realize that there is a dig at themselves.

One's inquiry into *The Bishop and the Beggar Girl of St. Germain* proves that Catholic priesthood is not a bed of roses. This novel teaches that the Catholic priest can neither be a priest nor be a preacher for long without possessing the Catholic imagination. Claude who owns this combination in his personality in the right proportion remains in priesthood as a satisfied person until it becomes physically impossible for him to preach. But, the sister who steps into his shoes, is a non-believer and, she has no Catholic faith. Hence she calls herself, "a faker", "a hypocrite" "a coward", "some one playing the role of a priest who does not believe"(162-163). And that is why, she says good-bye to her priestly robes and disappears mysteriously. In other words, neglect or loss of Catholic

faith ends up in one's leaving the priesthood. There are others who spoil their vocation and scandalize their preaching as a result of loose life. For example, Mother Marie tells Blackie in the convent, "It is possible that life is more difficult for priests today than it was a half century ago...Now a priest can do whatever he wants and probably never be caught unless he goes too far" (190-191). What is consoling is that in the Church there are priests like Blackie, who is happy about being a priest and does tremendous service to the community, and knows that preaching is one of the best services a priest can offer. For such priests even celibacy is not a problem. They work wonders in the parish. People listen to their words, which lead them to transformation. As Blackie says, "For those who are happy in the priesthood it [celibacy] is usually no more difficult than marriage which is not very easy"(80). These Catholic priests do not frighten their congregation, preaching about the punishment in hell, instead they convey to the listeners the true love of God, who, in Greeley's opinion, is nothing, "If not a God of variety, often, truth to tell, comic variety"(124). And for these priests, a woman is neither a scandal-carrier nor a temptation-breeder. For instance, Mother Marie tells Blackie about the character of Claude, "He did enjoy women however. He liked to talk to them and joke with them. But, he encouraged no one to forget that he is a priest" (72). Without merging faith with imagination a Catholic priest cannot develop this kind of a healthy attitude to women nor can he preach to his people how they should behave towards women in a Catholic manner. That is why, one concludes together with Greeley that Catholic imagination is of greater importance to each preaching Catholic priest than anything else.

A Catholic priest preaches because it is what he is called and appointed for. He is a missionary by profession. Hence, that priest who succeeds in bringing more people to the Catholic communion has to be regarded as the best priest. It is he who performs his

missionary task or the preaching ministry better than the other priests. In this context, one has to remember that Claude is the best Catholic priest, may be second only to Blackie, because as a media star his preaching has reached more people than that of any other priest addressing the faithful in the traditional way. Indeed, he has served the Church as a preacher more than words can express. Related to this, one must also discuss why he asked his sister to impersonate his priestly duties till his death, which he knew will not be very late. And she fulfills her brother's last wish splendidly, fooling the simple nuns and many others. By her television programmes, in a way, she has cheated the entire world. But, according to Greeley, she has a definite motive. As one reads in this novel, enacting the role of a Catholic priest, Chantal who was a non-believer becomes a believer, a staunch Catholic. As Chantal herself acknowledges, "Jean Claude has made me a priest so that he could make me a Catholic" (229). It can be said that the greatest achievement of Claude is nothing but the conversion of his own sister. As Mother Marie certifies, "Claude's miracle is that he made you a good Catholic" (232). In other words, the purpose of preaching of priests is making people Catholic. In this regard, Claude's priestly life, however short it is, is a grand success.

Of course, Chantal cannot be a priest for a long period, for, she is a female and besides she is a layperson. Hence, as per the existing restrictions in the Catholic Church, she sheds the priestly life at the earliest. But, being an actor and media person, she can continue the priestly mission of preaching sometimes better than many priests working in parishes, now that she is a firm Catholic. Here, one does hear the preaching of Greeley, the Catholic priest or rather what Greeley wants other priests to preach about. First of all, all Catholic priests have to recognize the worth of lay vocation and train the faithful for performing their priestly role wherever they are, doing God's Will and spreading evangelical virtues in and through their lives. Priests must be ready to share their pastoral

responsibilities with the lay people. For this, they have to empower their parishioners keeping in view the possibility that the Catholic Church might alter the present laws regarding the celibacy and implement the idea of married clergy and women priesthood which are Greeley's favourite themes. Catholic priests ought to respect the laity and preach frankly that they are the people who witness to God's love and mercy in the secular world. In Blackie's words, "Marriage is both a Sacrament of God's love for his people and an extension of that love" (178). One who looks at the marriage from the point of view of Catholic imagination cannot but conclude that a lay person can preach more impressively and convincingly about God's love in daily life than an ordinary Catholic priest does verbally out of necessity or obligation in and for the congregation.

As a woman priest, Chantal is a great success, to the consolation and satisfaction of Claude who finds that all his programmes are being carried out with no delay. Admiring her impersonate priesthood, she recollects, "He told me that if Rome should decide that I am a real priest, he would want me as his auxiliary bishop. He said he would be a distinct improvement" (246). After Claude's death, while narrating the new series on Notre-Dame, she goes into the crypt, carrying a suitcase as usual and disappears without being noticed by anybody but only to emerge as a smart woman as she really is, after changing her priestly adornments in no time. This is suggestive of the crucified Christ who after vanishing into tomb bearing the sins of mankind, resurrects as the eternal priest. Greeley hints that the new Chantal, the woman priest or the lay priest will perform better than Chantal, the impersonate priest. So, it is the duty of all Catholic priests to preach to the laypersons, to make them aware of their priestly personality, and to empower them to perform those duties in their respective walks of life.

Another character in the novel who teaches the Catholic priests, the necessity of women empowerment to be incorporated into their sermon and the training, is the beggar

girl of St. Germain, figuring in the title itself. As a mere beggar sitting at the gate of the Church of St. Germain, Marie Bernadette does not appeal to anybody. Blackie makes her his translator and she proves to be an efficient woman. The beggar girl thus, gets employed and later marries Jacques Yves, a carpenter. On one occasion she comments, "You are a very good *tec*, *Pere* Blackie. Probably because you are a very good priest who understands people, even silly weeping beggar girls" (49). Either faith or imagination alone does not drive Blackie to uplift the beggar girl, it is a combination of both. It is Catholic imagination that motivates or activates him in the light of which he sees in her a daughter of God the Father, with an enormous room for improvement. The Catholic priests shall not confine their ministry to verbal service alone, instead they must try to reduce the problem of unemployment and other social issues. They must work aiming at the total growth of the whole person. In order to do this, priests must depend on Catholic imagination for inspiration and implementation. It is not enough to be speakers but, they have to be persons who understand other people and their needs, as the portrayal of the Bishop and the beggar girl amply suggests.

This novel can also be explained as Greeley's regret that the attitude of the Catholic Church to the media is by and large, one of neglect. As a body of men specially trained for preaching the Good News to the whole world, Catholic priests have no other tool better than the media. So they have to make use of the media for telling the truth, guiding their people, and thus fulfilling their priestly obligations in a better way. Priests who are obliged to preach the truth, have a duty to find out the real truth. They must consider it as the challenging aspect of their evangelizing mission to see to it that the media does not distort the truth. Without the investigative tasks of Blackie, the people would never have heard the real truth about the mysterious disappearance of Claude or they would never know that it was Chantal who really disappeared after five years of her

brother's death. If Blackie never came across the beggar girl and perceived her real worth, she would never have come up in life. As already mentioned, what is characteristic of Blackie is the correlation between faith and imagination in his personality. In other words, Catholic priests who are given to Catholic imagination and evangelization must always seek after truth and stand for truth in their preaching as well as their priestly life.

Catholic priests, who preach on the meaning and efficacy of Sacraments and officiate them, have to learn a lot from the death of Claude. As Chantal explains, he died in Rome of tuberculosis, in the presence of a priest and only after receiving the anointing of the sick. A Mass is said for the repose of the soul. Here, Claude is a Catholic priest who dies in peace enjoying all the benefits of the Catholic Church. As a priest, he preaches on the value of Sacraments, knowing pretty well, that he himself is a Sacrament, as loudly as he can when he is alive, and now at death too, he preaches the Catholic significance of Sacraments, but in silence. In this sense, the whole priestly life is preaching that continues not till death, but in and after death as well. In other words, as long as he is alive and active the Catholic priest administers the sacraments, but, at death he is administered the sacraments, befitting a dying priest. The chapter on the correlation between faith and Sacraments will elaborate this point. It suffices to recapitulate that preaching is an undeniable and life-long obligation of a Catholic priest, and it is possible only when and as long as the preacher abides by the merging of faith and imagination. That is why we maintain that the correlation between faith and imagination is an essential component of Catholic imagination.

Irish Eyes is the next novel, which has been selected for a detailed exegesis. Set against the background of the ramming of a passenger ship named City of Benton Harbour by the five-masted schooner, Charles C. Campbell, captained by Hale Reed, off

Michigan City, on a foggy night in October 1898, Greeley is teaching the Catholic priests the importance of being truthful to faith, imagination, and preaching. The wreck of the ship which carried three hundred members of the Chicago Chapter of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, to support the Irish revolutionaries, is caused by apparently unfavourable weather conditions and too much of hurry on the part of the organizers. What is more important to the novelist is that a stolen chalice, carried by Thomas Doolan the chief organizer of the cruise which is a strong symbol of Irish Catholic faith, to be sold for money in order to buy arms for the rebels, is nothing but a violation of faith. Parallel to the tragedy of the ship, one century old, there is the recent murder of Nick Farmer and the suicide of Roger. Right from the school days Farmer and Roger have been rivals and the former has been on many occasions accused of faking or stealing stories which is worse than polluting the imagination. Violation of faith and imagination leads to the tragedy of persons, disintegration of families and disasters in social life. Hence, it can be said that this novel is intended to urge the Catholic priests to preach the truth and cultivate the inevitable relationship between faith and imagination in their own lives as well as in the lives of their listeners.

It is equally true that this novel is the story of a successful investigation to find out a lost treasure, that is the chalice, a valuable symbol of Catholic faith. Hence, there is always a correlation between faith and preaching. No priest can turn a deaf ear to such an unfortunate event. He who preaches the truth and the faith has the duty to search for, truth and fight for the faith. As long as the chalice remains hidden under the ocean, a priest's preaching is incomplete. When a chalice is being stolen, it is a scandal. If that sacred vessel is sold for money, that too, for buying destructive weapons, it is simony. Unless and until it is restored to its real owners there is injustice. A Catholic priest, who ought to preach and practise truth and is committed to train the parishioners to do the

same, cannot be indifferent to this situation. He has to strive for recovering the Holy Grail, here, the chalice. And in this story of the treasure hunt Greeley presents some Catholic priests who are endowed with the Catholic imagination or persons who value the merging of faith and imagination. First and foremost we have Father George, the brother of Dermot. Another one is John Devlin the librarian. Without the assistance of these two priests and the books they provided, Dermot and Nuala will never have succeeded in finding out the lost chalice. The contribution of Father Dorney is also significant for saving the girl, Ellen, who later preserves important documents related to the ship-wreck, which immensely helps the protagonists arrive at truth resulting in the discovery of the chalice. It is to be noted that all these priests are proud of their Irish Catholicism and they always keep a balance between their faith and imagination. One finds that it is Catholic imagination that prevails over them and it is the same that they follow in their lives and try to promulgate by their preaching.

With the help of the priests mentioned above, it is Dermot and Nualah who actually find out the metal box containing the chalice. Both these are Catholics and as Catholics they believe it is their duty to seek after truth to safeguard their faith together with their imagination. In Greeley's opinion, laypersons are also obliged to perform priestly duties. They need not be pulpit-preachers. All the struggles Dermot and Nualah undertake, are as good as the preaching of a Catholic priest. Both of these protagonists are greatly impressed by the ideas and suggestions of Blackie Ryan who is indisputable embodiment of Catholic imagination. He always represents and interprets the Catholic faith and wherever it is distorted or misinterpreted, he who is also an eminent investigator is determined to unveil the mysteries and he proclaims the truth. So, every Catholic priest shall, not only preach faith and stand for truth, but also empower the faithful to do the

same in their own walks of life. The priest must always bear in mind that as children of God, all Catholics are duty bound to perform their priestly responsibility of preaching.

Anyone who is fond of Catholic imagination is aware that proper use of the imagination is essential for making human life successful and peaceful. Those who give priority to envy, pride and revenge at the expense of due regard to imagination will have to fail. The Hibernians, who organize a cruise very late in the year for money, exhibit lack and neglect of real imagination. The stealing of the chalice and the consequent attempts to sell it also show misuse of imagination and challenge of faith. While in school when Roger submits a fake story, Farmer saves him saying that it is fiction. Both these are adulterating genuine imagination. Later in life, as Roger's probe on Nigeria becomes a grand success, Farmer in his envy plans to do away with the former. This provokes Roger to murder Farmer employing a Balkan gang and later, on the brink of exposure and disgrace he commits suicide. As media personnel, Roger and Farmer must have followed proper imagination and should have sought after truth. Instead, they are after money and popularity, and they end up in tragedy, invariably and irremediably. A writer or any person for that matter who is endowed with a combination of faith and imagination cannot degenerate like this. Probably, Roger and Farmer missed the right orientation right from the very beginning. Here, there is an important message for the Catholic priests, namely they have to educate the people in such a way that they are enabled to coordinate and correlate faith and imagination in their lives.

As already mentioned in the exposition of *Irish Gold*, there is a correlation between the past and the present in all the Irish novels of Greeley. The theme of this correlation assumes various dimensions in *Irish Eyes*. The ship-wreck of 1898, is conspicuous for the stealing of the chalice and the recent tragedy of Farmer and Roger is noted for the stealing of a story. This can be equated with the stealing of faith and

imagination. An analysis of faith makes one aware of its historical connectedness with the past and the present. One who lives at present has to look back to understand how his forefathers lived with their faith in the past. That person learns lessons and derives inspiration from the past in order to improve the quality of living one's faith at present and to correct aberrations, if any. If the stealing of the chalice means loss of faith, discovery of it after a century marks the regaining of faith. Likewise, there is another parallelism between misuse or non-use of imagination in the wreck of the ship and the missing of the chalice, and an abundant and fruitful exercise of imagination in the current restoration of the chalice by Dermot and Nuala who are always accompanied by Catholic imagination.

Again, in the relationship between Farmer and Roger another parallelism is evident. As classmates they collaborate in the story stealing. This is a clear case of the violation of truth and so of Catholic faith which preaches truth, and at the same time an assault against genuine imagination which every writer is blessed with. For the lack of Catholic faith and abuse of the literary imagination in their behaviour, the Catholic priest is morally responsible. It is a clear case of either failure or insufficiency of Catholic preaching which aims at Catholic formation and moral uprightness. Right now, Farmer and Roger collaborates in the media. Due to envy and mutual rivalry with the intention of gaining more popularity and wealth, they vye with each other and both of them meet with untimely and inauspicious death. They do not seem to have tried to get at their critical moments, any assistance from a person like Blackie or a Catholic priest who can guide them by resorting to his Catholic imagination. Besides, maliciously tarnishing the good name of Nuala as an acclaimed singer, and mistaking Dermot for his enemy, Neck appears to be a man who never cares for either Catholic faith or pure imagination. So, the analysis of what Farmer and Roger did at school and how they destroy themselves now,

tells about the necessity of having a proper merging of faith and imagination in one's life which is the primary duty of every Catholic priest to nurture. In this regard, the study of the story and history, which together is a record of faith, truth and imagination, alone, enables a priest to establish the connection of the present with the past and to derive lessons from that relationship. Such a connection is possible only with imagination. That is why, Greeley's priestly characters are marked by the combination of faith and imagination in their behaviour, preaching and tackling the problems in life.

One thing unique about this novel seems to be Greeley's insistence on the duty of a Catholic priest to teach the parents as to train their youngsters in a Catholic manner. The children do play an important role in this story. Nelliecoyne, Dermot's daughter, and Siobhan, another girl are the first ones to find out the remnants of the wrecked ship. Both Nuala and her daughter experience the vision of that ship. The imaginative and intuitive faculty of the young one helps the elders to locate the venue of the tragedy. The records preserved by Ellen, the replaced child, in her later years, provide the most important clues to Dermot and Nuala in finding out the misplaced chalice. It can only be deliberate that Greeley presents Nuala in this novel as a singer of lullabies very much appealing to all children and to the bitter envy of the rivals like Farmer. It has to be noted here that Father George takes great interest in the Catholic formation of Nelliecoyne and it is one Father Dorney who saves Ellen and entrusts her with Thomas Doolan. For Nuala, singing lullabies about God's love is equal to a priest preaching the Good News. She believes that every mother should sing lullabies exactly like God does to His children. Lullaby inculcates faith in children and activates their imagination both of which are essential for the development of the Catholic imagination. When mothers sing lullabies to their children, they are imitating God Himself. So, Catholic priests ought to sing lullabies for his parishioners, who are his spiritual children. Singing has to find a place in preaching in

order to be more appealing, especially, to the young generation. Nuala asks, “Don’t I think that God always is singing lullabies to us? Hasn’t God brought us into the world just like mothers do? And hasn’t He fallen in love with us? And don’t mothers have to sing lullabies to their children?” (85).

If the Church is the proper venue of the Catholic priest for preaching to his people, the house itself is the pulpit of the married people for preaching to their children. The responsibility of parents to ‘Catholicize’ or evangelize their children is in no way less than that of a priest doing it in the Church. In other words, when parents set a good example or give a good advice to their children, in agreement with the teaching of the Catholic Church, in Greeley’s opinion, they are performing their priestly role. Nuala’s words express what should be the right attitude of the parents to the children. She tells Dermot, about their daughter, “We must take very good care of her, so when she’s grown up we can give her back to God as a healthy, happy adult. God only lends children to us”(38). Many a times priests preach that parents are accountable for their children before God. Greeley reminds the preaching priest, that he too, is accountable on behalf of his parishioners. For, the same God who has appointed the parents as priests in a family, has entrusted him with regard to the salvation of the whole community. Here is a challenge for all priests to renew their commitment to God and all the people.

Catholic formation by no means is merely verbal. The children need and deserve concrete examples for emulation. *Irish Eyes* abounds in such scenes. Dermot and Nuala believe that they can not be authentic Catholics without practising love and forgiveness. They are aware that without abiding by these virtues they have no right to instruct their child to follow the Catholic ideals. They readily forgive Farmer’s wrongs done to them, and as he is dismissed from the job, they offer special prayers for him. Nuala says, “We really have to pray for him when we say our prayers tonight” (141). Later, the whole

family takes part in Farmer's funeral prayerfully despite his evil doings. With reference to the Catholic spirit of forgiveness, Dermot comments on another occasion, "Catholics, especially, Irish Catholics have a dangerous habit of being ready to forgive everything at the time of death- however temporary that forgiveness is" (197). Even the villainous character, Farmer writes in his letter to Martha his wife, "I am terribly sorry for having let you down so many times. I hope you will forgive me... I want to tell you how sorry I am" (200). For this, married people require a great amount of patience and practice. That is what Father Dorney exhorts Thomas Doolan and Mary, his wife, "Many People are married for fifty years and never get to know another. Getting to know someone else takes work and patience" (241). To cut it short, the basic training of every Catholic takes place in one's own home and parents are the most important teachers in our lives from a Catholic point of view. The parents have to remember that they cannot advise their children if they do not lead an exemplary life, and that when they do so they are fulfilling their priestly role even if they are not technically or officially ordained as priests.

The Church has entrusted the parental role of teaching the new generation with the priests. They should not only preach but also set examples. Looking at a priest's life the lay people ought to realize that God is love and that it is forgiving love. Forgiveness has to be the characteristics of the Catholic Church. As Nessa, Nelliecoyne's baby-sitter asserts, what she likes most about the Church "is that it always forgives you" (280). Greeley makes an appeal to all preaching priests to examine how far they are at present able to reflect in their lives this aspect of God's love and Church's forgiveness. Of course, as human beings, the priests are fallible. In the words of Blackie, "If the Lord wanted perfect men sitting at the throne of the Fisherman, he would not have turned the job over to human beings" (279). But God's generosity must not be mistaken for a justification either to cover up or perpetuate priestly sins. As preachers of God's love and

forgiveness, Catholic priests have to be examples for the community. This seems to be an important message of the *Irish Eyes*. As stated more than once, a Catholic priest essentially needs a properly nurtured Catholic imagination in order to lead such a life and to be an authentic preacher of Catholic values. Last, but not least, in all the Irish Novels, it can be said that 'Ireland' is the hero. Ireland is Catholic. For Greeley, Catholic is one who is in possession of both faith and imagination or one who abides by the precepts of Catholic imagination. Somehow Greeley has taken it for granted that the really Irish Catholic people have perceived truth, and that they are God-fearing people because God who loves them and whom they adore, is the truth.

'Irish eyes', typified by those of Nuala and her daughter Nelliemoynne are green eyes, smiling eyes, truth-finding eyes and capable of stealing away everybody's heart. Their fey and fair eyes serve as divining rods and always assist Dermot and Blackie in their investigations into mysteries. 'Irish eyes' are so powerfully transparent that forces of darkness or ignorance can never diminish them. They are perennial truth-seekers and will never be satisfied with nothing other than truth. Faith and imagination are the two eyes of the 'Irish eyes'. It is the fusion of faith and imagination that makes the 'Irish eyes' function as one in their pursuit after or struggle for truth. Without possessing the 'Irish eyes' a Catholic priest will not succeed in perceiving truth. Without grasping the truth a priest cannot preach truth. Without preaching nobody can be a priest. So, one can conclude that *Irish Eyes* teaches that the Catholic priests and all truth-seekers need 'Irish eyes', especially, in a world which is given to all kinds of falsehood and false appearances.

The last novel to be discussed in this chapter is *September Song*. This novel teaches how the laypeople represented by the couples, Charles Cronin O' Malley and Rosemary, can preach the Good News of peace and love to this secular world faster and

better than any priest. *September Song* has political, ecclesiastical and domestic significance. As a political novel, this is Greeley's outcry against American imperialism, which perpetuates wars in Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia. As an ecclesiastical work, this novel is the record of the protests that arose from the lay people all over the world against Pope Paul VI for publishing *Humanae Vitae*, which contains the official teaching of the Catholic Church on birth control, without considering their opinion even as they are the people mostly affected by the Encyclical. As a domestic novel it is the story of the final reunion of all the members of Charles Cronin's family. Though the couples constitute the hero and heroine of this novel, it is not totally exclusive of priests. For example, one finds Father Edward O' Malley who takes an active role in all demonstrations for the cause of peace. But, the service of the priest gets eclipsed when compared to manifold activities undertaken and organized by Chuck and Rosemary, though they are not pulpit-preachers.

The first thing to be pointed out is that the couples are strong Catholics. For them, faith is more important than anything else. They really love and serve the Catholic Church. It is because of their fascination for the Church that they criticize it very strongly. At the time of the explosion, while traveling by an aircraft, Chuck says, "All I can remember was clutching my rosary desperately"(171). Referring to another occasion, when the couple is exposed to an attack, Rosemary remembers, "A rosary wrapped around his hand. Astonishingly I was clutching my rosary" (245). This is enough to conclude that both of them are strong Catholics. Together with faith the couples possess imagination abundantly. This is evident from the professions they have chosen. Now, Chuck is a reputed photographer. Rosemary is a popular writer of stories. It is Rosemary who inspires her husband to emerge as a photographer, otherwise he would have been only an accountant. If Chuck did not have motivated his wife to publish her stories, she should have remained a mere housewife. As everybody knows writing and photography

are two areas where the imagination has its profuse performance. No other proof is needed to conclude that these couples are in possession of Catholic faith as well as imagination.

Greeley portrays Chuck and Rosemary as persons greatly endowed with Catholic imagination, after his own example. By means of Catholic imagination they have experienced God as love and forgiveness, which is a fundamental truth about Catholic faith. As their faith is seasoned with imagination anyone feels some romantic overtones in their expression of the same. For, Chuck and Rosemary, love is prayer and all love-making is a kind of seduction (16). Rosemary refers to their mutual surrender in bed as “a ritual”(350). Both of them believe that “God is a God of infinite second chances. We always have the opportunity to start again” (56). Chuck always loves Rosemary even though she leaves him temporarily. It is because he knows that God’s love is implacable and everlasting. As Chuck says, “Because he’s hopelessly in love with her. Implacably in love. He would never not love her... Something like God loves us” (331). Towards the end of the novel one finds a beautiful confession of God’s forgiving love, from the lips of Rosemary, “It’s taken me a long time in life, April Rosemary, to realize that real love is implacably forgiving”(368). Thus the protagonists of *September Song* are real Catholics who, according to Greeley, are persons whose nature is characterized by the combination of faith and imagination.

It is not enough for parents to have Catholic imagination. One becomes a Catholic only as and to the extent one preaches one’s faith to others. The Catholic Church teaches that the parents fulfill their priestly duty when they see to it that their children grow in Catholic faith and live according to Catholic values. In the novel, Chuck and Rosemary are really responsible parents. Both of them take intense interest in the Catholic formation of their children, three boys and two girls. Chuck tells his wife, “God gives us

children to take care of for a few years, then He expects us to give them back to Him” (45). All the five children find it easy to imbibe the spirit of the Catholic imagination as their father is a photographer and their mother is a writer. The parents feels proud of April, their daughter as she organizes young people and take part in the anti-war movements together with Father Edward. All the three sons have great fascination for music. One of them, Kevin specializes in “Catholic novelists” (111). In his letter Chuck reminds Rosemary of her responsibility to go for Mass together with all the children, and pray for him (137, 141). When April becomes a fulltime activist and gives herself to drugs for a period, hurting the feelings of her parents, they forgive her. Rosemary asks, “We have forgiven her already, haven’t we Chuck?” He replies, “That’s what Christians do, isn’t it?” (306). On one occasion, Rosemary asks her younger girl, how she knew all about the parable of the Prodigal Son. Moire’s reply is, “Because I am a Catholic” (361). I have referred to these contexts just to conclude that both Chuck and rosemary are responsible parents who perform their priestly or prophetic role of teaching or preaching in the family in an excellent and exemplary way.

The overall thrust of *September Song* recalls to one’s mind what *Blessed are the Peace-Makers*, the first novel elaborated in this chapter, preaches, namely, the importance of peace. The protagonists of this domestic novel, Chuck and Rosemary are peace-makers. The whole novel looks like an impressive sermon on the necessity of peace. In this sense, the *September Song* is an anti-war work. Chuck says, “My strategy is to win people over against violence without using violence” (197). When Lyndon Baines Johnson decides to send 165,000 troops to Vietnam before the year is over, Chuck protests against it relinquishing his post of American Ambassador to Germany. He flies back to Chicago from Bonn and becomes a photographer. Very often, the lay people “Keep their mouth shut and their wallets open” (72) in the Church. But, being a zealous

Catholic, Chuck speaks out the truth. He speaks through his pictures. When the media publish falsehood about the warfront, he risks his life, takes photos and publishes them to teach the people the real situation. The exhibition he conducts causes a sensation and many people turn against American Imperialism. Just one incident is enough to illustrate his fascination for peace and hatred of war. Once, a few suicide squads of sappers reach the outside of perimeter and the American soldiers eliminate them immediately. The media give a wrong version that Vietnamese attacked and occupied the Chancery of the American Embassy in Vietcong. Chuck presents original photos and proves that nobody occupied the Chancery (139). Very many times he cautioned the American government not to send more troops to Vietnam and to put an end to the war.

The Catholic Church never supports war and always stands for peace. War is nothing but organised slaughter of human beings. Both suicide and homicide are against the spirit of Catholic faith. One must not forget that this novel is written against the background of *Humanae Vitae* which categorically teaches that human life has to be preserved at all stages from the womb to the tomb. In this sense, the Encyclical upholds the dignity of human life as well as the inevitability of peace and security in the world. Thus, the Pope performs his priestly ministry of preaching by publishing the Encyclical. Chuck is also doing the same by means of his photography. Both are champions of peace. The Church exhorts all the faithful to be peace-makers. Those who use the media for the cause of peace, are really fulfilling the obligations of their priestly and prophetic roles as true Catholics. In this sense, all artists are preaching Catholic faith if they work for peace. Since, they are spreading Catholic faith and the teachings of the Church, Chuck, the photographer can be said to be witnessing to the correlation of faith and preaching.

In the context of the Catholic parish, it is customary that the priests preach ideals of love and truth from the pulpit. In the context of the family, parents are the priests who

have to preach the Catholic views. This preaching is to be done in and through their exemplary living. Chuck and Rosemary are aware of this parental responsibility. Every child grows imitating the words and deeds of its parents. If the parents are wreckless and scandalous, their children are likely to step into the same shoes. The children born of ideal parents have a better chance of developing an exemplary character. Greeley comments that President Jack Kennedy is an incorrigible womanizer like his father(4). Chuck and Rosemary have taken part in the peaceful demonstrations headed by Martin Luther King. Now, they feel really proud of April, their daughter, when they see her as one of the leaders of the Bridgeport March held on August 28, 1968, demanding the right of voting. When the police charges, into the mob both the parents and their daughter secure minor injuries. Church strongly protests against the police for handling the peaceful demonstration in a violent manner. Looking at April leading the demonstration, Chuck observes, "The young people of America are demanding peace"(263). Rosemary is a writer of stories. After her mother, April writes an article in *The Nation* (350). As practicing Catholics, Chuck and Rosemary abstain from drinking and their children take note of it. When April asks her mother why she does not drink, Rosemary replies, "I did too, before Daddy stopped me" (4). In short, they are preaching Catholic faith through their exemplary lives. Greeley wants the priests to promote this kind of families in each parish. The Mother Church wants more parents who are witnesses to the correlation of faith and preaching in daily life.

Greeley points out that though Chuck and Rosemary are champions of peace and committed activists, all the leaders are not genuine. In *September Song*, not only the lay people but also some priests like Edward take part in the demonstrations. Greeley questions the intentions of some of these activists. His reservations in this issue are vibrant in the words of Father Packy Keenan who asserts, "Some of the priests and nuns

in the peace-movement seem to be running away from their own religious problems. They are not certain about religious faith and since they need to be certain about something, they turn to politics”(200). Some of them do not have Catholic faith. In the case of some others, there is no congruity between their words and deeds. That means, there is no correlation of faith and preaching in their social activities. Such priests do not give adequate importance to the primary duties of their vocation. Greeley’s dig at these priestly characters reminds one of the story of Catherine Collins figuring in *Virgin and Martyr* explained in the chapter of this thesis. Father Ed Carny, a revolutionary priest, in whom Catherine puts all her trust, leaving the convent, is later exposed to be a fake with a foot of clay doing dirty work. The novelist seems to highlight the point that one cannot be a priest worth the name without either faith or imagination. No one can be a complete priest without possessing the correlation between faith and preaching. The analysis of *September Song* and this casual reference to *Virgin and Martyr* pose a warning before all priests to examine their real intentions and the basic commitment to the Church before they undertake social activities. When the priests who do not have real faith engage themselves in social service, they are not fulfilling their priestly role, for, they are not motivated by Catholic imagination.

In his activities for bringing about peace, Chuck is inspired by his Catholic faith of which he is very proud. He introduces himself, “ I am a Catholic, brother, a priest, Archdiocese of Chicago”(152). At his departure to the warfront as a photographer, Chuck declares that he has to do more than enough, “Because we are Catholics”(128). The children promise to go to Mass and Communion every day till he returns. Later, Chuck writes, “I am glad that everyone back home is going to Mass for me”(137). In his opinion, every Catholic has to fight peacefully against war. Priests are all the more bound to preach that the Church stands for peace. He has to conscientize the people against

colonialism and imperialism. So, what Chuck does is really the role of a priest. Of course, he criticises the Church and some of her teachings. But never does he hate her nor does he leave her. He loves the Church and is keen on serving her. Otherwise, he will not think of doing a book on priests (73). Another priestly role Chuck does is that he becomes a link between the leaders of the Church and the ordinary faithful. Every priest is a bridge connecting the lay people with the Magisterium. He has to represent and interpret the laity to the authorities of the Church. At the same time, he has to be the spokesman of the Church to the faithful. He shall never betray the rights of the one to placate the interests of the other. As part of this intermediary role, he goes to Vatican and listens to the Pope as the latter shares his anxiety about unbridled sex (78). He agrees with the Pope that the Catholic Church is not against love, but she is always against sin. The fact that Chuck is a prophet of peace, and healthy relationship between the clergy and the laity deserves the special attention and emulation of all priests who must realise how Chuck with his camera and Rosemary with her pen spread more Catholic ideals than the priests preaching from the pulpit.

If Chuck, a married man, can be said to be doing the role of a priest, one finds a female counterpart of a priest in *September Song* in the person of Maggie Ward, who is a qualified therapist. But for Ward's healing service, Rosemary will have to be a mental patient. As a girl, Rosemary has been sexually exploited by her own father. Many people accuse her of having murdered her mother with the help of a friend by name Peg. Really what happened is, during the scuffle between the mother and her daughter, the former lost balance, fell against the door that sprang open. This is how the tragedy occurred. It is Ward who relieves Rosemary of her bitter feelings (108). She is also instrumental to Rosemary's becoming a popular writer, which clearly proves that the latter has regained her Catholic imagination. Healing the sick and the weak is part of shepherding them,

which is one of the triple duties of a Catholic priest. Ward works like the female counterpart of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37). The Catholic priest who may not have enough time to visit all the bed-ridden persons frequently, can easily train a few lay women who will be of great assistance to the entire parish, even as Ward is. Greeley may intend Ward to be an anticipation of a woman priest, and a model of an empowered woman, in whose case, the encouragement of the Catholic priest is a must.

Every person is fallible, so are Greeley's characters. Some of the priestly characters as well as lay people fall short of their expectations and commitments. There are similar instances in *September Song*. Even Chuck and Rosemary undergo the ordeal of separation, though for a short period. April, who appreciates her parents for not being drunkards, later, becomes an alcoholic for some time. She is seen "Totally naked, her body painted red, zonked out on LSD cavorting around with a crowd of naked boys" (308). The Catholic faith, as Greeley portrays in his novels, is neither pessimistic nor fatalistic. God always gives second chances. He forgets and forgives the failures of human beings. Of course, Chuck and Rosemary have preached high ideals. April has accomplished meritorious services among the youth. Yet, they 'fall from grace' occasionally, as to err is human. God does not leave these persons to suffer or to be doomed for ever. As Chuck acknowledges, 'The Lord God must have assigned the most skillful angels to protect us....'(274). A parish priest ought to teach the people that when they neglect or lose the correlation between faith and preaching they will have to suffer, and correct their ways. He has to save them from falling into despair and at the same time convince them that God is preparing them to sing the 'September song'.

The very title, *September Song*, is suggestive of great jubilation or celebration which becomes a reality as a result of the final reunion of the entire family. The mutual forgiveness and acceptance of all the important characters mark the climax of the novel.

Chuck and Rosemary are reunited. Kevin, their son, falsely reported to be missing and dead, returns from the battlefield, the Distinguished Service Cross being awarded posthumously to him, by the Defence Department (341). He is now happily married to Maria Elena. April, who is believed to be spoilt for ever, returns, as a new person, with her lover James Nettleton of the medical profession. Above all, the Vietnam War is over. Peace is restored to the family of Chuck and Rosemary. The whole world feels greatly relieved. In Greeley's opinion there will be no better time for a 'September song'. This family reunion looks like an anticipation of and a partial participation in the heavenly bliss. Anyway this is a sacramental experience of God's love and forgiveness. Hence, *September Song* is actually a preaching of the Catholic faith in God's love, and forgiving nature. As the Church is a sign of God's loving presence, the family of the Malleys becomes the sacrament of the same. Any priest can make use of this story to illustrate the theme of necessity of peace and family reunion, which can be realized, only when the correlation of faith and preaching is restored.

The ministry of preaching will be effective only when it is accompanied by Catholic faith and Catholic imagination. This study has proved that priests as well as lay people can and must preach the Word of God in their respective walks of life. *Happy are the Peace-Makers*, the first novel, is the story of Nora MacDonaugh who, though not a nun, interprets and implements the Gospel message, motivated by Blackie, the personification of faith and imagination. Nora thinks that by virtue of her Baptismal priesthood, she cannot but preach the Word of God. In Greeley's opinion, she is Mary incarnate. Nora preaches the necessity of peace, the importance of family reunion and the inevitability of the spirit of forgiveness. She is performing exactly what Jesus has commissioned the Church to do. So, she can be rightly said to be a sacrament of God. In short, Nora illustrates how a lay person has to preach Catholic values in daily life,

whereas, Blackie proves how a priest can best preach the Gospel officially, and at the same time, train the laity to be effective preachers. Faith by its very nature has to be preached and preaching has to be backed up by faith. Hence, there is an inseparable relationship between faith and preaching.

The next novel, *The Bishop and the Three Kings*, also establishes the correlation between faith and preaching. In this novel, Blackie solves the mystery regarding the disappearance of the relics of the Magi or the Three Kings from the great Cathedral of Cologne. For Blackie, every investigation is an extension and expression of his priestly obligation to preach the truth. The novel appeals to every priest to realize their role as the promulgators and protectors of truth. But, Frederick Heidrich, even as a Bishop, instead of safeguarding the relics of the Magi, takes sides with some businessmen in stealing them. He can never be a preacher of faith and truth. For, he is not inspired by Catholic imagination. The female counterpart of Blackie in this novel, is Cindausue. He frees her of her inhibitions and complexes, and she, being reborn, offers herself at the service of the Catholic imagination. She unites her broken family and emerges as a sign of God's love and forgiveness. The stories of Blackie and Cindausue prove that a Catholic priest has to maintain a mutually supporting relationship between faith and preaching.

The Bishop and the Beggar Girl of St. Germain is expected to proclaim the unique role of the media in preaching the Gospel message, and at the same time, reminds us of the dangers involved, as a priest dominates in the media-world. Jean Claude, the priest, preaches very effectively over the television and under his influence, Chantal, his twin sister, continues the preaching ministry, in his absence. Since the ultimate aim of preaching is conversion of the listener, Claude has converted his sister. Greeley argues that a lay person, that too, a woman, can and has to preach the Word of God like Chantal. It is the duty of the parish priest to train the lay people to take up this missionary task.

The novel also highlights the significance of teaching the faithful about the importance of frequenting the sacraments, which is to be elaborated in the fifth chapter. It suffices here to state, that, in order to be an effective priest, he necessarily needs to combine his preaching with Catholic faith and imagination. In other words, each priest must abide by the component of the correlation of faith and preaching.

Irish Eyes is the fourth novel discussed in this section. This is an account of how Dermot, Nuala and Blackie, the three ideal characters of Greeley, recover the stolen Chalice, which is a strong symbol of Irish Catholic faith. The novel is a strong declaration of the perennial nature of Catholic faith and that of the preaching ministry. As long as there are human beings, there will be Catholics; as long as there are Catholics, there will be priests, and as long as there are priests, there will be preaching. The Chalice is never destroyed, and likewise the Catholic faith will never be destroyed nor will it ever wither away on its own. But, the priests have the duty to preach for which all of them have to follow the precepts of Catholic imagination. It is only when Blackie and the two protagonists link themselves with the correlation of faith and preaching, that they are able to witness to the teachings of the Catholic Church, both in their words and deeds. This novel can be said to be Greeley's intense warning to all the priests not to disregard their preaching ministry. The novel also portrays the story of Roger and Farmer, the collaborators in the media, who in their pursuit after money and fame, violate the spirit of faith and imagination. They are unable to preach truth, and consequently, both of them meet with untimely death. In other words, they fail in performing the preaching duty expected of a Catholic. The novel ought to be an eye-opener to every priest to be more faithful to his own preaching ministry as well as his obligation to train the lay people to be ministers of the Word of God in daily life.

September Song is the last novel discussed in this chapter. Written against the background of *Humanae Vitae*, the Magnacarta of human life, this book proves that both the clergy and the laity are bound before the Church to preach the Good News. The ideal couples, Charles Cronin O'Malley and Rosemary, perform this duty as good as any ordained priest, and even better than some of them. With regard to the spreading of peaceful and anti-war activities, the camera of Charles Cronin and the pen of Rosemary are as eloquent and expressive as the microphone, an ordinary priest uses for his sermon. Whether it be a priest or a lay person, in order to fulfill the prophetic mission of teaching and preaching, a Catholic needs, not only oratory skill but also solid faith. It is the combination of faith and preaching as an important component of Catholic imagination, which enables a person to perform this duty effectively. By the end of the novel, Vietnam War is over. And there occurs the final reunion of all the members of the family of the chief protagonists. In other words, the preaching of a Catholic, activated by the merging of faith and imagination, bears fruit in the life of the individual, in the family and in the entire world.

To wind up, Greeley is of the opinion that preaching is one of the important obligations of a priest by virtue of his ordination. At the same time, each lay person as partakers in the Baptismal priesthood has to preach and witness to Catholic virtues and Biblical perspectives. Those who preach have to make use of all the media, but prudently. Every Catholic must stand for truth and peace. The priest should preach the truth about the real nature of God that He is nothing but love and forgiveness. He has to fight against violence and war. In order to make the preaching effective, Greeley stipulates that the speaker has to maintain the correlation of faith and preaching. In other words, faith is the content of the preaching of a priest, and imagination is its source and strength. This chapter is to be wound up with a partial and very brief reference to some non-fictional

writings of Greeley just to see how much the novelist insists on the importance of this component of Catholic imagination in them.

That Greeley is very much preoccupied with how the Catholic priests fulfill their prophetic role of teaching and preaching becomes very evident, as we look at his non-fictional writings. He takes the priests to task for the poor quality of Sunday sermons which is mostly due to their neglect of Catholic imagination. He writes in *A Piece of My Mind on Just About Everything* (1978), "The first most serious problem facing the American Church is not clergy morale or finance, or women etc. but the problem of rotten preaching..." (143). Commenting on the low quality of homilies heard in the Church, and referring to the Marijuana Mass, he writes in *The Friendship Game* (1970), "Given the quality of homilies heard in the Roman Catholic Church today, the marijuana ought to be used, if it is going to be used at all, before the homily instead of after" (112). This is Greeley's dig at the sleep-inducing effect of sermons usually preached in the churches. He regrets that most of the clergy are not even worried about how boring and ineffective they are on the pulpit. As Greeley writes in *The Making of the Pope* (2005), "Only 20 percent of the priests thought quality of preaching was a serious problem for the laity, while 80 percent of the laity thought so" (XXVI). According to Greeley, every Catholic priest must be aware of this unpleasant situation and they must endow themselves with Catholic imagination without which preaching will not be appealing to the people.

In Greeley's opinion, each parish is a storehouse of stories and each priest is a storyteller. In this respect, Jesus himself is the model for all priests. Jesus' parables are unforgettable to this day not only because of the originality of the content but also due to the richness of imagination in each of them. One encounters the real Jesus in the stories. The priest can present and represent this Jesus only by means of stories which are impossible without the fusion of faith and imagination. Since preaching is essential for

the priest, and stories are essential for every preaching, what Greeley writes in *Jesus* (2007) is very relevant to all those who preach Jesus and his teachings. In his words, “But if you want to know what Jesus was really like and what he really believed, if you want to get to the “essential” Jesus, then you must read and re-read the parables” (164). It is this Jesus who has called and sent the priests to go and preach. Hence, they have to tell and retell the parables of Jesus and other Catholic stories with happy endings during their sermon. In short, this chapter substantiates that every Catholic is bound to be the preachers of the Word of God. Without maintaining the correlation of faith and preaching, neither an ordained priest nor a lay person can perform his or her priestly witnessing.

Chapter IV

FAITH AND LOVE:

The Cardinal Sins, Thy Brother's Wife, Virgin and Martyr,

An Occasion of Sin and Summer at the Lake

As has been stated in the first chapter, the combination of faith and love is the third component of Catholic imagination. According to Catholic theology, love is the most important attribute of God. That God is love is one of the Biblical definitions of the Almighty. One cannot have Catholic faith without believing in God as love. At the same time, God has revealed this love to man in the form of a story through the history of salvation, which cannot be understood without resorting to imagination. The best way to experience love is, in and through human relationships in which imagination plays an important role. Hence, a Catholic priest who has to present and represent God who is love cannot do this duty without Catholic imagination. This chapter examines how Greeley's characters, priests as well as lay people, witness to this correlation of faith and love in their daily life.

Unfortunately, there is no other word more misinterpreted than love especially in the modern media. Very often the word is applied to mean everything a man does to a woman for his own gratification. So, the Catholic priest has an added responsibility to teach the world what love really is because love is inalienably related to Catholic faith and its proclamation is the fundamental role of the priestly profession. Faith as well as love is essentially an unconditional surrender. A true Catholic who believes in God as love, has to admit that he must love his or her brethren as a selfless service. This is possible only when the believer looks at his life and the reality of love from the angle of Catholic imagination. Catholic faith teaches everyone to understand the other people as

God's children, and one's own brethren, where as, Catholic love demands that one must live for the other. This is the basis of all Catholic services rendered to the world. Likewise, the correlation is also the foundation and inspiration of the triple vows or virtues which the Catholic priest has to observe. Catholic imagination equips the priest with an undivided heart to share everything with all, and to work for God's kingdom as responsible servants. It is the same Catholic imagination which assists the married people to have firm faith in their vocation as a sacrament of God's love and to be proud of that. The analysis of the five novels of Greeley will assess how his priestly and lay characters in them reenact this correlation of faith and love which is an important component of Catholic imagination. The five novels are *The Cardinal Sins* (1981), *Thy Brother's Wife* (1982), *Virgin and Martyr* (1986), *An Occasion of Sin* (1992) and *Summer at the Lake* (1997).

The Cardinal Sins is Greeley's most popular novel and one of the earliest and one of the largest as well as the mostly criticized one. This book is apparently an account of how Patrick Donahue emerges as the Cardinal Archbishop of Chicago overcoming a lot of unfavourable constraints, including his sexual aberrations. Through this novel, as the title indicates, the author elaborates on the four cardinal sins—Patrick's covetousness, Kevin's pride, Ellen's anger and Maureen's sloth. It is actually a lesson on virtue which is more cardinal, that is, the infusion of Catholic imagination into human relationships. The ultimate aim of the novelist is to present what love really is or what it showed to be, in the context of the Catholic faith. All the characters in the novel acquire more and more maturity in mutual relationships. And it is the duty of a Catholic priest to help the people, in this process of maturing their relationship which needs transcending of mere physical love and rising to the level of Catholic love which is impossible without Catholic

imagination. In other words, this novel proves that love is stronger than death, a love that is Catholic, a love nourished by faith and imagination in the right proportion.

The Cardinal Sins revolves around two central characters Patrick and Kevin, who were classmates both at school and in the seminary, and are now Catholic priests. Patrick has a lover by name Maureen, and, in fact, he entertains other women also. Kevin too, has a lover and she is Ellen. All these four characters are marked by one prominent flaw each, that is, covetousness, sloth, pride and anger, respectively. These flaws are really impediments in their mutual relationships. There is a specific difference between the relationship of Patrick with Maureen, and Kevin with Ellen. Both Patrick and Kevin maintain passionate relationship with their lovers. The distinguishing element is that the love of Patrick has always been body-centred, always caring for carnal pleasures. Even as a Bishop, Patrick is a victim of sexual gratification, where as, in the case of Kevin and Ellen the relationship is never sexual but liberative, respecting the other's identity, mutually strengthening and consoling. At a time, Ellen wants Kevin to leave priesthood and marry her. But, she learns to abide by his option for continuing in the priesthood, though she never ceases from loving him but without any physical contacts. Later, she tells Maureen, "I don't sleep with him, I don't let my love for him interfere with my family and marriage, I don't let it stop my writing, and I don't make him sick with self-loathing and guilt" (395). Ellen is the first one to develop as an adult friend. As Sr. Mary Carmel certifies in the novel, Ellen has become a person in her own right, and if Kevin has grown as a person, it is because she offered him "adult friendship" (406). Now, Kevin claims that he is a "living proof that you can intensely and passionately love members of the opposite sex without having to jump into bed with them" (443).

As one probes into Kevin's character, s/he finds that his love cannot be regarded as either the ideal love or a love motivated by Catholic imagination. Something is lacking in

his understanding and practice of love. Technically, he has not sinned violating a woman physically. But, he suffers from what can be properly rewarded, that he is better than others and that he is never a sinner. He feels that he is eclipsed by Patrick's achievements. In Kevin's opinion, Patrick has no right to become a bishop (413), not even a priest (71, 86). Even though Kevin has written books, made huge money and has a non-pastoral job he thinks that he is an outcast (318), a non-person, a pariah (227). Kevin does not appear to be a man of integrity. One cannot say either that he is a model for priests nor that he possesses Catholic love. When Georgina, one-time lover of Patrick and mother of a child Patricia, visits him, Kevin proudly resists and survives her amorous advances (323). As Maureen stays in Kevin's room over night he does not touch her, but, he thinks, "You get a beautiful woman in bed with you after four decades of fantasizing and you put her to sleep" (414). Of course, Kevin claims that he is better than Patrick, but, his motion of love faith is not beyond suspicion or accusation. One finds Patrick telling Kevin, "You're still what you always were, the rich bastard who patronizes everyone and loves no one" (500). Even Ellen complains against Kevin, "Laughter like love, is stronger than death. You know that, Kevin. You preach it. Why don't you practise it? Why don't you let all of us love you?" (505).

A Catholic priest is bound to preach on faith and love. No priest can ignore Kevin's Character. According to the traditional standards of morality, he does not commit sin. But, one cannot say he is sinless. One cannot say that he has either Catholic faith or Catholic love when s/he finds him disobeying Patrick, the Archbishop and threatens to publish the nasty stories he knows about the latter. Kevin helps Patrick very much to become the new Cardinal. But, Kevin's Pharisaic pride dissuades everyone from showing any sympathy to him. In the eyes of a Catholic priest who teaches that "But I say unto you, I that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed

adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5: 28), Kevin is sinful. If one considers seriously the following words of Jesus, s/he can not admit that Kevin is either pure or innocent; “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of them mouth, this defileth a man” (Matthew 15: 11). He owes all the positive aspects of his nature to the saving presence of Ellen, his wife. The Catholic priest can draw a lot of lessons from this analysis of Kevin’s character.

Kevin shows an intense awareness of his vocation from the very beginning. As he says, “I just want to be a priest” (23), and again, “It’s going to be an exciting time to be a priest” (50). Though, he always abstains from committing sexual sins unlike his friend, Patrick, the Archbishop, Kevin is not happy as a priest. He is not interested in the problems of his parishioners. At a time, Maureen shouts at him, “My God, Kevin, is that what your vocation is all about? Why don’t you get out?” (237). Any way, Kevin does not exhibit any unconditional positive regard for the people nor empathic understanding of the people expected of a Catholic priest who is motivated by Catholic imagination. In Kevin’s case, faith is not fully Catholic and his love is not pure. When Greeley attributes Kevin’s dissatisfaction with priestly life to pride what he means is that the latter lacks an integral merging of faith and imagination. Kevin’s Pharisaic or hypocritical attitude draws more attention as one looks closer at Patrick’s life.

Patrick being covetous is always a womanizer. That his attitude to woman has no element of Catholic love is evident from Ellen’s opinion that if Patrick becomes an Archbishop, “No woman in Chicago will be safe. Pat’s never been able to keep his pants zipped” (221). And Maureen is determined never to leave him. And she says, “I want to be his mistress, not his wife. He doesn’t need a wife, and I don’t need a husband?” (224). Despite his weakness for women, Patrick thinks that “He’s going to save the Church” (262) and really he becomes “A big man in the Chicago Church” (272). In Patrick’s

behaviour, one notices an impersonation of the taxcollector who is aware of his sinfulness and unworthiness and is ready to confess his sins. Immediately after one of his love-making sessions with Maureen, he prays for forgiveness (247). On another occasion, while exploring the body of Ellen, who comes to visit him, he suddenly stops and asks pardon for having tried to rape her(42). Greeley is more tolerant to Patrick who sins many a time in deed than to Kevin who does not commit sins. The readers can only sympathize with Patrick's fragile nature. At a time, he thinks of quitting his priestly vocation. In his own words, "I'll decline the bishopric, resign from the priesthood and begin a new life" (301). Patrick's repeated falls from the grace is an invitation to all Catholic priests for learning and teaching the necessity of having both faith and love in the Catholic sense. His craze for sex and women fails to provide him with the love he wants for or the Catholic love, a Catholic priest ought to possess and promulgate, of course, in association with faith. One feels sheer pity for him when Patrick confesses, "It's not sex. I don't care much about that. I just need love....can't go on empty" (374). In fact, he is love thirsty and terribly lonely. Behind every one of his aberrations, one can hear a cry for love from others, and a complaint that he is not loved enough by others. This poor man has neglected the fundamental truth that celibacy means nothing but an undivided love for God, that is, a love to be divided for all, but, not anyone in particular. He has forgotten the truth that according to Catholic faith a priest is ordained to love others and not to be loved, and to be servants of all and not to be served. Both Kevin and Patrick are sinners. Kevin sins, but, neither does he know nor does he admit that he is a sinner. At the same time, he accuses others of being sinners. In the case of Patrick, he sins, he knows it, he admits it, and he confesses, regrets and repents that he is a sinner worse than others. This merits him God's mercy and favours. Luck also accompanies him always. Greeley reminds of what Jesus told the Pharisee, with reference to the woman caught in adultery,

“Her sins, which are many are forgiven, for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.” (Luke 7: 47). One cannot justify or attribute the success of Patrick as an administrator despite his ‘falls from grace’ to anything but God’s mercy and forgiveness which He showers more abundantly upon the sinners who repent than on the Pharisaic saints.

What is more important here, is Greeley’s expectation about a Catholic priest who has to own for himself and preach for others the Church’s Gospel of the human body. In a world given to bodily pleasures, how a priest can respect his own body and that of others, is a relevant problem. How to deal with the persons of the opposite sex, is one of the causes of tension to many priests. Every Catholic priest, being a preacher, must know the approaches of the Catholic Church to these questions. Greeley’s position seems to be that the human body is not evil in itself. It should not be condemned as the cradle of all temptations. As one asks which Gospel will enable a person to respect the other as oneself, and redeem him or her in the relationship with another one, there seems to be no better answer than the one given by Saint Paul according to whom the human body is really God’s abode or the residence of His Holy Spirit. He writes in his first letter to the Corinthians, “What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (6: 19-20). He reminds the Corinthians in his second letter, “We are the temple of the living God!” (6:16). Again, as Paul writes in his second letter to the Thessalonians, God’s will is that we be holy and completely free from immorality because He called us not to live in immorality, but in holiness (4: 3,7). This Pauline messages shall be the guiding principle of the priests both in their preaching and their dealing with women. Since, the first requirement of real love is the understanding of the other persons for God’s sake and as His children, it is a component of faith and imagination. Without imbibing this Catholic spirit of love no

priest can remain or function as a priest. From this point of view, neither Patrick nor Kevin can be said to have attained the correlation of faith and love in their lives. Thus, *The Cardinal Sins* can be understood as a strong appeal to all Catholic priests for maintaining a better correlation between faith and love in their ministry.

Any reader of *The Cardinal Sins* is as equally fascinated by the two female characters, Ellen and Maureen, as by the male ones who are their lovers. Both Ellen and Maureen initially want to bring their lovers Kevin and Patrick respectively, to their own bodies. The body of the Church is only of secondary importance to them. So, they never care for the priestly position their lovers hold in the Church, one as a priest and the other as a Bishop. Both of them gradually undergo a process of maturing in their relationship with the clergymen. Ellen is the first to realize that the desire of her body for selfish pleasure is less important than the demands of the body of the Church which Kevin is committed to serve. She also realizes that Patrick has to transcend his life as the Cardinal. She advises him to go for a therapy. Maureen seems to be bent upon claiming Patrick for herself. Towards the end of the novel, she decides to marry Sloane in order to let Patrick be himself in his purple robe. But, before she fully realizes the maturity of a Catholic relationship she breaths her last in an accident, in the gracious presence of the newly elected Pope John Paul II, and of course, Patrick, the new Cardinal. Though the relationship between Patrick and Maureen is marked by its perennially body-centred character, one consoling thought is that, but for her presence and influence, Patrick might have been a worse character. To that extent, one can say that Maureen's role has a saving influence in the life of the new Cardinal. One's concept of love will necessarily influence the partner in love either for good or bad.

Usually, the role of Eve as a source of temptations is attached to the female characters in literature. But, all the prominent female characters in Greeley evince the

Our Lady figure of Saint Mary. They are helpers on the way to salvation. They are in general, persons who love the Church, who suffer silently in life and almost always provide, the male protagonists with counselling and consolation. Invariably, they are signs of God's love, they are sacraments of grace, and though in varying degrees, they perform their priestly duties of preaching God's love and witnessing to this providence, through their exemplary lives. They are people rooted in Catholic imagination and in their relationship with the others one is struck by the prevalence of the merging of faith and imagination, of course, at different levels of intensity. As the inquiry into the novel makes it clear that both Ellen and Maureen love their Catholic Church. In most of the novels of Greeley one idea we come across, many a time is, "Once a Catholic, always a Catholic". In *The Cardinal Sins* Maureen writes to Ellen, "None of us can really ever get away from the Church. It was too much a part of our life when we were growing up. Maybe we don't do all the things it says. We need it" (325). In the advice Kevin gives Ellen in the confessional before the absolution, one feels the revibration of this idea of belonging to the Church for ever.

It is taken for granted that the Catholic priest has to save the Church in case of troubles and that he has to interpret and represent the teaching of the Church in the modern world. One thing one marvels at in Greeley's novels in general and in *The Cardinal Sins*, especially, is how much lay people also participate in this priestly function. For example, even at the expense of her art lessons, Maureen devotes her time and energy to assist Patrick in his conciliar politics during Vatican Council II. She is determined to keep Patrick out of trouble (251). Maureen considers it as a challenge to make him a Cardinal (255), even after knowing that Patrick is activated by dark demons of money, power and pleasure (162). Once Maureen asks Kevin in the presence of Ellen, "Is the Church ever going to wake up to the fact that this is the twentieth century? Do all

of us have to leave before they change?” (78) To this question Kevin replies that she is changing. Tim Curran, Maureen’s lover, tells Kevin on a later occasion, about her desire for changes in the Catholic Church. In his words, “She says the Church is not going to change, and there’s no point in waiting until 1965 or something for the change. Is there going to be a change, Father?” (183). The lay people who really want to renovate the Church appreciate the availability of good priests who are catalysts of change. That is why, Ellen tells Kevin that the parish that gets him, is going to be very fortunate (121).

In short, *The Cardinal Sins* is a novel centred around the beauty of the human body. The question Greeley attempts to answer is whether the beauty of the body is a seductive force enslaving the human beings or if it is a symbol inviting the believers experience the divine love resulting in bringing glory to God and liberating and saving the people. There is a very befitting scene in the novel to conclude this discussion. As Kevin appreciates Maureen’s beauty, she responds, “Does He [God] like our bodies? He must, I suppose, because he is responsible for them”(119). Kevin’s comment is that if He should turn out to be She, She might be jealous of Maureen’s body. Both in this question and in the answer, as the Catholic priest ought to admit and witness to, there is the correlation of faith and love. The question, if God is a He or a She or both, and whether the divine nature is love, pertains to the field of faith. The appreciation of the beauty of the human body is first of all an acknowledgment of the human participation in divine beauty and it is possible only if the believer has a Catholic understanding of love which surpasses all our physical instincts. And beauty whether it be divine or human cannot be admired without employing our imagination. Hence, the message of the novel seems to be that love in its integrity and any relationship based on that cannot be understood without viewing or applying Catholic imagination. So, this has to be a favorite concern of every Catholic priest in all areas of their ministry.

The second novel selected for a detailed analysis in this chapter is *Thy Brother's Wife*. This book highlights the significance of realizing and loving one's God-willed vocation, and the responsibility of being faithful to the duties of the vocation. From a Catholic point of view, it can rightly be said that this novel is a modern exposition of the sixth and the ninth commandments which forbid the believers to commit adultery or in other words, to covet 'thy brother's wife'. The central theme of this novel is how a lay woman [Nora] plays a decisive role in helping an Archbishop [Sean Cronin] to be convinced of his priestly vocation and decide, firmly and finally, to adhere to that call. The story of Sean Cronin and Nora and their relationship teach that it is impossible to find out one's real vocation and commit oneself to its demands without abiding by a correlation of Catholic faith and a true understanding of Catholic love. The novel also gives a warning that betrayal of one's vocation or neglect of its obligations will end up in disaster of the people concerned, as in the case of Paul Cronin. A Catholic has no other means of growing in holiness and witnessing to God's love except through living up to the demands and expectations of the vocation God has destined for one and which he or she has chosen. This novel also puts forward a strong appeal to all parish priests to be aware of their grave obligation regarding the preparation of the young people for embracing their proper vocation which they have to do in the light of Catholic imagination.

Paul and Sean are brothers, born of Michael Cronin and Mary Eileen. Michael decides what his two sons must be in future. Accordingly, Sean enters priesthood and is on the way to be the next Cardinal, while Paul enters politics and is about to become a Senator. It has to be emphasized that should it be the father who dictates the vocation of his sons. In other words, neither faith nor love has any place in the choice of these vocations. What the novel presents is a series of violations of the two commandments

already mentioned. Michael after the birth of his second child puts his wife in a hospital at St. Helena and tells his sons that their mother died in an accident in their early years. Mary Eileen stays in the hospital for more than thirty years till she is delivered from there by Nora to the great shock of Michael but the great surprise of Sean and Paul. Nora is Michael's foster-child brought from Angel Guardian orphanage and it is she who eventually assumes the role of a kingmaker in the novel. As his wife is locked up in the hospital Michael indulges in immoral relationships with Elizabeth Hanover, Joan Gondon, Mrs. Conway and Jenny Warren. It is very clear that he follows an Epicurean philosophy of pleasure. He never cares for Catholic love or faith as taught by the Church. The net result is that all the members of his family also desecrate their bodies for momentary gratification of their passions. For example, towards the end of the novel one is shocked to learn that the real father of Sean is one Father Ed Connario who used to visit Mary Eileen. In obedience to his father, Paul marries Nora. Among his mistresses, Maggie, Sally Grant, Chris Woverly and Nicole Shields are the prominent ones. In his hurry to cover up things and in order to save his face he sees to it that Maggie, Nicole Shields and one Joseph Makuch are killed. The callous Paul, leading a scandalous life, has an abominable ending. The fear of exposure and disgrace compels him to take out the Mary Eileen [A boat] and sail away from all the problems, into the sea never to return. Paul's wife Nora the 'thy brother's wife' maintains illicit relationship with Sean even after his ordination.

Thus, *Thy Brother's Wife* is replete with relationships in which love is adulterated or distorted. These are instances in which even persons who are professed Catholics fail to cater to the Catholic meaning and value of love. Catholic faith teaches that love of God is the most fundamental commandment. But all the important characters figuring in this novel seem to be advocates of immoral sharing of love which is detrimental to the

Catholic understanding of both faith and love, needless to say, that they are not moved by Catholic imagination. They are driven by hedonism which thrives on unrestricted and uninhibited ventilation of sexual instincts. This situation of 'sexplosion' is precisely a challenge to all Catholic priests to tackle with. It is the duty of every priest to realize the nobility of human sexuality and the sanctity of the sacrament of marriage. This Catholic teaching cannot be communicated to the lay people except through the imparting of faith studded with imagination. For this, what is needed first, is that the Catholic priests should lead a life of integrity and honesty especially in matters related to sex and women. Unfortunately, some of the ecclesiastical dignitaries portrayed in this novel are worse than many of the lay people. These priestly characters who lack Catholic imagination can never witness to either faith or love. In fact, they are counter witnesses to all what the Church stands for. They are the persons expected, trained, and appointed to guide the community. Even as very few of them resort to scandalous ways, it is no wonder, many people go astray. Actually, Greeley regrets at the plight of such priests who instead of being signs of God's love, degenerate into sources or causes of temptations and take people away from his love for the momentary fulfilment of their own vested interests.

What is most embarrassing in *Thy Brother's Wife* is the relationship between Sean and Nora, and the transformation they undergo in their attitude to each other, which forms the climax of the novel. The process of their love relationship can be described as a continuous search for real love. In other words, the novel is an account of how these two lovers liberate themselves from their mutually enslaving sex-centred friendship in order to let the other undertake the commitments of one's vocation. To put it differently, this book is an exposition of Sean's tense mind which is torn between the restrictions of priestly life and his attraction to Nora. Even as a seminarian Sean treats Nora as his lover. After a few years, he becomes a priest while she becomes Paul's wife. Whenever

they get a chance, one sneaks into the other's room. Sean being a priest, this sort of a relationship with a person of the opposite sex is incompatible with Catholic love. A relationship based on the fascination for the other's physical charms does not have the concurrence of Catholic love. So, undoubtedly the relationship between Sean and Nora is initially detrimental to the spirit of Catholic imagination. When the Church decides to appoint him, Cardinal of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Sean finds himself at a loss haunted by the sense of guilt and shame, and the fear of being exposed. Due to the secret that he is not a Cronin, the murders committed by Paul, his brother who commits suicide, his illicit relationship with the 'thy brother's wife' and the cruelty metered out to his mother by his father, he confesses that he is utterly unworthy of becoming a Cardinal. Even as the Pope begs for Sean's acceptance of the sublime post, the latter responds negatively and categorically, "I will not be the next Archbishop of Chicago"(461). He adds to the great amazement of all that he is going to leave the priesthood. After Paul's suicide 'thy brother's wife' is nobody's wife. So, Sean decides to quit his priesthood and marry Nora. He tells her, "I am going to resign from the priesthood. I want to marry you. You need a husband. I need a wife"(489). Sean decides to wed his lover forsaking and betraying his love for the Church and the priesthood. And his drastic resolution tarnishes the image of Catholic faith.

As one traces the course of Sean to the various grades of priesthood, one finds that he has neither strong faith in Catholicism nor pure love for the Church and the priesthood. Right from the seminary days onwards, Sean's is an unsteady character. His faith is wavering and his love is superfluous. One can notice a parallelism between his loss of Catholic imagination and his attachment to Nora coupled with a corresponding aversion to priesthood. When his thoughts about the charming Nora exceeds limits, the conscience warns him, "You are a seminarian. You are going to be a priest. You shouldn't feel this

way about a girl” (46). Sean has no interest in prayer. He even doubts whether there is a God. As one who follows a vocation chosen by his father, Sean asks, “How can I go through life as a priest and not believe in God?”(56). About the origin of his vocation, he asks, “Was it his vocation or his father’s?” (88). Even Nora blames him for not praying enough while Sean is in a parish. She asks him “what kind of a priest is it who doesn’t pray?” (165). Due to his fascination for Noa’s love, he never cares for God’s love. Because of his absolute faith in Nora’s beauty and ability, he does not value Catholic faith. The more he loves Nora the more he wants to possess her. As a result his respect for faith and Catholic love is increasingly decreasing. On a later occasion, Sean writes in his diary, “I have almost no faith in you [God] and now even less in the Church and the priesthood...I desperately need some sign that you are there and I am not being a fool”(420). A catholic priest who sincerely loves his vocation and has to prepare his parishioners in choosing the right vocation must understand the gradual degradation of Sean as a priest and that the root cause of it is his utter neglect of the merging of Catholic faith and Catholic love. Anyone can easily recognize that Sean’s growing indifference to the Catholic imagination is proportionate to his intensifying obsession with Nora.

It is indeed surprising to note that despite his rotten interior life and indecent moral life Sean is very successful both as a priest and as a Bishop. Though he does not have strong conviction about his own Catholic vocation, Sean preaches high ideals and that he does it very impressively. Even as a sub-deacon he looks like a Cardinal. Once, Sean tells Jimmy Quire “if we don’t like working in poor parishes we don’t belong in the priesthood” (114-115). And one finds Sean working with and for the people. In one of his addresses to the potential converts, he assures, “All I can say is that whenever you experience love, you experience God....You have to get ready for God by trying to love one another with all the power you have so that there may be more of God’s love in the

world” (146-147). Though Sean himself has thought about leaving his priesthood, when appointed in the Chancery he is greatly shocked and horrified by defections of others from priesthood (227). As he hears about the decision of Father Peter Flynn, Sean’s reaction is, “I believe that priests should keep their promise and not screw the first available woman parishioner who comes along” (229). One knows for certain that Sean is not faithful to his commitments as a priest. But he claims, “when I make a commitment I keep it” (230). Again, Sean readily offers his help, when he finds at stake the relationship between Nora and Paul who asks, “Aren’t priests supposed to help people put their marriages back together again?” (241-242). That he is committed to his people and that he must be available for them, though his first priority always seems to be Nora and neither God nor his community. At the funeral of his mother Mary, Sean, who is by now a Bishop, preaches, “There is only one thing we can understand today. God loves Mary and He loves all of us” (398). What we understand from all these is that Sean is aware of what kind of a personality a Catholic priest ought to be. He is also aware that he is not an ideal one in this respect. Greeley expects the Catholic priests to realize the mental conflict that prevails over Sean, that is, the tension between what he is expected to be and what he actually is. The lesson they have to learn from Sean’s story is that in the priestly life there should not be any contradiction between one’s ideals and one’s practical life. The criterion of an earnest person is that there exists a harmony among his thought, word and deed. Sean cannot be presented at this level as a model for Catholic priests because he preaches a lot of good things about God’s love and priestly responsibilities, but, he himself violates most of these fundamental principles in his own life. Gradually, finding himself grief-stricken and guilt-ridden, the feeling that he is cheating the Church and that he has no worth to occupy the Episcopal throne, overwhelms him to the core. Every priest has to lead an exemplary life. He has to be very careful to see that his relationship

with women does not become an obstruction to his pastoral commitments and a distraction in his prayer and meditation without which he cannot be a disciple or vicar of Jesus Christ.

Because of the reasons mentioned above, Sean resolves to quit the priesthood, exactly when Vatican invites him to be the next Cardinal. It is in such a situation that Greeley introduces God as interfering in Sean's life. Nora is the first to be caught up in a change of attitude. For Sean, there is nothing more desirable in this life than marrying Nora who herself assumes the role of a transforming agent, in God's hands, bent upon making him a new person, the new Cardinal. As the first step, she helps him realize that fulfilling one's commitments in accordance with one's state of life, is the most important thing. Everything else is secondary. Due to his neglect of the combination of Catholic faith and Catholic love, he has lost what is known as the priority of values. His concept of truth itself has been distorted. The basic reason why he hesitates to be a Bishop is that he wants to perpetuate his relationship with Nora. Why he declines to be the new Cardinal is that he can marry her, as Paul, her husband is no more. Another tactics Sean plays to justify his rejection of being a Bishop is an unjust generalization that all Bishops are worthless persons. In his own words, "You can't be a good bishop unless you are an accomplished liar....some of us are readymade psychopathic liars" (330). Instead of confessing his own infatuation for a woman he is finding fault with others. He has turned a deaf ear to truth, and to the reality of his sinful and scandalous ways. At this juncture, God of Catholic faith, who always gives second chances, touches Sean lovingly and decisively. As it has been already mentioned, Greeley's God is a romantic comedian. He is love and His love is nothing but His forgiving nature. This God gives a sign and sends an angel in the form of Nora for the purification of Sean, the next Cardinal. Till this moment, Nora's role is that of a temptress, a seducer, an enslaving force which

disassociate Sean from his clerical ministries. Now, he is on the verge of total collapse and is about to leave the priesthood. What he needs is a nurture of Catholic faith and Catholic love. God's ways are so mysterious or zigzag that He makes the same Nora instrumental to Sean's regaining of the Catholic imagination. It will be very useful to all Catholic priests to examine how Nora sublimates her sexual love to the level of celibate love thereby liberating Sean from their mutual body-centered obsession so that he can ascend the throne of the Cardinal with a pure heart and rejuvenated will. Hence, there is a message in the story of *Thy Brother's Wife* relevant to all celibate persons. The following analysis shows how Nora enacts Sean's transformation.

Somehow, Nora realizes the nobility of the post of the Cardinal. Of course, she loves Sean more than her own life, and she wants him, all of him for herself. The fact that if the relationship between Sean and Nora is exposed, it can disqualify him for that supreme stature, strikes her. So, she determines to sacrifice all her desires and claims, before it is too late. She succeeds in convincing Sean that one should not turn back on one's commitments. She persuades him to believe that real friends will neither enslave nor endanger the partner. She corrects him and consoles him, "I'll be your mother, your sister and your friend, your inspiration, but I won't be your mistress, because that would mess up and it would mess one up, it would mess up my family, and it would mess up your Church" (447). Now, Nora being the new Senator from Illinois, it will not be possible for her to spend more time in Sean's company. Sean also knows very well that if he be the new Cardinal, he will not find so much time to spend with Nora as he did until now. Hence they mutually agree to keep a safe distance from the other for their own better performance in their respective walks of life. Though it is already late, Sean attains a new insight, a manifestation or a revelation that Nora is the sign of God he has been always looking for. He thinks that he is a damn fool who missed Nora, the best sign of

God's love he would ever have" (493). At this, Sean feels relived and regains peace and joy. He who decided to become a priest to abide by his father's will now, resolves to be a Cardinal in obedience to Nora's will which for him is not different from God's own will. Thus the same Nora who appears first in the role of an Eve, the temptress, later assumes the figure of our Lady, a sign of God's grace, a real sacrament. The last phase of the novel that presents Nora as God's living sign, is so bright and transforming that her previous history of seduction and temptation simply turns out to be inconspicuous. The novel reaches its success, and the glory goes to God since both Nora and Sean become new persons by His intervention.

What is most marvelous about *Thy Brother's Wife* is that it shows how a lay woman powerfully decides and designs the future of an ecclesiastical dignitary. Every Catholic priest has to comprehend that these two persons become new persons as a result of a total reorientation of their attitudes to the other. When they were victims of sexual love none of them seems to have cared for God, the eternal lover. They do not try to experience His love, the perfect love. Each one thinks that the love of the lover, the friend, is the only love, the full love, as if nothing exists outside that. Now, that the love of the other slips to the secondary place, and love of God is at the helm of affairs. And this is perfectly in agreement with Catholic faith and Catholic love. In other words, when they separate physically, a re-merging takes place at the level of faith and love in their hearts and minds. In their physical merging with the other, Sean and Nora have separated themselves from Catholic faith and Catholic love. Now, that they are wedded to God himself, first and foremost, one can say that they have returned to Catholicism and its commitments as well as regained their Catholic imagination.

The novel reaches its zenith when Sean announces his determination to say 'yes' to the Pope's appointing him the new Cardinal. He tells the Apostolic Delegate, "I freely

decide to serve” (494). This is perhaps, the first time, that he takes a decision freely. So, his earlier decisions are either his father’s or Nora’s. This decision is now taken freely because, firstly he is free and secondly he is a new person. A Catholic priest is expected to educate his people to be free and new. Faith is a renovating force and love is stronger than death. This insight is the input of the Catholic imagination. The Catholic faith demands that in every right relationship between two persons there is also a third person that is God, the totality and plenitude of love. Without applying Catholic imagination one cannot understand these aspects of faith and love. That is why, the assistance of a priest is essential for the Catholics in their faith-formation and maturing of love-relationships.

According to Catholic faith, the Church as an eschatological sign is a precursor of God’s kingdom on earth. One who really loves God undividedly prays that this world be changed into Thy kingdom. The mission of a Catholic priest is to accelerate and coordinate this process of changing this world into a new heaven and a new earth. In this regard, the Catholic Church has to be a guiding star. Hence, whether the Church will ever change in this direction is the constant botheration of any Catholic priest who is committed to the proclamation of faith and love. *Thy Brother’s Wife* also shares in this botheration, which will prove that this tale is relevant not only to top-ranking personalities like Sean and Nora, but also to ordinary priests, too. At one point, when Sean says that the Church is not going to change, Nora has a quick and daring answer, “The Church will change... will because it has to” (163). On another occasion, Sean tells his Cardinal Eamon Mc Carthy that the Church will not and cannot change. But, the Cardinal blames Sean for his pessimism and declares, “The Church will change because it has to change” (187). Greeley quotes Harry Truman to disprove the misconception that the Church will never change. Because, “Never is a helluva long time” (321). As the successor of Eamon, Sean tries to introduce changes in his Archdiocese. He suggests that

there ought to be a certified accountant in every parish to prevent misappropriation of money (309). Nora solves the financial insist of the Cronin Foundation and introduces various changes for the development of the trust. As the new Senator, she is sure to perform excellently. Even Vatican is very hopeful that Sean, the new Cardinal, will bring about changes in the Church. Sean and Nora have made changes in their lives. Sean represents all the clergy where as Nora represents the laity. If there are more persons like Sean and Nora the Church will really change. What is urgently needed is a better collaboration between the hierarchy and the lay people without which the Catholic Church cannot be saved. Hence, *Thy Brother's Wife* is a challenge in front of every Catholic priest to decide whether they are ready to work for bringing out changes in the Church or how much they are committed to empower the laity by sharing responsibilities with them. It must be added here that Greeley welcomes changes which are legislative and peaceful in character. One has to remember that the first change must take place in one's own heart in the light of the Gospel values. In a way, this purification of one's own self is the most difficult kind of revolution.

The next novel under scrutiny is *Virgin and Martyr* which unfolds the story of Catherine Collins' self-discovery, self-acceptance and self-fulfilment. The study of this novel is included in this chapter because this book teaches the necessity of Catholic faith and the importance of developing a Catholic and comprehensive approach to love. This work is a strong indictment on those Liberation Theologians who neglect faith and identify love with love of the poor which is only a label to cover up their vested interests. In other words, this is an account of how Catherine Collins, fascinated by the revolutionary ideals of Liberation Theology deserts her life in the convent, becomes an activist in the movement but is exploited and oppressed by its own leaders from whom she escapes heroically and launches on a new life with Nicholas, her classmate. As far as

a Catholic priest is concerned, the relevance of this novel consists in the fact that it makes us aware of how some priests, expected to give consolation and encouragement to the lay people, become their torturers with the support of the Government, and at the same time, highlights the importance of having a healthy blending of faith and love, as demanded by Catholic imagination. So, the theme of *Virgin and Martyr* is significant to the priests as well as the lay people.

Catherine Collins, the cousin of Bishop Blackie, the investigator, is the heroine of this novel. In Greeley's language, virginity and martyrdom are not purely biological. A woman can be a virgin in spirit through out her life even if she may have been raped or assaulted at times without her consent and beyond her control. A person can be a life-long martyr suffering from all around as well as from within oneself but never getting killed in life. Catherine has been physically violated by a few priests and the police, yet, Greeley describes her as a virgin. She suffers a lot at the hands of some priests in whom she put absolute trust, and also from her own past characterized by guilt and shame, and from the police force. She is never murdered, though such news flashes in the media. But for Greeley, she is a martyr. It is in search of absolute faith and perfect love that one joins a convent. The training there does not win her admiration. For some reason, she is captivated by the principles of the Liberation Theologians, who, she thinks, possess more of faith and love. It is very late when she realizes that she has been betrayed. These activists do not abide by the Catholic faith and some of their activities are deadly against the teachings of the Church. There she comes across some priests who are really trouble-shooters and perpetrators of violence instead of being peace-makers. Her shock cannot be expressed in words as she recognizes that Father Edward Carny whom she always believes to be an exemplary revolutionary, is indeed a fake and a cheat. He wants nothing but her money. In the end, Edward himself sells her to the police and receives a thick

packet of currency. Though the Liberation Theologians make much hue and cry about love of the poor, they do not perceive the Catholic views on love as God's own nature and as selfless service realized in human relationships. In the end, when she marries Nicholas, she experiences the blessings of Catholic imagination, and as a result, she finds herself firmly rooted in Catholic faith as well as replenished by God's love, channeled through Nicholas.

As one probes into the 152 episodes Greeley has strewn together in composing *Virgin and Martyr* what strikes anyone most, is his criticism of the Catholic priests especially those who are involved in the movements inspired by Liberation Theology. The survey of Catherine's experience with a few of them is more than enough to conclude that many of them do not have real faith nor do they ever preach genuine faith. Some are drop-outs from their parishes working together with nuns, mostly expelled from their convents. By not paying attention to their spiritual duties, they neglect the basic aspect of their vocation. They are neither satisfied with themselves nor are they reconciled with God. Greeley does not understand how these unhappy people will make a happy world, that too, as a result of violent revolutions. In their character, one does not meet the blending of faith and imagination. They interpret the Holy Bible to fit into their political purposes and projects to the detriment of Catholic imagination. They are not endowed with integrity. Even Edward, the hero, is doing dirty job for the mob in the name of option for the poor. He is basically a liar, involved in smuggling money. What Edward really wants to have is nothing but Catherine's family property. That is why, when she changes her will, leaving nothing either to him or his movement, he sells her to the police, for a large sum of money. He is worse than Judas who betrayed Jesus Christ for thirty silver pieces. Both these betrayals are preceded by a kiss.

In the light of her biography, one comes to know that while joining the convent Catherine has the purest of intentions which can originate from nothing but faith and genuine love of God. She believes, "The religious life with its vows of poverty and chastity and obedience is the most perfect way of being dedicated to God... They are the people who most please God" (124). Disappointing Nicholas and undermining his love for her, Catherine becomes a nun, in search of better faith and greater love. The life in the convent instead of promoting this faith and love, unfortunately, is instrumental to a lessening of all Catholic virtues. Severe punishments even for silly things humiliates her. Frustrated, Catherine spends long hours in the chapel. Once she is told, "You need your sleep, Cathy, a lot more than God needs your prayer" (170). In sheer bitterness, she confesses, "I am one of the worst sinners ever lived" (191). She complains that the old religious formation kept them immature on the pretext that they would be saints, but actually deprived them of the freedom and maturity to make their own decisions (215). At this time, the ideals of Liberation Theology make an insatiable appeal to her. She quits the convent and gladly offers to be Ed's trusted activist, a radical, a revolutionary. She hates imperialism and war. She hopes that working with and for the people will enable her improve faith and experience of God's love. Under Ed's influence, she underrates her spiritual life and secularizes her attitudes. She argues that every Christian must identify with the poor and that the Church must not have any ministry to the affluent. In her words, "The garbage from one American family would feed a hundred Indian families" (326). At the outset of her life in the convent, Catherine upholds the three vows. As she gets more involved in Ed's activities, she condemns them, and demands that priests themselves should abolish celibacy. She tells the priests, "Since you are not involved in solving the problem [giving up celibacy], you become the problem" (350). As an activist she leads demonstrations, marches on protest lines, experiments with heroine and

becomes a heroine. Gradually, she falls in love with Father Roy Tuhoy and they get married. Catherine's attitude to sex and love undergoes considerable changes. She says, "I don't believe anymore that it would be sin for two people who honestly love one another to express their love by fucking" (322). At Ed's instruction, Catherine changes her convent-name Anabilis and assumes a new one, Angela Carson, which is suggestive of her change of character. Initially, she wants to lose her life in the service of the poor instead of seeking happiness for herself. Of course, this is a clear expression of her Catholicism. Eventually, she loses most of her virtues, which is nothing but a fall from grace.

When Catherine comes to know about Ed's misappropriation of money, her consternation knows no bounds. She blames herself for having left the convent and served him as his runner or carrier of money. She will not give any money to Ed and changes her will accordingly. The revengeful Ed sells her to the police and collects money for that at her own sight. She is ill treated at the police station. Later, she kills the two policemen sent to protect her, and escapes to Chicago. What is more excruciating is that Ed accuses the police of Catherine's disappearance and declares that she is "a modern martyr" (485). All dreams being shattered, she holds the Church responsible for making Ed "a bastard" (495) and finds fault with her family and friends who never helped her at this time (497). By this time, Catherine has lost her faith in Roy Tuhoy, another priest, too. Her attempts to get real and full love in the convent, in the priests and in social work prove to be a total failure. To cut the story short, she becomes an artist, an area where she can portray God's love, using her imagination and it is from her studio that Elackie and Nicholas redeem her, and present her in the court of Judge Janice Fielding. When the decedent Catherine appears in the court, the whole world hears from her the truth about her martyrdom and

the activities of many of the Liberation Theologians, and with this the damnation of Ed and his associates is confirmed.

It is part of the pastoral ministry of every Catholic priest to preach on conversion, and he has to prepare his community for the renewal of life. The beautiful way how Greeley depicts Catherine's attainment of her self-fulfilment, is to be taken very seriously by all priests. In the story of this self-discovery, one can distinguish clearly three phases. At first, Catherine, in full possession of faith and love, as can be expected of a girl brought up in a Catholic family, becomes a nun. Then, she gradually loses her Catholicity and Catholic imagination. Finally, after futile pursuit after some priests and social work for self-fulfilment, she returns to the original faith and love she had, with the assistance of Blackie and Nicholas, her all time lover. She is bent upon knowing herself. In her words, "I commit the next three years of my life to Catherine and find out who she is really and what makes her tick" (436). This search for self-identity makes marvelous results.

As a result of her self-search, Catherine becomes a transformed person. She has attained the truth about herself. She has recovered her faith in God which she treasures more than anything and everybody. Now, that she has recognized the momentariness of sexual love and the selfishness of a lover, she gives first place to God's love. Catherine is sure that at the expense of or unmindful of God's love, the love of the couples assumes no Catholic significance. In the absence of Catholic imagination, she is aware that a woman is an object to be used and discarded by men who, she says, "Can never comprehend the meaning of mutual sharing and love" (420). *Virgin and Martyr* concludes in a romantic mood, with a happy note, as every Catholic story is expected to do. One reads, "Nick and Cathy would live happily for ever" (534).

Blackie is one of the first to appreciate the role of the Catholic imagination inherent in the reunion of Nick and Cathy. Catholic imagination is the ability to see the

presence of God in our daily life, viewed from the angle of Catholic faith. According to Blackie, the marriage between Nick and Cathy is “A powerful witness to the presence of God’s love” (499). He explains that Catherine’s life in union with Nick, whom, once, Father Ed referred to as ‘occasion of sin’ (519), is not less valuable than the martyrdom of a saint. Blackie assures her that she will be a towering person as a woman, a painter, a leader, a witness, a wife and mother, a citizen and a fighter for justice. In other words, for ever she sheds the Angela figure which she owes to Ed and Roy, and begins to live as genuine Catherine who is Blackie’s cousin. The prevalence of Catholic imagination manifests itself in the relationship between the two, especially, when one understands why Cathy works as an artist in the Art Department of St. Peter’s College. It is because she knows that she can spread Jesus through painting. She does not expect either money or fame out of painting. She writes, “I want to be a great painter so that when people see my great paintings they will see Jesus, even if I am not painting pictures of Him, as is true in art class” (109). So, Cathy is an artist who preaches like a priest, perhaps, in a better manner, through her paintings. In other words, a Catholic artist is one who makes use of his imagination to preach his or her faith in God and his message in an impressive way. All priests have to do this as Greeley does like a writer and as Cathy does like an artist. As Ed’s agent, one finds Cathy smuggling money from Costaguanna to Swiss Banks, under the name of Angela Carson. This is, she writes, “Some special work about which I can’t write” (379). But the painting she does, as God’s agent, is some sacred work about which she cannot but write and speak. For an artist, it is compulsory to use the imagination, and in the case of a Catholic artist this is to be used for evangelical purposes.

As already suggested, from the Catholic point of view, one cannot think of love except in relation to God. Love always implies love of God. God’s love is best communicated by means of stories. The relationship between Cathy and Nick forms one

such story which teaches about God's love. In addition to love of God and love of the partner in the context of the family, it has reference to one's profession. In *Virgin and Martyr* one finds an ideal priest in the person of Blackie preaching the inevitability of faith and love. Nick and Cathy also do the same, even if they are not priests technically. But, both of them witness to the mutually complementing nature of faith and love. It should be noted that though the priests have to preach the Good News, they can't do it well, in case they lack Catholic imagination. At the same time, the lay people, if they are endowed with Catholic imagination can and have to preach the same Good News, even though they are not officially appointed as priests for preaching. Cathy, the ex-nun, realizes and preaches God's love more than she ever could do when she was either in the convent or under the custody of Father Ed.

Thus, *Virgin and Martyr* is intended to teach how an ordinary woman can spread the Gospel even in the marital stage. How one lives the vocation is more important than what vocation one chooses. It is not the selection of any particular vocation that justifies the person. The mere belonging to a vocation does not automatically bring about salvation. Fulfilling the obligations of one's vocation is what is most important. Catherine's story reveals that in her case being a married person is more salvific and sacramental than being a nun or close associate of a priest like Ed. After marrying Nicholas, she turns back and finds that everything else has been an aberration or a deviation and in a way a preparation for achieving one's real vocation. This is an important area in which the parish priest has to be the guide and advisor of the young people. At one time, Catherine's self image seems to be at its lowest. She thinks, "I'm probably not good enough to do anything but bring babies into the world" (50). Gradually, she learns that living in the world is not evil. Being a mother is in no way inferior to being a Mother Superior. In her own words, "Marriage is good and holy and

not just for weak people. After all, it is a sacrament as the religious life, isn't? You can serve just as well as a wife and mother as you can as a nun" (121). After reading *The Nun in the World* written by Cardinal Suenens, Catherine really enjoys being in the world. She finds that, "The world is a place to love, to respect, to learn from, to teach, to save. It sounds very exciting" (212). Living in the world is not going away from God. Being in the world or living as a genuine Catholic is as good as a homily, the priest makes on Sundays.

Having said a lot about Ed and Roy who openly violate Catholic imagination it will be injustice not to mention Blackie who is the embodiment of the combination of faith and imagination. As a reputed investigator, he is a man of faith, and at the same time loves God and serves His people, and always maintains a balance between his faith and imagination. His mission itself is unveiling mysteries and finding out truth. All his attempts prove to be successful as he is supported by Catholic imagination. He gives counseling to his cousin and brings her back at a time when all think that she is decedent. He advises Father Roy not to marry Catherine before getting dispensation from Vatican. It is Blackie who always strengthens Catherine and encourages Nicholas to marry her, and himself blesses the marriage. He is proud of Catherine, his cousin, who as a brave and resourceful woman, escapes alone and unaided from a hostile country. As it is clear, it is Catholic imagination which always accompanies and assists him in solving problems in life. For example, while discussing with Nick whether Catherine and Angela are one and the same person, Blackie suggests to go for a sleep, for, "May be a new angle will be revealed in a dream" (449). He makes use of his imagination but always in perfect agreement with his Catholic faith. Blackie's understanding of love is also worthy of emulation for all priests. Of course, he loves God most. He is one who values his priesthood and does justice to its obligations. As one who loves his people, he really

enjoys working with them for promoting their causes, solving their problems and thereby saving the Church and serving the society. This is how Greeley expects all priests to be, which they can, only if they maintain a mixture of faith and love in their character.

The presence of a woman in the life of a priest is very often taken for granted as an occasion of sin destined to cause his fall from grace. This is natural and very likely to happen when the parties involved in the relationship consider love only at its biological and emotional levels. The same love when approached from the angle of faith and applied in the Catholic context, can sublimate and liberate the partners and enable the other as a sacrament of God's love. Greeley has portrayed such a redeeming and sanctifying kind of love in *An Occasion of Sin*. The central theme of *An Occasion of Sin* is the inquiry of Father Lawrence Mc Auliffe, appointed by the present Cardinal Steeve Said, as to if the name of his predecessor, John Mac Glynn, can be recommended for Canonization. The book reaches its climax when Father Lawrence finally submits a positive report to Cardinal Steeve Said recommending him to continue a slow canonization process. In the course of his investigation into the life of John Mc Glynn, Lawrence realizes that the late Cardinal's life-long relationship with Mary Elizabeth, known as Marbeth, with a single exception, has never been an occasion of sin. Again, he finds out that it is actually Marbeth's love that sustained the former Cardinal and now has made his name worthy of being initiated into the process of canonization. In other words, here is a story in which love of a woman becomes instrumental to the canonization of a priest, that too, not an ordinary priest, but, a Cardinal. As part of preparing a favourable report about Mc Glynn, Lawrence successfully disproves all the allegations which many people, including priests, have had raised against the Cardinal. How he achieves all these is explained in the study that follows.

John Mc Glynn has a magnificent ecclesiastical record to his credit. Immediately after his ordination, he is appointed in Putnam Park parish. After his higher studies in Rome he works for Archbishop Benelli, serves in Africa, assists Cardinal Koenig in Vienna, and then becomes the Archbishop of Chicago. Accidentally, getting in the way of a bullet, he dies in harness, lying in the arms of Marbeth, his life-long companion, and uttering "God, how I love you" (4). Some people firmly believe that Mc Glynn is a martyr and hence the Church must officially declare him a saint for veneration and emulation. Besides, a few miracles are reported to have taken place by the intercession of the late Cardinal. For example, a boy by name, Brendan, the grandson of Marbeth, suffering from retinoblastoma is cured by the mere touch of the Cardinal's pectoral cross. Another miracle is that Nancy, the daughter of Mary Elizabeth is cured of her blindness, again by the touch of the same pectoral cross. It is in the wake of these developments that Steeve Reed appoints Lawrence to prepare a report on the life and activities of his precursor. A probe into the history of Mc Glynn is also necessitated by certain charges leveled against him from many corners. To begin with, there are people who think that he did not have either vocation or even faith in God. Actually it is his mother's decision that her second son, Mc Glynn, must be a priest and Bishop (19). Marbeth herself reports that while in the seminary "Mc Glynn does not even believe in God" (21). Another solid argument is that the Church does not need a saint who is notorious for a scandalous life. Even Father Lawrence thinks that Mc Glynn is the son of a bitch who can never be a saint (184). The Catholic Church can never canonize a Bishop who in full clericals including pectoral cross and ruby ring entertained young women in bikini thongs and carried a life-long romance with another man's wife. *An Occasion of Sin* has empanelled many a priest vying with each other in contributing many more allegations against their former Cardinal. According to some of them, Mc Glynn is a courier of CIA, smuggling

Vatican's money to Poland for Solidarity. Some think that he has inordinately helped his brother in the latter's financial crisis, using Church money. Perhaps the most controversial accusation is that he has an illegitimate child, Carolin. All these criticisms can be summarized as someone who is guilty of larceny, simony and incest must not be canonized. Mc Glynn's seems to be a gone case.

When a Catholic priest reads this list of charges and observes how interested a group of priests are in discrediting their own diseased Cardinal, he must realize how his relationships with his parishioners, especially the women, can easily be misunderstood. He cannot but be embarrassed at the thought how difficult it is to maintain a healthy relationship between faith and love in the context of his ministry in the parish. His relationship with some persons, even if he has purest of intentions, may be viewed as scandalous by others. Greeley is also giving a warning to all priests that some of his fellow priests may turn out to be severe critics instead of giving him friendly corrections or solace and support. Anyway, this novel makes Catholic priests aware of how best they must make use of Catholic imagination in their ministry as a whole. Because, without a blending of faith and imagination they cannot explain either the Biblical stories or the story of *An Occasion of Sin*. Greeley really wants the priests to realize that the theme of this novel will inspire them to speak about more of the inevitability of God's love and the beauty of human love, understood from a Catholic point of view.

Since, this novel focuses on the relationship between Mc Glynn and Marbeth one should have a closer look into it. They are intimate friends from early years onwards. As Marbeth says, "I fell in love with John Arthur Mc Glynn on a cloudy autumn day, a week before Halloween in 1940. I was five years old. He was ten. I never stopped loving him. Never" (30). Kate, Marbeth's best friend during childhood, remembers that she used to repeat, "I am going to marry him" (86). At the time of his profession of vows, to her great

frustration Mc Glynn tells her in a very responsible manner, "But I'm going to be a priest. We can always be friends, but not lovers" (51). Most of his critics believe that Mc Glynn did not or could not keep his words or vows. As Bishop Louis Kilmartin tells Lawrence , "But I have no doubt that he continued his practices despite his commitment to permanent and perpetual celibacy" (139). It is certain that even after marrying Bud, Marbeth visits Mc Glynn frequently. The marriage between Bud and Marbeth does not last long. As one having suffered a lot from depression, he shoots himself dead. Even this does not obstruct her relationship with Mc Glynn, now an Archbishop. She helps him in financial matters as well. Even Lawrence seems to have taken a stand against Mc Glynn. He tells Father Kunkel, "I can't see him as a saint. Gracious and charming, yes. Brave, yes. Kind and thoughtful, yes. But saintly or even holy? I don't see it" (277). Yet, he prolongs his probing, conducting more interviews with people, directly or indirectly, associated with Mc Glynn. Lawrence marvels at what Father Leonard tells him, "More than anyone else, I am in a position to assure the authorities that they were close friends and nothing more" (207). According to Leonard, the charge of sexual relationship between them is absurd and profoundly offensive (209) and he argues that Mc Glynn must be canonized. Lawrence visits Marbeth in order to know the truth about their relationship. She confesses that since his ordination they have never thought of marriage or indulged in any physical contacts, except once which is the *An Occasion of Sin*. She believes that Carolin is the result of this occasion. But for that, Mc Glynn is a celibate, even after Bud's suicide. When Mc Glynn was a priest he could not marry Marbeth as she was married to Bud. After Bud's death, she was free to marry him. But he had by that time become the Archbishop. Both of them continue as close friends but with due respect to the status of the other. And she tells Lawrence, "John valued me as a close friend, not as a potential wife" (221).

As Lawrence learns more about Caroline's rescue from the pool in 1985, he realizes that it is a miracle which Mc Glynn did as he was alive (266). The Cardinal saved her life after she remained lifeless for twenty minutes. Lawrence also comes to know about another instance which he is forced to include among the miracles. It is related to the birth of Mary Anne Quinlan. Contrary to the doctor's predictions, the child, a preemie, survived, as a result of Mc Glynn's visit and prayer. Dr. Mc Cafrey says, "It was not a recovery that medical science, then or now, can easily explain" (300). By this time, the prejudices of Lawrence change to admiration for Marbeth. He admits that Marbeth is God's grace in Bud's life (242) and with greater intensity in that of Mc Glynn (311). In all his problems, through out his life she assists and rescues the Cardinal. She is a true confidante and friend. Thus, she has rendered great services to the Church also. As it is restated, Marbeth is a friend, advisor and confidante in Mc Glynn's life and ministry (322). Before he prepares the final report, Lawrence asks Marbeth about Caroline's paternity. She reveals that the child is the product of *An Occasion of Sin*, the only time she seduced Mc Glynn after his ordination and the only occasion he surrendered. Lawrence knows from medical records that Caroline is an illegitimate child but that does not prove that it is Mc Glynn's.

Lawrence has noticed a sudden and dramatic change in Mc Glynn's attitude to spiritual matters, a few years before his untimely death, as proved by his letters and diaries. In Marbeth's words, the young Mc Glynn did not believe in God and never liked to be a priest also hated to being a priest (153). But in his last years his spirituality has grown more intense. Lawrence finds out that this transformation is related to Caroline's rescue from the pool at Lake Geneva. While pulling the girl out of the pool Mc Glynn sees the face of his own mother, an undeniable proof that the child is an illegitimate one, born of himself. This happens to be a turning point in his last years (305). The reformed

Mc Glynn is found leading intense prayer life which can be considered as a retrieval of his Catholic faith and love of God. The revival of his faith together with his total surrender to God's love is well expressed in his words, "All right, You win, as You knew You would" (314). This transformation is a strong manifestation of Catholic imagination. All these convince Lawrence that ultimately, Marbeth has been Mc Glynn's redeemer and source of solace and grace, and not seduction. Since he does not want to incriminate or humiliate either Mc Glynn or Marbeth he prepares a report in which nothing is mentioned about Caroline. Lawrence seems to abide by the general principle that every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.

By this time, Lawrence has found out that all other allegations against Mc Glynn are either false or unjustifiable. Now, he is sure that the former 'Cardinal never used' Church's money to bail out his brother. He used family money only for this purpose. Lawrence comments that this accusation is pure clerical nastiness. With regard to the charge of smuggling money, Lawrence understands that the money Mc Glynn carried to Poland was not stolen nor was it of C.I.A. It belonged to the Mossad [an Israeli Intelligence]. It was not American money, but the contribution from some people in Vatican given to certain Catholic laymen, in Poland, for their trade union activities. Marcy Rudolf who raised this accusation has not proved that there was violation of chastity in the Cardinal's relationship with La Anne Marie who accompanied him in all his trips to Middle Europe. Thus, Lawrence disproves the validity of Rudolf's opinion that "The Church ought not to canonize someone who is guilty of grand larceny" (254).

Lawrence prepares his report in which, as already hinted, he discards all the allegations raised against Mc Glynn. About Marbeth he writes that she is not 'an occasion of sin' but the vehicle of God for bringing about the Cardinal's transformation. He keeps mum regarding the illegitimate Caroline, out of his respect for Marbeth. Lawrence

specially mentions the miracles that have occurred in the name of the late Cardinal. According to him, the first miracle done by the Cardinal is “Not the cure of Brendan but, the revival of Brendan’s aunt Caroline – and that while he was still alive” (293). He also adds there are reports about new miraculous instances believed to have occurred as a result of the Cardinal’s intercession. Finally, Lawrence submits his report with the recommendation that the ruling Archbishop shall continue slowly the process of Canonization. The fact that the late Cardinal was unusually spiritual and generous during his last years enjoys special significance in the report. Since, allegations about him have been dismissed, in all probability the process of Canonization will proceed without any serious constraints and John Mc Glynn would be declared a saint without much delay. By way of commenting on the report, the investigation of Lawrence reminds the reader of Blackie and it can be said that he has done the work so well that even Blackie would not have done it more efficiently.

An Occasion of Sin has a special appeal for all Catholic priests for more than one reason. First of all, this is a novel which upholds the glory of priesthood. The ultimate purpose of a celibate priest is attaining holiness and thereby becoming a saint. He has the added responsibility to guide his people on the path to holiness. This is the only novel in which Greeley presents a priest becoming a saint. Even in *The Patience of a Saint*, the saint referred to is not a priest. In most of his novels one comes across priestly characters. They are fallible and vulnerable. Most of them fall from grace. But they experience God’s love and grace and salvation, very often, as a result of the constant relationship with a woman. None of them is even considered for canonization. In this respect, *An Occasion of Sin* is unique, it can be said to be the most perfect portrayal of priesthood. Here at least, one finds a man in the person of Mc Glynn who really becomes what every Catholic priest ought to be. It is not enough that the Catholic priest is an efficient administrator. It

is rather easy to be smart, active and brave. To become a saint is an altogether different thing which requires a real and complete transformation. This renewal can be understood as a return to or a retrieval of Catholic faith and love. In his last years, Mc Glynn appears to be Greeley's ideal priest who is an embodiment of Catholic faith and imagination. It is to be noted that he recovers his true priestly personality only when Catholic imagination overwhelms him.

An analysis of the relationship between Mc Glynn and Marbeth convinces that this woman has done a lot of service to the Church. Despite her lay vocation and female status she assists the Cardinal and serves the Church. Her presence is much more salvific than seducing. She performs the duties of her baptismal priesthood with greater zeal and commitment than some priests do their ministerial obligations. She works as God's vehicle or messenger to convey God's love and mercy to the Cardinal. As Lawrence asks her, "Didn't you understand your place in the story? Don't you see that you were the vehicle for Johnny's transformation? God's vehicle. You were the important grace in his life" (319). Here one can see that Greeley is in fact casting a dig at all the Catholic priests. All of them are called to be vehicles of God's grace in the lives of other people. Many of the clergy do not care for being such vehicles. Or they cannot succeed in becoming vehicles of God's grace and love for others. This is something they must regret at. Instead, some of them take delight in throwing stones at people like Marbeth and criticize them as 'an occasion of sin'. Marbeth is always a vehicle of grace to the Cardinal except once. Unfortunately, a few priests who do not have anything to tell about Marbeth as a vehicle of God's grace and love, speak incessantly about her as 'an occasion of sin'. These priests are perhaps envious of Marbeth's physical beauty and the influence she exerts in the Cardinal's office but they do not learn the message of her life. Leonard tells Lawrence, "As long as we had Churchmen with the vision and confidence and wit of

Johny Mc Glynn, there were still grounds for hope” (203). Greeley wants Catholic priests to put this idea in this way that the church, if has more vehicles of God’s grace and love like Marbeth in every parish, there is still reason to hope that the Catholic Church will be saved.

The most important function of the priestly life is in a way witnessing to the mutually complementing co-existence of faith and love. To do this genuinely and effectively, each priest essentially needs Catholic imagination. It is not enough to preach about the importance of this component of Catholic imagination on the pulpit. It is more important to all priests to practise this as a virtue in their daily life. As parish priests, they cannot avoid women. They are very much exposed to the worldly attractions. Hence, if they do not adhere to the Catholic faith and Catholic love, they may neglect their mission, they may easily fall from grace and they can think of women only as objects of temptation and distraction. No priest can ever survive the challenges in the parish if he does not subscribe to Catholic faith and abides by the Catholic understanding of love. To be a vehicle of God’s grace and sign of His love to the Catholic believers, a priest has to follow his Catholic imagination. *An Occasion of Sin* also teaches the priest the need of practicing self-examination and self – purification, every day, so that they can deepen their faith, experience more of God’s love and intensify the quality of their service inspired by genuine love for brethren. Then only, one can see the merging of faith and practice, word and deed, and faith and love in their actual ministry and private life.

Summer at the Lake is the last novel to be examined in this chapter. Among Greeley’s works this one is marked by maximum number of characters and episodes, ranging over a period of three decades, 1940s to 1970s. It has a complex structure comprising “Mysteries within mysteries and puzzles within puzzles” (34). Through the portrayal of Leo Kelly , besides reestablishing the sanctity of marital sexuality, this novel

upholds that, viewed from the point of Catholicism, love is nothing but forgiveness. The novel also teaches that various problems disturbing the peaceful family atmosphere can be solved only when truth is revealed and love is reinstated along with forgiveness for which Catholic imagination as well as the assistance of a priest is a must. In other words, whenever the correlation of faith and love is overlooked a family disintegrates and the members are victimized, but the moment they confess their guilt and are ready to forgive one another, all enjoy peace and happiness. The following analysis of the novel is intended to convince each Catholic priest that the story of Leo Kelly is better than any other story that he can use in order to convey the relevance of love understood as forgiveness in the life of every Catholic.

The Nicholas, the Murrays, the Clares, the Devlins and the Keenans are the wealthy and powerful families residing close to a lake near Chicago. Patrick Keenan, Jane Devlin and Leo Kelly form a trio of lovers in the novel. While spending their summer of 1948 at this lake, the three friends witness to an accident in which two young lives – the Murrays, Jim and Eileen- snuffed out. All the trio come together to the same place in the summer 1978. Meanwhile, Leo Kelly has successfully solved the mysteries regarding the car blast of 1948, his transfer to Korea and the recent attempt on his life. Leo grows up as the adopted child of Tom Keenan and Mary Anne. Both Leo and Patrick love Jane Devlin. But, they join the seminary. After three years, Leo leaves it because he thinks, “He does not have the personality to become a priest” (37,143). Because, Patrick is ordained a priest in 1954 and Leo is reported to have been killed in action, in 1950, Jane marries Phil Clare, an immature and unfaithful fellow in 1951. In the year 1953, Leo Kelly makes his return, if not resurrection, and unfolds the mysteries and sorts out the real villains. On his return, Leo saves the life of Jane who being dissatisfied with her family has taken to pills and is on the verge of disaster. He also gives new life to Judge Angela

Nicola Burke who had been married to Tino Devlin, the arch villain, and later disowned by him and whose family goes up in flames after the car blast. As Leo marries Jane, the summer of 1978 becomes one of reunion and experience of God's love and forgiveness.

Leo recognizes two unrelated conspiracies coinciding with the car accident. The enormous amount of money found in the car and the loosened brakes represent two separate plots (446). According to his findings, the real villains are Jane's own brothers – Herbie, Mickie and Dickie – who act instigated by her mother Ita Devlin, a real devil, notorious for her craze for money and power and lesbianism. In 1948, they loosen the brakes of the old Laselle in order to kill Leo. In 1950, they forge Government documents in order to send Leo to Korea where he will get killed very easily. Recently, they have employed two goons or thugs to beat him up. The other unrelated conspiracy is Tino Nicholas sending his son Phil to pick up the money from the mob. Not knowing that the brakes have been loosened to kill Leo and without anybody's consent, Phil drives the car with the young Murrays and meets with an unavoidable tragedy. It is Leo's timely interference that saves the life of Phil, for which the former is misunderstood and ill treated by the cops, who accused him of vehicular homicide (30).

The most striking feature of *Summer at the Lake* is the truly Catholic way in which Leo who is now a Provost, deals with the people who have caused a lot of miseries to himself and Jane. He forgives all of them on the condition that they will all give up all hatred and live in harmony in years to come. This is impossible without finding out the truth. He tells Jane, "Eliminate the evil that has imprisoned both of us for so long. Then the past will be transparent and we can take an honest look at the future" (273). Hence, what he insists on is that the truth must be told and the crimes should be confessed. Why he does not take revenge upon them is simply because the Catholic God in whom he has faith is love and forgiveness, and He does not retaliate. In his words, "Our God does not

play in that way” (267). About the future of the reunion and reconciliation, Leo says, “I hope that from this day on, the energies of hatred that have caused suffering to all of us will be permanently exorcised” (451). To forgive one’s enemy or to declare that no one is an enemy one needs Catholic faith which teaches that God our Father is love. In Leo’s case Catholicism is in his blood, and he can never leave it. He says, “Catholicism for all its faults was the best available. I realized that you can’t leave. It is in your blood” (180). To know what love is and which its nature is one essentially needs Catholic imagination. In other words, each reunion is the result of the union between faith and imagination. A Catholic priest cannot preach about forgiveness as inevitable for reconciliation with God and the community, without first of all realizing the significance of the correlation between faith and love which is an important component of Catholic imagination. Every Catholic priest, hence, has to reflect on this Catholic spirit of Leo who dissuades from taking the culprits either to trial or to imprisonment.

Another fascinating reason, why Leo does not hand over the survivors among the criminals to the police, is that they have already suffered a lot. During the last three decades, they have been victimized by very many tragedies which appear to be wages of their sins. As one sows, so one reaps. Even if God does not punish anybody directly, the culprits inflict upon themselves their own punishments in the form of sense of guilt, mental agony and physical pain. It seems their families have incurred some sort of a curse brought about by their own sins which are mostly deliberate. As already mentioned, the two Murrays, that too two young ones, die in the car accident. Lizabetta dies in an explosion. Iris Clare and Ita Devlin die of liver cirrhosis, in their late fifties, in isolation, cursing all their kith and kin. Herbie also dies of cirrhosis of the liver. Most of the male ones die in their late fifties or early sixties (161-162). Even Patrick the priest does not understand why God lets so much suffering. He asks, “ Dear God, how do you tolerate

such tragedy? How do you endure it, why do you permit it?" (45). The reunion and relief which Leo brings to their families are beyond explanation. Any crime is a breach of faith and distortion or abuse of the imagination. Reconciliation can originate from a healthy blending of faith and imagination as well as a realization of the true nature of Catholic love and God's mercy which is possible only in association with one's faith. This is an important message, a Catholic priest has to learn from *Summer at the Lake*.

Jane Devlin occupies a key position in this novel. As one examines her life, s/he come to know that it is the blending of Catholic faith and love that sustains her as a believer. The vocation of Patrick and the integrity of Leo owe to her character in which one finds the full manifestation of Catholic imagination. In a way, she is the one who suffers most, even more than Leo. Maggie explains how miserable the life of good old Jane is, "A philandering husband who has destroyed her sense of sexual worth, brutish brothers, a son killed in Korea, a daughter vanished into a commune, a second son who is a Yuppie prig..." (40). Where as her parents and brothers lead reckless lives for money and power, Jane never betrays or violates her Catholic identity. In her behaviour, unlike that of her brothers and parents, both faith and imagination are at work, with one accord. Despite her prolonged suffering she loves God and the Church. To put it differently, even as a silent sufferer she believes in God and serves the Church. Even amidst her frustration with Phil Clare she upholds the sacredness of sex, as a sacrament of God's love. For example Jane says, "We do know in our hearts that our lover is kind of like God to us. I wish I could really believe that" (7). On another occasion, Jane asks Leo, "Isn't it strange that God chose to compare himself with love?" (430).

Her sense of guilt also contributes to Jane's silent suffering. Though Leo tells that she is really innocent, Jane always thinks that she killed Jim and Eileen (184). But, she does not hate Phil Clare who killed them. It is because, she is moved by Catholic

imagination. She prays for Phil Clare, too, which is a clear indication of her faith in God's love and mercy. Jane prays, "Grant them peace and happiness. And even poor dumb Phil who killed them" (361). The fact that Jane has to suffer a lot from her husband whom she marries unwillingly is reflected in what Leo tells Phil Clare, "You stole my woman from me. You raped her when she was vulnerable, knocked her up and forced her to marry you" (284). "The miserable condition of her own children also adds to her agony and anguish. Jane thinks that she is responsible for the death of her son Phil in Vietnam, for the loss of her daughter Brigid joining a commune and for the apparent deterioration of her daughter Lucy"(325).

As a Catholic priest inquires how the correlation between faith and love enriches the character of Jane, he cannot but be captivated by her relationship with Patrick the priest. This attempt will prove that Jane has great respect for priestly vocation and that her faith in Catholicism is almost matchless. Her idea of love is Catholic and not merely biological. One finds that the charming Patrick and beautiful Jane love each other and that they want to get married in which case they will be the best couples in the novel. As Jane says, "If he had not been committed to being a priest I might have married him after Leo died" (7). She respects his decision and never does she seduce him. In other words, she does not enslave him. She deals with Patrick like a dignified friend and not like a lustful lover. And Patrick declares, "She likes me, but I have always been a priest for her, even before I was a priest" (49). After many a year, Patrick and Jane meet in Rome. Their behaviour is worthy of mentioning in this context. They kiss modestly, "Then the blink of the eye ended and I was a priest and she a woman who trusted me" (205). Jane who never tries to possess Patrick always respects and expects him to be a good parish priest. She encourages him to be a warm and wonderful priest as he used to be. She tells him, "Be a parish priest again" (293). Before the three friends disperse after spending the 1978

Summer at the Lake, Jane lavishly praises Patrick's exemplary priestly life. Proudly she tells him, "You have always been a good priest for me. You are not a man who possesses the priesthood but a man possessed by it" (458). Patrick and Jane are able to remain as friends without messing up with genital expression of love, because, they are moved by Catholic imagination. No professor in any seminary can teach what celibacy is, better than the way it is practised by Patrick in relationship with Jane which can be made use of by any Catholic priest as an example, worthy of being imitated.

Most of the priests whom Greeley portrays in his novels experience fall from grace. Only very few of them are above scandals and accusations. Patrick like Blackie and Father George belong to this minority. So, Patrick's understanding of love in priestly life and his relationship with women are very important in one's approach to the correlation of faith and love as an essential constituent of Catholic imagination. Patrick as a boy is very promising in the seminary and very successful as a priest in the parish. He evaluates, "I have had a peculiar priesthood, one that many of my fellow priests envy" (91). Though, he never creates either scandals or problems in his priestly career he has had crisis as is natural with any priest. He cannot appreciate everything he comes across in the seminary and later in his priestly life. As he remembers, "I hated the seminary and the fools who ran it. But I wanted to be a priest" (44). In spite of the tensions he still loves it. At the same time, occasionally he thinks of leaving it. He asks, "Have I not been a priest long enough? Is it not time to break away from the insane Church and its stupid cowardly leaders?" (3). In Patrick's opinion, being a Catholic is more important than being a priest. As he says, "I'll always be a Catholic, but I no longer think I'll always be a priest" (66). Yet, it is clear that he never quits priesthood. He is a totally committed priest above all kinds of possible accusations usually raised against Catholic priests. It is because, he always remains deeply rooted, in faith and abides by love in its Catholic sense

as service and sacrifice. He loves his people and has great confidence in them. He says, "The only hope I see for the Church is in the lay people" (66). For him, the mission of a priest is training the community in faith and love as the Church expects them to do.

The correlation between faith and love, and the merging of faith and imagination can be seen as deliberately applied in this novel from another point of view. Leo and Jane get married, though very late. During one of their love-making sessions, Leo tells Jane, "We are well-matched lovers it seems" (422). They merge into one, mentally and physically as faith and imagination together constitute Catholic imagination. Both of them are Catholics and both of them are writers. In each one of them, there is the combination of faith and imagination. Jane wants to be a novelist. She plans to prepare a journal and a memoir which will be a resource for the book (34). It is very suggestive that Leo's book is entitled, *Great Change*. Both the lovers think that *Great Change* will bring about changes in the Church and the society. They consider it as part of promulgating their faith and it is nothing but fulfilling the mission of their baptismal priesthood. Though Leo cannot become a priest and preach from the pulpit, he spreads the Good News by means of the print media. They are endowed with powerful imagination. Jane is able to get some premonitions about the culprit responsible for their suffering, with the help of the imagination. She tells, "I must remember that petrifying picture I saw in imagination. It is important and dangerous" (277). Needless to say, that Leo has been very much helped by his own imagination in finding out the delinquents and solving the mysteries. Again, they express their love, they make love as expected of a Catholic couple. Their mutual love is not at the expense of God's love. They indulge in love without prejudice to their Catholic faith. It can be said that each time they share their love, they grow in their faith. None of them fears the body of the partner as evil or bad. For Leo, the woman's beauty is not a source of temptation. As he imagines Jane's body, he is reminded of John Updike's words

that the naked body of a woman is the most beautiful thing a man will see in the course of his life (188). The reader is reminded of this sentence when Leo renders the same in different words, on another occasion as, “The naked body of a woman, simultaneously glorious and earthly, is a delight, a challenge, and a terror” (374). And as the Church teaches, in the case of the married people exploring and enjoying the body of the partner is a joyful duty of the other.

Catholic love is always Trinitarian and it is not the play of two bodies. Love becomes complete and Catholic only when it is in view of a third, that is the possibility of a new person. Patrick, being a priest, is the one who represents the Church in the novel. The love of Jesus for the Church is the model for the married people. The marital love ought to be a reminder or a sign of the love of God. As his Cardinal tells Patrick, the Church is going to face some tough moral questions in the years to come, especially in the matter of sexuality. Then the latter replies, “If marriage is a sacrament, husbands and wives should often make love so as to reflect the constant passionate love of God for his people” (92). According to Patrick, the Assumption of Mary, celebrated on August 15, means that the human body is destined for glory and that in spite of all its frailties, it is none the less sacred. As he claims, “There is nothing in the human body that is not sacred, neither birth nor growth, nor love, nor ageing, nor death” (403).

The meaning of life and the glory of the body must be understood in the light of the Catholic faith in resurrection. Here also, the correlation between faith and love is very conspicuous. The Church teaches that the human body will have its resurrection at the time of the second coming of Jesus. Resurrection means and brings about new life. This resurrection aspect of the human body takes us to a new realm of reflection which has to be explained, though briefly.

There is an 'already and not yet' dimension attached to this conception of the body. That means there exists a parallelism or correlation between the present body which is already glorified by Christ's resurrection, and the body which is to be fully realized and glorified in future. The purpose of the earthly life, according to the Catholic faith, is sanctifying body in order to make it worthy of entering the fully divinized status. The means for attaining this purification is by doing the obligations of one's vocation, in agreement with the precepts of Catholic imagination. The Catholic Church teaches that since the whole Church is called to be missionary, all the faithful, the clergy and the lay people, have to perform the duties of their respective vocation. Hence, the preaching of Patrick is not more important than Leo's writing of a book. The suffering of Jane is as valuable as Patrick's offering of the Eucharist. The priest at the altar experiences God's love. What the married people do in bed is not anything different. This discussion can be concluded, stating that as one acts on the basis of the merging of faith and love there takes place sanctification of one's body, and in its absence, what happens is body's gratification. It is the mission of the Catholic priest to lead his people on the road to sanctification and not gratification.

As the detailed study of the five selected novels in this chapter has proved, the most basic teaching of the Catholic Church is that God is love and the best method to experience this love is human relationships, especially, the love of the couples. All these novels teach how a Catholic must deal with the other as a dignified person and how priests have to preach the sacramental character of marriage which demands each one to respect the sanctity of the human body. Greeley emphasizes that sex is not a taboo as such, but it is a sign of God's sacrificing love. Narrating the story of how Patrick Donahue becomes the Cardinal Archbishop of Chicago, *The Cardinal Sins* elaborates on the four sins of covetousness, pride, anger and sloth. The novel argues that love cannot be

properly understood and practised and experienced except in relation with faith. Without faith love is nothing but the gratification of body. Hence, the love relationships of the priests as well as the married people have to be motivated by Catholic imagination. *The Cardinal Sins*, thus, highlights the beauty of the body. It challenges the priests to mature their own interpersonal relationships and their attitudes to the lay people, particularly, the women. Through the portrayal of Ellen and Maureen, Greeley has shown that a woman is not necessarily a seducer or a temptress, but, she can be a sign of God's love and a sacrament, as the Church is.

Thy Brother's Wife, the second novel analyzed in this chapter, has been set against the sixth and ninth commandments. This novel narrates how Nora, a lay woman, helps an Archbishop realize the greatness of his vocation and sublimate his biological instincts. The one who says 'no' to the God-willed vocation embraces tragedy in life, whereas when one accepts the real vocation destined by God and abides by its obligation, he or she experiences fulfilment. When Sean is about to wed his lover denying the Pope's offer or order to make him a Cardinal, and thereby forsaking and betraying his love for the Church and the priesthood, Nora interferes and transforms Sean and empowers him to say 'yes' to the Roman Pontiff. The novel appeals to the clergy to teach the community that love does not mean that 'women are to be enjoyed', but, that they are signs of God's graceful intervention in one's life, for which, what is required is the correlation between faith and love.

The third novel scrutinized in this chapter is *Virgin and Martyr*. This book is a detailed account of how Catherine Collins who is humiliated in the convent as a nun, and deceived by the activists as a social-worker, and deserted by her one-time priestly lover, finally achieves self-discovery, self-acceptance and self-fulfilment in life. As an artist she spreads her faith that God is love. By marrying Nicholas she experiences that God is love.

Greeley teaches that there is as much holiness in married life as in religious life. So, what is more important is not which vocation one has chosen, but how she or he has been faithful to the duties of that vocation. Blackie, the ideal priest of Greeley, is of great assistance to both Nicholas and Catherine in finding out their vocation. What gives more of God's love to Catherine is neither the love of the religious nuns nor that of the ordained priests, but it is the love of her husband. Hence, the chief message of the novel to the clergy is that they shall prepare the youngsters for choosing their vocation only after considering the correlation of faith and love, which is an important component of Catholic imagination.

The fourth novel, *An Occasion of Sin*, maintains that the presence of a loving woman in the life of a priest can have redeeming effects. The work reaches its climax when Lawrence, the investigator, declares that the influence of Marbeth in the life of John Mc Glynn does not disqualify him from being canonized as a saint. According to Greeley, Marbeth has been instrumental to sustain Mc Glynn in the priesthood. After disproving all the allegations against Mc Glynn, Lawrence declares that Marbeth is a sacramental vehicle of God with the intention of bringing about the Cardinal's transformation. *An Occasion of Sin* is the only occasion where Greeley portrays a Catholic priest worthy of being canonized. In his opinion, it is not enough that a Catholic priest is smart, active and brave. He has to be nothing less than a saint. This will be impossible as long as the priest does not subscribe to Catholic faith and abide by the Catholic understanding of love. For this, the priest has to follow his Catholic imagination and it is his duty to motivate the faithful to do the same. In other words, this novel is a strong approval of the correlation of faith and love.

Summer at the Lake is the last novel scrutinized in this chapter. Highlighting the example of Leo Kelly, Greeley is, in and through this novel, witnessing to the glory of the

highest Catholic characteristic of love, that is, forgiveness. No one can practise Catholic faith without the spirit of forgiveness. Neither family life nor priestly ministry is possible without having and practising forgiveness. Except in the context of the Catholic imagination one cannot ever appreciate the value of forgiveness. A believer can experience God's love only by means of loving fellow human beings. Love cannot be understood except as forgiveness. In the novel Leo is ready to forget and forgive all the wrong-doers and as a result he becomes the rejuvenating spirit and saviour of the whole family leading to a loving and peaceful reunion through mutual forgiveness. Greeley is of the opinion that the altar for a priest, the bed for a couple and a factory for a labourer, are the holy places where God's love is to be experienced, which is to be implemented through the correlation of faith and love.

Towards the end of the last chapter I have established, in the light of the discussion of the selected novels and with reference to a few of Greeley's non-fictional works, the identity of a priest and his duty of preaching. As the followers of Jesus, the Great Master of parables, every priest must preach stepping into the shoes of Blackie and Father George who are truth-finders, always following Catholic imagination. In this chapter I have been driving home the idea what the priests should preach. The theme of priestly preaching is that God is love and that love is nothing but forgiveness. Each priest, driven by the correlation of faith and love, has to preach that God's love can be expressed and experienced best by means of human relationships, especially, in the married life, with no prejudice to the ideal priests who are always witnessing to this love in its totality. Before winding up this chapter, a few non-fictional texts of Greeley is to be recapitulated to show how he repeats this favourite theme in those contexts.

According to Greeley, though the Catholic Church has been teaching that sexual union is a sacrament, an image of the union between Jesus and the Church, she has not

succeeded in convincing the people of the importance of the human body and the sacredness of sex. *The Catholic Imagination* (2001) abounds in these ideas of Greeley. In his opinion, the Church teaches that human nature is good and so the reproductive process is also good. That means “Human love between man and woman is a sacrament, a hint, a revelation, a sign, a metaphor for Jesus’ love for His Church and for God’s love for His people” (56). Greeley writes in the same book, “God is present in all passionate unions between married lovers and enjoys their love even more than they do” (70). In another book, *The New Agenda* (1973) he writes that physical nudity, then, is a paradigm of all self-revelation and self-disclosure (148). Greeley presents this idea more strongly in another book, *How to Save the Catholic Church* (1984) written in collaboration with Mary Greeley Durkin. He writes, “Moreover God not only reveals Himself/Herself to us through each other in sexual love, She/He is somehow present in the body of the lover in the act of sexual love” (43). He regrets or confesses that at one time, at least some Catholic thinkers held the view that “the less sex a husband and wife had with one another, the more a sacrament their marriage was” (66). Instead, the priests have to insist on the positive and sacramental aspects of the married life.

In Greeley’s opinion, the Church has to preach more on the sacredness of the human body. Many people are haunted by the fear and guilt in sexual matters. Priests shall approach the young people with more understanding and liberating spirit than with a juridical and punitive mind. In his book, *Everything You Wanted to Know About the Catholic Church- But Were Too Pious to Ask* (1978), Greeley requests the Church leaders to use their resources to train the youth in the skills of generosity, patience and sacrifice required for sustained human intimacy instead of harassing them about fondling and passionate kissing (35). The couples should be encouraged to maintain sexual playfulness at a high level after marriage instead of preventing their playfulness before marriage. As

he writes, “The real human problem, however, is not so much necking and petting before marriage, but not having enough after it” (97). Greeley insists that it is the duty of the priests to portray sex as God’s love and source of salvation for the couples.

Theologically, the Church believes in the importance of the body and in the sacredness of sex. Greeley asks why the same Church does not fight against raping and assaulting women. While receiving the 1993 U. S. Catholic Award for furthering the cause of women in the Church, Greeley raised this question. The article, ‘Why does the Church Stand Silent While Women are Abused?’ which appeared in *U. S. Catholic* (1993), reports Greeley’s words. One reads, “When we tolerate rape, incest, abuse, harassment, and all the other physical offenses against women, we tolerate the rape and abuse of Jesus” (29). He expresses the same sense of shame and shock in *The Making of the Pope* (2005), too. In his words, “The pall of silence inside the Church on the subject of the abuse of women... frightens me... Many, many women, some of them exemplary Catholics, believe that the Church hates them, because of the pious silence of the Church and its leaders” (96). In short, both in his fictional and non-fictional works, Greeley has upheld the dignity of the human body and the sanctity of human sexuality. It is the duty of the priests to aware themselves of the importance of this theme and incorporate it into their preaching, with the help of Catholic imagination. They must regard these aspects of faith and love as inseparable as love of God and love of people are inalienable.

Chapter V

FAITH AND ADMINISTRATION OF SACRAMENTS:

The Angels of September, Happy are the Oppressed, Irish Mist,

A Christmas Wedding and Irish Love

As already enlisted in the first chapter of this thesis, the triple duties of a Catholic priest are preaching/teaching, leading/shepherding and sanctifying. As he teaches, he is fulfilling his prophetic role. As he administers a parish, an organization or runs an institution, he fulfills the duty of shepherding. A Catholic priest performs his sanctifying ministry mostly by administering the sacraments and offering sacrifices. It is when he officiates a liturgical ceremony that the priest is at his best as a mediator between God and man. The correlation between faith and administration of sacraments forms part and parcel of the daily life of a Catholic priest. One cannot think of a priest as one who does not administer the sacraments. As everyone knows, he cannot officiate a religious function or lead the community meaningfully without having strong faith. The sacraments being symbols, imagination is also as essential as faith in making a liturgical celebration effective. This presupposes that a priest possesses a solid spiritual life. One without holiness in himself cannot give it to others. Hence, the Catholic priest must be a man of prayer. Otherwise, he can never be Christ-like. In other words, the title of a Catholic priest as a holy man or a praying person, individually as well as collectively, cannot be realized except through the faithful administration of the sacraments.

This chapter is an attempt to evaluate how the priestly characters do justice to the role of sanctification in their ministry through the proper administration of the sacraments which presupposes a solid spiritual life. It is with this end in view that a detailed study of the following five novels written by Greeley is done. They are *Angels of September*

(1987), *Happy are the Oppressed* (1996), *Irish Mist* (1999), *A Christmas Wedding* (2000) and *Irish Love* (2001). It must be borne in mind that to be holy and to make others holy is not the monopoly of the ordained priests. The Catholic Church teaches that by virtue of baptism every Christian is a priest. For the lay people, marriage is their ordination. The family or the whole world is their altar on which they offer their exemplary life in accordance with the evangelical virtues, as sacrifices and sacraments, though they are neither trained nor authorized like priests to officiate the services on behalf of the community. So, the focus of this study is not only how the priests administer sacraments meaningfully and effectively, but also how the lay people witness to Catholic values and teachings and become sacramental in their respective walks of life. This will also be an eye-opener to all Catholic priests to improve the quality of their liturgical celebrations, and to the lay people in order to prepare themselves for active participation in prayer and worship, and thereby sanctify their daily life. The following analysis of the five novels mentioned above will make us aware that there are more priests among non-priests who represent God's love and are living sacraments in the world than among the official priests who work as vicars in the parishes. As already suggested, this attempt is to prove that Catholic imagination is a must both for the priests and the lay persons to acquire the fruits of administering the sacraments and taking part in them. During this process, an examination is also made to show how these novels are flavoured by the undercurrents and overtones of the correlation between faith and the administration of sacraments.

Angels of September is the first novel dealt with in this chapter. This book portrays the story of the redemption of Anne Reilly from her emotional and psychological slavery due to self-imposed tortures based on a misunderstanding. Anne Reilly is a girl spoilt by the bad life of her parents and the bad knowledge she got in her younger days about sex. She has been haunted by fear and sense of guilt until recently Bishop Blackie as an angel

of September removes her misunderstanding, enables her to give up her obsessions and completely liberates her. When the angel of truth incarnates, the devil of ignorance and bondage disappears leaving space for joy and happiness. The administration of sacrament is expected to bring about new life in the recipient. Blackie's interference in the life of Anne results in a similar experience. Hence, it is nothing but a sacrament. By this, Anne herself becomes a sacrament of God's love for others. In the light of *Angels of September*, a Catholic priest has to admit that there can be sacramental experience or God's intervention, even outside the churches and the liturgical celebrations without any prejudice to the existing seven sacraments usually officiated by him. The priests have to realize that they are not the only people who can provide the people with a sacramental experience. They must educate the lay people that the latter are not merely the recipients of the sacraments but that they too have the duty to be sacramental or to be sacraments or God's signs to other people. At the same, time it must not be neglected that the awareness of the seven sacraments is a fundamental quality and condition of every Catholic. The lay people who participate in the celebration of sacraments and the priests who solemnize them both require solid Catholic faith and rich imagination the absence of which is likely to diminish the efficacy of these sacraments.

Anne is always haunted by the horror of the Mother of Mercy School fire that occurred in 1935 in which her two sisters, Connie and Cathleen, and many other students died. She takes it for granted that she is responsible for the fire and that she is a murderer of many innocent children. She thinks, "I was the arsonist who was responsible for the Mother of Mercy fire. I killed my two sisters and ninety other children and nuns" (415). Blackie, the investigator, produces a letter written by Michael Casey's mother to her husband who was in Poland. This letter refers to her visit to Mary Anne Laverty, the heroine's mother, and proves Anne has not gone to school on the day of the fire (449).

When this truth is revealed, Anne's mind is relieved of its shock and tension. The school was actually set ablaze by a former student, a pyromaniac, who had been expelled from there. The other factor that worsened Anne's mental health is her sight of Divine Justice, a picture painted by Desmond Kenny, an ex-priest. It looks like a raging inferno – a mass of dark and twisted colours of fire and suffering. She thinks that being the worst sinner she deserves nothing but punishment in hell. Blackie's interpretation of God's loving nature, Michael Casey's encouragement and Dr. Mary Kate Murphy's rapport help Anne regain her integrity. Without their timely and collective assistance, Anne will have ended her life in some mental asylum.

According to Greeley, God sends three angels or assistants or sacraments to empower Anne. The three angels are a priest angel in the form of Blackie, a lover angel in the form of Michael Casey and a Psychiatrist angel in the figure of Dr. Mary Kate Murphy. As a result of the timely help of these angels of September, Anne who was on the verge of mental breakdown recovers her peace of mind, reconciles herself with all others including God and the Church and thus becomes a new person. The three angels are like three sacraments transforming the life of Anne, the recipient of the sacraments. When the three angels of September collaborate, the net result is the emergence of a fourth angel that is Anne herself. She is an angel as well as a sacrament. When she behaves like an insane person, it is clear that she has no harmony in herself. She possesses neither faith nor truth. As everyone knows the imagination of a mentally disordered person lacks accuracy and propriety. In other words Anne has lost her Catholic imagination. The achievement of the three 'angels of September' is that they succeed in filling her mind with Catholic faith and imagination. As she is endowed with Catholic imagination she becomes worthy of receiving the sacramental assistance which makes her a new and better sacrament. She marries Casey, her classmate and they begin a new life, a

way of life which according to Greeley, is the best opportunity to witness to God's passionate love for men, His loving children.

A second glance at the school fire and Kenny's painting also convinces everyone of the necessity of having personal integrity for which it is necessary to have the combination of faith and proper imagination in one's life. Greeley calls the former student who sets fire to the school, a pyromaniac. No sensible person will ever indulge in such an act. Any school is supposed to be the abode of truth. In the case of Catholic students it is also the place where they grow in religious faith and the Catholic imagination. So, any school deserves our respect and admiration. The one who attempts to destroy it doesn't have either faith or truth or a proper imagination. In the case of Kenny the artist, he is an ex-priest which means 'his faith' is to be doubted and his loyalty to the teachings of the Church is at stake. His 'Divine Justice' is a violation of the Catholic teaching on God's love. He presents a punitive figure of God which evokes fear in the viewers. A Catholic artist is expected to project the true nature of God that He is a loving father, which is a form of evangelizing the world and must be considered as part of fulfilling the priestly duty of every believer. Kenny leaves his priesthood. He perverts and misinterprets God's nature by means of his pictures. Instead of becoming a sacrament of God, Kenny appears to be an anti-witness. In him there is neither faith nor Catholic imagination. He is nothing less than an insult to the Catholic Church and the priesthood as it exists in the world. The horror of the school fire and the sight of 'Divine Justice' split Anne's personality and take her to the point of disaster. Blackie's orientation based on Catholic imagination reunites all aspects of her character and all the members of her family as a result of which she becomes a new person. When he lacks faith and imagination Kenny deserts priesthood making himself disqualified to administer sacraments officially. By misusing his artistic talent he forfeits the possibility of spreading the Good News even as a non-priestly

person. Greeley wants all Catholic priests to realize that an effective administration of any sacrament is possible only if, a correlation of faith and imagination exists in the personality of the priest.

The inquiry into Anne's life brings forth a series of failures in marriage. First, she marries Limbo, a brutal man, secondly, she lives with John Dunan, a Senator, and again she marries Matt Sweeney, an ex-priest. None of these marriages survives for a long span of time. It is mainly due to the wrong ideas she has taught herself in the light of the loaded and biased teachings of the Church about sex and marriage life. Everywhere she senses sin. The only thing she is sure of is that she is damned to be punished in hell. Sometimes, she assumes the responsibility for the sins of other people too. She fears men and sex. She has faith in none, not even in the nuns teaching in the school. She is incapable of trusting anybody. As Mary Kate Murphy tells, "Her monumental guilt attaches itself to the actual or imagined violation of various and Sunday Church regulations, laws, norms, canons and other obligations - past and present" (106). Again as her daughter Bethie goes astray, she says, "If she is spoiled, then it is my fault for spoiling her or letting Jim do it" (151). As a student Anne thinks that it is a mortal sin to be disobedient to Sister (244). If at all she has any faith it is against the Catholic faith and the imagination that drives her is not in agreement with the Catholic imagination. As a result, she does not understand the meaning of marriage as a sacrament. She bluntly states that nobody prepared her for a Catholic marriage. In her own words, "And because no one, any time in my life, prepared me for marriage, neither my family nor my Church nor my friends, I was utterly unready for it" (173). When Anne is divorced by Jim Reilly, her husband, Blackie suggests the possibility of a remarriage. Being so much obsessed with the idea of the indissolubility of marriage in the Catholic Church, she responds negatively, "I'll never remarry, Mr. Ryan. I am a Catholic" (252). But, later one sees the

same Anne indulging in immoral relationships with other men. So, it is true that her Catholic imagination is not true. Anyone can easily notice Anne's double standards as she upholds the indissolubility of the Catholic marriage and at the same time living with other men. For instance, while living as the Senator's keep, Anne tells him, "We view marriage as a sacrament. Even God couldn't dissolve my marriage to Jim Reilly" (307). Her life seems to be for ever mired in a Catholic backwater. In short, the failure of Anne's marital life is owing to the false knowledge she has got from the family and the Church. Hence, she remains immature with regard to the use of Catholic imagination. There is an important lesson here which all the Catholic priests should listen to, that all of them have to be more qualified and committed to the area of forming the Catholic imagination in the children and preparing them for choosing the right vocation. In *Angels of September*, Greeley strongly regrets at the negligence of priests in guiding youngsters in matters related to sex and marriage, "You pack the students in, process them through their courses and credits, collect tuition fees, announce an annual retreat, award them their degrees and tell yourself you've done the work of the Lord" (333). That means, the Church does not sufficiently prepare the young people to embrace the Sacrament of Marriage.

The Catholic Church teaches that the Church herself is a sacrament in the sense that she is the sign of God's presence on earth, and the continuation of Jesus' redemptive ministry. She is in fact a treasury of many sacraments and the members of the Church have to subscribe to them in order to nourish their life of faith. That is why, a Catholic is said to be in close association with the Church in spite of her imperfections and deviations down through the ages. Regarding Anne's life, indeed, it is marvelous how passionately she is in love with the Church despite her problems related to faith and imagination. Whatever happens, she will never quit Catholicism. As she says, "The Pope himself could tell me I had to leave the Church now and I wouldn't go" (311). On another occasion,

when Blackie asks her why she remains in the Catholic Church, she tells him, "It's the only Church I have, and I don't know what I'd do without Midnight Mass at Christmas" (399). As everyone knows, compared to the other Christian denominations, the Catholic Church abounds in celebrations and feasts and stories. All these cater to the development of one's faith as well as imagination. As a mother feeds her babies, the Church sees to it that the faithful grow in the quality of faith and the knowledge of her teachings, through the celebration of mysteries or the administration of sacraments which are sources of sanctification. The Catholic priests do have an important role in this process. For this, they should always maintain the correlation between faith and the administration of sacraments. That is why, one considers it as a decisive constituent of Catholic imagination.

In a sense the message of *Angels of September* is that the Catholic Church must take special care of people like Anne who suffer crises in their spiritual life. In Anne's case, God sends Blackie the priest, Dr. Murphy the Psychiatrist and Michael Casey, the lover, as three angels to console her and to consolidate her faith in communion with Catholic imagination. These three angels are three assistants sent by God to save Anne from her problems. As signs of God's providence and assistance these three persons are three sacraments. They are at the same time, symbols and assurance of God's presence and grace. Anne is immensely grateful to God and the Church for this timely help but for which she might have spent her last years in a mental sanitorium. In admiration of Blackie's service, she says, "God sent me someone who offered to help, the most helpful priest I've ever known" (325). As Kenny disappoints Anne saying that there is no escape from God's impending punishment, Blackie motivates her saying that an escape is possible by telling the truth. And he makes the possibility, a reality. Greeley explains how Blackie does it, with the intention that it should be a model for all other priests. In her

fight against demons and despair, Blackie entrusts her with the care of three guardian angels including himself. Blackie tells Michael Casey, "I'm going to see her every day, you're going to talk to her every day, and she is probably spilling her guts to Mary Kate several times a week" (343). When this plan is realized, Anne, who at one time considered herself as "A vile stinking swamp, a cesspool of filth and corruption and death" (347), emerges as a new person or rather, a new angel or even a new sacrament.

The newly born Anne can be seen as a perfectly balanced person, or a melting point of faith and imagination. Blackie being a priest sees to her spiritual needs. Dr. Murphy caters to the needs of her mind and imagination. Michael Casey, as her lover, is primarily concerned about her bodily needs, but subject to Catholic imagination. When he plays with Anne's body, it becomes the merging centre of faith perfected by Blackie, and imagination strengthened by Murphy. Then the body becomes an altar on which love is offered as a sacrifice and it reminds us of the altar inside a Church where a priest officially offers the Holy Eucharist. Thus, Greeley brings about a parallelism and some kind of an identification between the husband administering the sacrament of love in the family and the priest officiating the sacramental celebration at the altar. What is central to this chapter is the fact that this celebration or glorification of the human body and the sacramental administration of a priest in the Church are impossible without the assistance of the three angels who provide the priest and the parent with Catholic imagination. This analysis of the sacrament of matrimony can be wound up stating that both the priest who officiates sacramental celebration in the Church and the parent who performs his or her obligations at home are administering their priestly roles and that this sacramental administration is possible only when they are endowed with Catholic imagination.

Another theme which has a reference connected with a sacrament in *Angels of September* is forgiveness. The inevitability of the spirit of reconciliation is many a time

upheld in this novel. There are direct and indirect references to the sacrament of reconciliation. There is the notorious incident of Kenny threatening Anne in the confessional saying that she is irremediably damned to hell and forcing her to pose naked for him to paint a picture. This man is an insult to the Catholic practice of confession which confers and confirms God's forgiveness to repenting sinners. Blackie comments about this priest, "That man was a disgrace to priesthood. He never should have been ordained" (418). A priest must have the readiness to forget and forgive the sins of others. A priest who is hostile in style and always unprepared to forgive others cannot administer the sacrament of reconciliation meaningfully. Hence, it is a must that he should have strong faith in the existence of a God who saves us by loving and forgiving us. Nothing but Catholic imagination can empower the priest to do this.

The spirit of reconciliation or the readiness to forgive is essential not only in the confessional but also in the family life. The parents cannot hold together and live in harmony without practising forgiveness. In *Angels of September* one finds the marriage of Jim Reilly and Anne on the verge of divorce. Though, her husband is an irresponsible person, she is willing to tolerate him. The only demand she makes is that he must take part in an alcoholic treatment programme after which he must consult a psychiatrist. This is perfectly justifiable because her ultimate plan is to sustain their family. Another instance worth mentioning, in this context, is the marriage between Mathew Sweeny and Anne. Sweeny quits his priesthood and marries her. Though this marriage does not last for long, a piece of advice he gives has perennial relevance. He asks Anne, "Is there no forgiveness in your heart? Forgive others as you yourself expect to be forgiven" (123). The concluding chapters also highlight the necessity of forgiveness. Greeley always argues that the Catholic priests as well as the lay people have to be activated or animated by Catholic imagination. Only then they will be able to give solace and guidance to those

people for whom guilt is like a heavy piece of luggage that grows more onerous the longer they carry it.

There is one more reference in *Angels of September* to the administration of another sacrament and it is Baptism. It is only a casual and very short reference to the fact that after the death of Jim Reilly in Thailand, the boy delivered by Jennifer is christened as James Reilly. According to the teachings of the Catholic Church, Baptism is the first sacrament one receives and it is one of the initiatory rites which makes one a Catholic and empowers that person to receive the other sacraments in the coming years. Thus, the marriage and the rite of reconciliation are the two sacraments Greeley has specifically elaborated in this novel. Of course, nobody is to expect a detailed treatise of all the seven sacraments in any of the novels analyzed here. The analysis already done, is more than enough to convince of the mutually complementing nature of faith and imagination in the administration of the sacraments. The administration of any sacrament or any liturgical celebration, for that matter, becomes lively, meaningful, attractive and fruitful only when Catholic imagination is applied to it properly. Hence, the Catholic priests as well as the lay people must be ready to abide by the demands arising from the correlation between faith and administration of sacrament, which, for Greeley, is an important component of Catholic imagination.

The second novel to be examined in this chapter is *Happy are the Oppressed*. This book is an account of how Jane Chantal Reynolds Cardin tormented by a sense of guilt and fear of immediate death regains her peace of mind making a general confession to Blackie who is, as usual, sent by Archbishop Sean Cronin, to unveil the mystery regarding the curse that still haunts the Cardins. Blackie finds out the truth, brings the real murderers before the law and thus makes the curse of Colonel Pettigrew ineffective. He proves that the curse due to obsession with money is worse and more dangerous than the

words of the dying Confederate Colonel. The most evident message of this novel is that a genuine confession not only absolves sins but also solves problems and results in the reestablishment of human relationships. As Blackie reveals the truth, the craze for money which makes people blind and belligerent disappears and then a family reunion takes place. The theme of reconciliation as experienced in confession or resulting from it, and an emphasis on the loving nature of God as witnessed by exemplary family life are the prominent hallmarks of *Happy are the Oppressed*. There are partial references to the vocation to priesthood. That is precisely why a detailed study of this work is given in this chapter. As this study progresses, one is to realize that, as already stated, for the effective administration of the sacraments, both the priests who officiate and the people who receive, need Catholic faith and Catholic imagination. Every sacrament presupposes faith which is intensified when the sacrament is administered properly with the accompaniment of a high degree of imagination. As the priest officiates the administration of sacraments he nourishes the faith of the community as well as that of himself. Thus there is an unbreakable affinity between faith and the administration of sacraments.

While dying Colonel Pettigrew tells Pete Cardin, known as Red Pete, "I curse you, you vicious murdering bloodsucker! May death haunt you and your family for every generation! And may you all burn in hell for ever!" (39). The tragedies which have been storming the Cardin family for a century prove that the curse is still in full swing. Cardin I dies of heart attack in 1896, Cardin II succumbs to influenza in 1918, Cardin III is killed in action in 1944, and Cardin IV dies in a plane crash in 1985. Rose Tennon, the wife of Cardin I, was brutally murdered in 1895. Now in 1985, Jane Chantal, the wife of Cardin V, fears that she too, will be killed to mark the hundredth anniversary of the first tragedy. Blackie's investigation makes it clear that the murderers of Rose Tennon in 1895 and the recent attempts on Jane's life, are provoked by the same motive that is craze for money.

Regarding the tragedy of 1895, someone else had killed the wife to implicate the husband in a murder charge that would lead to his hanging (297). Then, the someone gets all that Cardin I was in possession of. Blackie finds out that at present the villain is Patrick Reynold, Jane's own brother who is an ingenious improviser and manipulator. In both these issues, the killers are in dire need of money, and there is a tendency to incriminate the husbands, in order to misappropriate huge amounts of money. For these murderers, whether they are people who lived in the past or they are living at present, there is no God but money. Man is always hunted or haunted by the same sinful nature. They have neither love nor faith. Those who possess Catholic faith will always respect the body of the other at all cost. Anyway, they will not kill anybody. Those who have Catholic faith believe that God is the father of all and that all are His children. Hence, one who has a strong faith cannot kill anybody. Anyway, it is very clear that they don't have Catholic faith. It is also true that the murderers, in Jane's case, Patrick Reynold, and in Rose Tennon's case, Joe Carey and his secret lover Peg Mc Gevin, are not endowed with Catholic imagination which will never prompt anybody to act against Catholic faith. The tragedies that occurred between 1895 and 1995 teach that the criminals are those who neglect or lack faith, and have perverted their imagination. What brings about tragedies in Cardin's family is this disintegration of the Catholic imagination and not the curse which is one century old. In Greeley's opinion, the remedy for these and similar tragic problems is the reestablishment of Catholic imagination. This is what Blackie achieves by means of the confessional which is the highest expression of God's loving forgiveness as well as the inauguration of a renewed life.

In *Happy are the Oppressed*, Jane Chantal Cardin is the mostly oppressed person. Her life is a cesspool of suffering. In the words of Blackie, "Chantal Cardin had been attacked from three sides, each attacker with a different goal, each one with their own

responsibility. But, only one attacker had been responsible for the physical violence done to her” (277). Her suffering at the hands of her husband, her brother, the hired assassins and the police, knows no bounds. It is very significant that Jane recovers her mental health as a result of her making a general confession to Blackie at the Cathedral rectory. According to her, Blackie is a man of understanding. She doesn't like the priests of Corpus Christi or the Jesuits. As Jane says, “We need kind priests, more than stern or lenient priests” (23). She approaches Blackie in a restless and highly agitated manner. In the confessional, she experiences God's love and mercy, and as a result she regains her identity and integrity. Her mental and physical strength improves considerably. The confessor consoles and convinces her, “I believe that our God is helplessly in love with us and does not desire so minute explanations of our past sins as much as She requires our reflection on Her great love for us” (13-14). After the confession and some therapy, Jane assumes the directorship of the new Cardin Foundation. She never thinks that she is worthless. The words of Blackie, the confessor, reveal that he is inspired by the correlation of faith and imagination. He says:

The essence of our faith is a dream, a vision, a possibility.... We can all live with one another in peace and affection.... This is the story Jesus told us. This is the faith that keeps us Catholic, this is the vision we see in the eyes of our children.... It's a dream about what is possible if God really loves us the way Jesus says He loves us. In the light of that dream, the worst of all sins is to say that one is worthless.... If you don't believe that, woman, you have no right to claim to be Catholic. (86-87)

By virtue of Confession, Jane reconciles herself with God and, as instructed by Blackie, she is willing to share the spirit of forgiveness with her husband as well her assailants. This readiness to forgive, subject to the conditions put forward by Blackie,

works miracles such as Cardin V becomes a new person, and Jane's husband who has had adulterous relationship with Peg Mc Gurn for about twenty five years, now feels sorry for his deception and assures cent percent faithfulness to Jane. As he confesses in front of Blackie, his wife is more important than his riches and power, for in his own words, "Riches and power do not bring happiness, Bishop" (167). The reorientation which Blackie and the confession have created in Cardin is well expressed in his conversation with Dr. Milanie Jefferson. Fed up with the humiliating words of the Countess, the doctor asks, "What is more important to you, Sir, your wife's life or this woman's whims?" Cardin's answer is, "My wife" (267). The best result of the confession seems to be the family reunion of Cardin and Jane. The novel reaches its climax when Jane, the most oppressed person, emerges as the happiest one. Here is a special lesson for all the Catholic priests. It is not enough to officiate the sacraments. What is more important is that those who receive the sacraments must be ready to forgive and be reconciled with one's partner and the other members of the family. In this regard, priests themselves ought to be models. For this, they have to appreciate and encourage the mutually supporting correlation between faith and administration of sacraments. That is why, the Catholic Church insists on the priests and the lay people to recognize the need of following Catholic imagination in one's personal life, liturgical celebration and social relationships.

Having discussed some aspects related to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the focus is shifted to the Sacrament of Marriage. The attitude to the human body and sex, the mutual responsibility of the parents in the family, and the relevance of empowering the women are discussed here. That the marital love is a reflection or symbol of God's eternal love is a favourite theme of Greeley. One cannot point out any novel written by him which does not elaborate upon this sacramental nature of human love. To be a sacrament

is to be a symbol. When one says matrimony is a sacrament it is self evident that the human body is not evil in itself, that sex is not a taboo, but that sexuality is a means of experiencing God's love. As the pioneer of the analogical nature of Catholic imagination, Greeley always maintains that proper expression of sexuality is an anticipation of and a participation in God's love. In *Happy are the Oppressed* Blackie tells Jane, "You must remember Ms. Cardin, that God loves each of us with a parent's tenderness and a lover's passion" (1). He continues to comment that nothing in this world is more powerful and more expressive than the love of a parent to communicate God's love for us. The Trinitarian God shares love, expresses love and creates. The parents, too, do the same. The Catholic priest who has faith in God, the creator, has to preach the Good News about the creative aspect of human love. Without faith love will be nothing more than indulgence in carnal pleasures. Greeley's characters often remind that each person ought to safeguard the safety and sanctity of one's body. According to him, it is a part of realizing God's Will in one's life. In Blackie's words, "Proper care of one's body is virtue and not vice... When you follow your instincts to conserve that beauty, you do God's Will" (84). It is impossible to believe this without imagination and it is equally impossible to imagine this without faith. That is why, the Catholic Church holds that for the proper understanding of marriage one needs Catholic imagination which is also composed of the correlation between faith and the administration of sacraments.

Catholic imagination understands love basically, as respect for the other. This respect is not confined to the body alone. It also implies listening to the partner and respecting his or her views. In Greeley's opinion, the relationship between the husband and the wife is not one of superior and inferior. One is not the leader nor is the other a mere follower. Both the parents are collaborators with equal rights and responsibilities. The woman is not a silent slave. The husband is not to be an imposing boss. When Tony

O'Boyle, the coachman of the Cardin family and Clare go to the 'den' or Pat Mc Carthy's Saloon to catch the killers red-handed, she tells him, "If you are going to marry me, you would be clear that I'm no weeping and fainting female who needs protection all the time" (201). These words convey to all Clare's self-confidence and her self-asserting nature. She will not be a slave either in the family nor in her profession, though she is a maid. On another occasion, she says, "But I'm young and strong and I don't intend to spend all my life as a maid of all work" (115). To consider the other as a human person with equal dignity and rights, one needs, according to Greeley, Catholic imagination. What Blackie does in *Happy are the Oppressed*, is providing Jane with Catholic imagination through the administration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Then he prepares her husband to accept and co-operate with his newly born wife. Now, he is obsessive about not being obsessive with money. He devotes more time to his family and public service.

The third sacrament referred to in *Happy are the Oppressed* is Priesthood or the vocation to ministerial service in the Church. Blackie, the perfect embodiment of Catholic imagination, is the ideal priest, investigator and inventor of solutions to difficult problems. He is a grand success in his parishes, he performs excellently as a Bishop and works wonders in the confessional, as it has already been discussed in this chapter. The way he administers sacraments especially, his hearing the confession and making the sermon, are very much appreciated by the people. His preaching is saturated with knowledge of faith and embellishment of imagination. In Greeley's novels, Blackie is a living example for all priests to emulate. They must learn from Blackie's life and achievements how to combine faith and imagination in their priestly ministry. If they desire inspiration from the correlation between faith and administration of sacraments the

priests can fulfill their commitment to God and to the Church with greater zeal and more efficacy.

In the novel, one also comes across partial but noteworthy references to vocation to priestly life and religious life. For instance, the first son of Pete Cardin is known as Peter Junior or Cardin II. Born in 1871, this young master likes to be a priest. He wants to be a priest only till the death of his father, due to influenza in 1918. He falls in love with Clare and dies as Colonel in action in the year 1944. In the words of Clare, the young master has "The mark of the priest on him and a good priest he will be" (110). But he never becomes a priest, he marries Clare. The Cardins are handsome empty men mad after money and power. The family abounds in neither Catholic faith nor Catholic imagination. There is no wonder that the young master or any other member never becomes a priest, for the Cardins, as a whole, are so much obsessed with their family and wealth. The desire to become a priest, in their case, is nothing more than a teen age 'crush'. A thorough change takes place in the family of Cardin V as a result of Blackie's interference. Since the attainment of family reunion this Cardin and Jane seem to be interested in leading a true Catholic life free from the obsession of money. This Catholic reorientation is noticeable in Cardin's words, "We need to teach our young people the old religious values" (22). This is evidently an expression of the responsibility of a typical Catholic parent. Accordingly, a great change is visible in the character of Cardin VI who is a young man now and surprisingly he wants to become a priest.

One particular scene towards the end of the novel is suggestive of another sacrament, that is the Anointing of the Sick. This is the last sacrament usually administered to the sick people in death bed. The Forest Lane Squad finds Jane beaten, raped, water-sprayed and tied to a tree near the lakeshore. She is taken to a hospital. In this critical condition Blackie visits her. Of course, he does not administer the Last

Sacrament for Jane. But, the prayer he leads beside her bed and the consolation it gives make it as good as the Anointing of the Sick. Blackie invites all to pray for the suffering Jane. As Greeley writes, they "Said a whole rosary. The nurses and the residents joined us. Papists everywhere" (272). Technically speaking, there is no administration of sacrament in this context. But, here Blackie himself becomes a sacrament of God's grace and mercy. He teaches all the priests that they have a duty to visit the sick and assure them God's blessings, especially at a time when every patient craves for consolation and rapport. When Jane regains her consciousness Blackie sends Dr. Joseph Murphy, the psychiatrist, to her. As a consequence, the patient recovers quickly and the process of family reunion is accelerated. Rosary is a typically Roman Catholic devotion to Saint Mary and the fact that all the nurses and the residents take part in it, for Greeley, is a matter of the glory of the Catholic faith which is by its very nature associated with proper imagination. Blackie's Catholic imagination gradually enters and changes the mind and attitude of Jane and she becomes a new person ready to forgive all and to be reunited with her husband.

Before winding up this discussion on the relationship between faith and the administration of sacraments, a quick glance at the social significance of administering the sacraments as Greeley expresses it in *Happy are the Oppressed* is made here. The ultimate purpose of the sacraments does not consist in simply conducting a function in the Church with unction. Any meaningful celebration aims at the building up of a given community. Each sacrament is the external sign of God's gratuitous love for us. So, those who officiate or participate in a sacramental administration ought to be transformed persons who live in harmony with others. In Greeley's opinion, sacraments are levelers making people equals, and they have great unifying strength. Those who receive the sacraments ought to form one community and live as brethren. In his Christmas Eve

message, Cardinal Sean Cronin, Blackie's boss, explains that no one who claims to celebrate Christmas can exclude anyone whether by reason of race or ethnicity or religion or gender or age or sexual orientation. He concludes, "Catholicism means here comes everyone" (190). Various discriminations rampant in the modern world are the violation of the spirit and meaning of the sacraments. The inequalities prevailing in the society are a scandal and a shame to the Church and all those who frequent the sacraments. Clare asks in the novel, "If there is so much equality why do some people live in such beautiful homes and others in those terrible slums in Chicago and why are the niggers treated like slaves, even though they have been free these thirty years?" (116). These and similar examples amply prove that many a time sacraments are administered mechanically and the people are not transformed. Hence, this novel is a challenge for all priests to make their administration of sacraments more effective. This is possible only when sacramental celebration is coupled with faith, and faith is seasoned with Catholic imagination.

Irish Mist is Greeley's attempt to portray certain events in Irish history which are shrouded in the mist of mystery and tarnished by misinterpretations. This novel presents how Dermot and Nuala, the chief protagonists, assisted by some priests and police officers, remove the mist that has been surrounding the disgraced and desolate life of General Tudor in Newfoundland and the disappearance of Lady Augusta, which pertain to the past, and the present problems instigated by the jealousy of Marve Doyle. Mist always obstructs light and hides reality. Greeley explains how, when he applies the light of his faith and imagination, this mystery is unveiled or in other words, the problems are solved. Dermot and Nuala find out that General Tudor, the youngest British officer sent to Ireland by Winston Churchill, lived till his death at 95, in Newfoundland, in utter disgrace of either his ill-reputation as a cruel officer or his illicit love affair with Lady Augusta Downs, the widow of Colonel Sir Arthur. Kevin O' Higgins, the successor of Tudor,

while going for Mass at Booker Town is shot dead by Tommy the only survivor of the Whelan gang – a group of Irish rebels – who fought against Great Britain, whom Tudor tried to exterminate under the pretext of saving the life of Lady Augusta. The investigation reveals that Lady Augusta survived the fire, became a Carmelite nun with the help of her parish priest, and rose to the position of the Mother Superior. At her death, that priest arranged things in such a way that her body was buried near to that of her husband as it was the last wish of Augusta. The protagonists also prove that Marve Doyle is behind all the attempts on their lives, the cause of provocation being nothing but sheer jealousy and envy.

Thus, *Irish Mist* is apparently concerned about answering a few questions regarding some past historical problems and some present problems related to the life of Dermot and Nuala. In the process of unfolding these issues the novelist expresses his views on the correlation between the Catholic faith and the administration of the sacraments. It is because of this preoccupation with the exposition of the sacraments that *Irish Mist* is included in this chapter. This novel enables each priest to understand the sacraments as a manifestation of his Catholic faith and to uphold the significance of the sacraments to the faith-formation of the faithful. Hence, this study is to inspire the priests to improve the quality of sacramental administration giving due importance to faith and Catholic imagination. The sacraments mostly highlighted in *Irish Mist* are the Eucharist, Confession and the Anointing of the Sick. A separate treatment of each of these sacraments is attempted below.

In Greeley's own opinion, *Irish Mist* is an explanation of how the anniversary Mass in memory of Kevin O' Higgins came to be. Kevin is shot dead on July 10, '92, while going to take part in the Holy Mass. The novel mentions this event in many contexts. The anniversary Mass is attended by Kevin's daughter, a nun, Tommy, the

killer, and the man who gave the signal to the murderers (92). Both the Catholics and the Protestants mourn the death of Kevin. The priest says a Mass even against the laws (105). The central theme of the epilogue is Kevin's anniversary Mass. A special mention is made of the homily preached by the priest (359). The references to the Holy Mass in *Irish Mist* are not always in association with Kevin's death. For example, it is mentioned that Mass is said in the Catholic Church, at the death of Tudor and Hazel, his wife (246). Being genuine Catholics, Dermot and Nuala go to Mass early morning (253). These manifold references prove that the Eucharist is the apex of the Catholic sacramental system and liturgical celebration.

The Holy Mass is not a part but the very heart of the life of a Catholic. The Church teaches that the Eucharist is the commemoration and celebration of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. It implies and initiates a new life in Jesus. The Catholic priest offering Mass at the altar represents Jesus dying on the cross, and leads to redemption. In the case of a Catholic priest, his self-realization is proportionate to the meaningful way of celebrating the Holy Eucharist. He cannot offer the Eucharist, or any other sacrament for that matter, if he does not have faith which has to be accompanied by Catholic imagination. The Catholic Church insists on all her clergy that they must say the Holy Mass every day even if there is no audience. She teaches that the faithful must participate in the celebration of the Holy Mass on all Sundays and days of obligation. Those who join the community in offering the Mass do witness to their Catholic faith and thereby they strengthen their own faith. Thus, the altar is the revivifying reuniting centre of the parish. It is the duty of the Catholic priest to officiate this celebration in the most appealing, convincing and exemplary manner. For this, he has to give due regard for Catholic imagination. In order to make this celebration more effective and interactive both priests and the lay people need training.

A survey of Kevin's murder reminds of the Sacrament of Confession. The Holy Mass is very much related to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. These two are as inalienable as the two sides of the same coin. *Irish Mist* highlights the nobility and necessity of forgiveness. Kevin O' Higgins forgives his assassin. At the moment of his death, Kevin tells Tommy, "The killing has to stop; I forgive you" (360). During the anniversary Mass, the officiating priest, in his sermon, elaborates on God's gratuitous love and stresses the need for forgiveness after Kevin's model. The priest reads a passage in which Jesus teaches the 'Our Father'. He argues that Catholicism is nothing but forgiveness and makes a strong appeal to the Irish people and the whole world to forgive each other. Kevin is one who has taught us how to realize the theme of forgiveness contained in the "Our Father", in our daily life. Jesus dies on the cross saying, "Forgive them, Father! They don't know what they are doing" (Luke 23: 34). The fact that he is shot dead, while going to the church, in order to take part in the Eucharist shows that he has Catholic faith. He has faith in the forgiving nature of God. His readiness to forgive his enemy unconditionally proves that he is guided by the Catholic imagination. Neither does he curse or condemn his assailants nor does he demand that they must be punished. He sacrifices his life in an exemplary way, with no hostility to anyone. Jesus says, "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, ...first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5: 23-24).

Kevin's death ought to be an eye-opener to all the priests who officiate the celebration of the sacraments, especially those of the Confession and the Holy Mass. The Sacrament of Reconciliation imparts God's forgiveness to the penitents if they are willing to forgive those who have committed sins to them. This divine forgiveness is effected through the medium of a priest. To be a worthy confessor, every priest must be pure in

spirit. There is no place for enmity or grudge in his heart. He has to show forgiveness to his superiors, fellow-priests and the laity. He must also forgive his enemies as Kevin does at the point of death. The life of the priest has to be a good example for others to imitate. It is taken for granted that a Catholic priest must have faith in God's mercy and in the efficacy of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. For this, he needs an intense degree of Catholic faith and imagination. One cannot comprehend even a spark of God's nature or character without faith and Catholic imagination. Every lay person has a right to see in the life of the priests a reflection of a healthy merging of faith and Catholic imagination, the expression of which is at its best at the time of the celebration of sacraments.

Another occasion on which Greeley upholds the inevitability of forgiveness is in chapter 33. Father Placid who is accused of misappropriation of money confesses his sin and asks for forgiveness (327). It is Placid who invites Nuala to Ireland for a concert at Point after which he absconds with the fund to New York. Though late, Placid has the magnanimity to make a public apology. As a Catholic priest, he is supposed to abide by, if not the vow of, poverty. But Placid goes after money at the expense of all other values. He forfeits the credibility, truthfulness and accountability which are hallmarks of any priest. Here is a man who raises an enormous amount of money for some noble cause and then disappears with it in pursuit of one's own vested interests. This shows a gradual deterioration of his Catholic faith, a proper imagination and all priestly virtues. The priestly ministry is not meant for accumulating wealth for personal whims and fancies. As a priest one has to collect money but, it should be spent responsibly and in an accountable way. Placid is not a good model for any priest. He is a scandal to others and an insult to priesthood. The possibility of a renewal is naturally implied in his apology. Each priest has to appreciate this, and learn a lesson that no one can serve two masters, God and money, at the same time. If he preserves the correlation between faith and administration

of sacraments, and if he lets himself be led by Catholic imagination, he will not fall a prey to the temptation of money. The novelist expects the priests to understand how his misappropriation of money makes Placid a misfit among his own people and forces him to migrate to the States. A priest who gives up faith and neglects Catholic values is abandoned by all. His apology, of course, is a sign of hope and beginning of a new life.

Kevin's murder also reminds us of the relevance of a third sacrament, that is the Anointing of the Sick, also known as the Last Sacrament. Greeley makes a deliberate mention of this rite. Kevin is killed as he is going to the Church at Booters town. The murderer pours the content of his revolver into Kevin's body at point-blank range. A boy rushes to invite a priest who rushes to the spot. The priest comes and administers the Last Sacrament (49). Kevin receives the Anointing of the Sick, forgives his assaulters and dies as a martyr. Kevin is a known believer. He has Sunday observance. In Greeley's opinion, Kevin is a Catholic who took religion seriously and lived in its light (206). One of his daughters is a nun. It is both his duty and right to be anointed with the sacred oil at the time of death. All these prove that he is a practising Catholic. He is a stern and upright Catholic (204). Though he is brutally assassinated, Kevin dies peacefully in the presence of a priest. And here is a priest who readily obliges the invitation to administer the Last Sacrament to a dying man. His immediate and positive response makes him a worthy pastor who takes the trouble to console and bless the dying person. On Kevin's part, his readiness to forgive his enemies makes him a worthy recipient of the sacrament. Both Kevin and the priest are motivated by their Catholic imagination, and in this administration of the sacrament, one finds a solid witness to the Catholic faith. In Greeley's opinion, the Catholic priest working in a parish for the people, assisting them and guiding them even at the death bed is the ideal man on earth. He has great fascination for the ministry of a Catholic priest. And he exaggerates, "God respects all orders equally;

but God is, in fact, a diocesan priest” (289). The diocesan priest becomes an exemplary person only when and if he promulgates his Catholic faith in and through the administration of sacraments fulfilling all the demands of the Catholic imagination.

To one who examines the life of Lord Arthur Downs and his relationship with Lady Augusta, the influence of a Catholic priest in the behaviour of the people becomes very clear. Both Arthur and Augusta, are good Catholics. About his spiritual life, one reads that he is close with the priest (138) and he doesn't believe any more in the war (140) because it is against the Catholic faith. Lady Augusta, too, is a firm Catholic. She writes poems which are expressions of her spiritual experiences. Greeley comments, “Her religious faith permeated all of the poems” (135). Thus it is clear that the priest who administers the sacraments exert lasting influence in the life of the faithful. This is true with regard to the life of Tudor also. Tudor spends his last years in Newfoundland. As a lonely and neglected person, he derives solace from his faith. About his last years, Greeley writes that he has become “Friendly with an Irish priest” (352). These examples amply prove that the priest and the sacraments have an important role to play in the faith formation of the lay people. The Church teaches that the parish priest is accountable before God for the spiritual welfare of the people. He has to advise the people to lead a Eucharist-centred life endowed with Catholic imagination, deriving strength from the faithful celebration of the sacraments, officiated by the priest.

Another sacrament which Greeley discusses, rather in detail, in *Irish Mist* is the Holy Matrimony. The novel portrays the traditional views of the Catholic Church on sexuality as well as the modern, even, controversial views of the novelist on this subject. Greeley presents the life of Dermot and Nuala as the ideal marital status and by means of their words and deeds the novelist promulgates his personal views as well as the Church's official views on sexuality. Before analyzing the attitude of Dermot and Nuala to sex and

family life, the fact that this couples are genuine Catholics and that they are inspired by the Catholic imagination, have to be ascertained. As practising Catholics, Dermot and Nuala abide by their faith. Dermot is a novelist and Nuala, a musician. These professions by their very nature presuppose imagination. Writing for Dermot is an expression of the Catholic faith. Singing for Nuala is also a manifestation of her religious faith. When they land in the airport in response to the dyspeptic Placid's invitation, the media people ask them about their religious beliefs. Both of them reveal that they believe in God and that they are church-going. Nuala always listens to priests and regulates her life according to their direction. An important justification for all her activities is, "That is what the priest said" (19). Her programme at the Point sounds like a religious experience after which Geen Keenan, the police officer, comments that Nuala knows "what Catholic Ireland is and that the Archbishop might ask her to teach religion..." (184). Her performance reminds Greeley of the words of St. Irenaeus, "The glory of God is the human person fully alive" (188). Referring to Nuala's singing and recording some songs for the monks, Dermot comments that it was a very moving religious experience (301). "It is a resurrection celebration with Mary" (336). The couples are interested in Church activities. One finds Dermot going to the Vicarage and he contributes a substantial amount of money to Father Mike who says, "This is the golden age of Irish Spirituality" (316). These examples are more than enough to convince about the Catholic character of the protagonists of *Irish Mist*. Their behaviour appears to be seasoned with Catholic faith and imagination. What is important to our study is that both of them respect and frequent the sacraments and maintain a healthy relationship with the priest, as the Church expects her faithful to do. They are faithful and law-abiding members of the Church, who take pride in being Catholics.

The Catholic attitude of Dermot and Nuala is very evident in their understanding of sex and married life. The two lovers are torn between their loyalty to the Church on the one hand and the fascination for carnal pleasures on the other. It is very significant that the protagonists in *Irish Mist* postpone the consummation of their love to the end, despite the repeated persuasions of the 'adversary' to assault the other for one's own sexual pleasure. The 'adversary' advocates anti-Catholic views as projected by the American culture which encourages free and immediate sex which is detrimental to the redeeming aspects of sexuality and fidelity and stability of family. They regard and respect the bedroom as a sacred sanctuary. In both these places there is death and resurrection, resulting in new life. In the act of love-making with the right motive, the couple die with and for the other, at least temporarily. After the consummation of love Nuala says, "I died of pleasure" (357). Both the partners redeem each other and die for resurrection i. e. the birth of a child. For Greeley, sexuality is not for the selfish pleasure of an individual at the expense of the other. But it is complete self-denial in the context of marriage.

Dermot and Nuala believe that sexual pleasure in the context of marriage is a reminder of God's real loving nature (125). For both of them God is a passionate lover. Nuala is exceptionally immune to all kinds of inhibitions regarding sex. She remembers her mother's views on marital relationship. The mother tells her that love is like fire and that the wife has the right to initiate the process of love-making (194). It is the duty of the married partner to satisfy the other sexually. Nuala thinks that if she is unable to satisfy Dermot, "The marriage won't be everything that it should be" (239). Marriage, viewed from this point of view, does not detract the couple from loving God and leading a spiritual life, but it works as a sacrament and unites the married people with God more intensely. In fact, Nuala thinks that she has two lovers; one is Dermot, her husband, and the other one is God Himself (358). She sees in God her husband, the lover, and in

Dermot , God, the lover. One lover reminds her of the other. She says, “I believe that you [God] exist and that you loved me. I never knew why. So you sent Dermot as your representative” (357). That means every partner has a duty to teach the other partner that God loves him or her. Thus, marriage is a means for knowing that God is love. Marriage is so, a sacrament, a sign of God, experienced as love. To regard and respect the other as God’s sacrament, both partners need Catholic faith and imagination. Dermot and Nuala are genuine Catholics. The Catholic priest must not think that his pastoral obligation will be over if he blesses and officiates the marriage celebration. He has to inculcate in the lovers the right Catholic understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage which is impossible without maintaining a solid correlation between faith and imagination in the administration of the sacraments.

From a purely biological point of view sex is nothing but an urge for possessing or using the other, even forcibly, for one’s own pleasure. In the case of Dermot and Nuala, they respect the body of the other, for, they are driven by Catholic principles on sex and its functions in the context of the family. Though the ‘adversary’ always challenges Dermot for indulging in pre-marital consummation, he postpones it, as we have already mentioned, to their married life. Likewise, when the same ‘adversary’ insists on repeating the process of intercourse, Dermot does not oblige, because, he decides not to ‘use’ his wife. None of them has got a hidden agenda. Each one is transparent to the other, as God Himself is. This aspect of transparency reminds one of Nuala’s words to Dermot. She says, “When I am with you, I feel like I am completely naked all the time” (284). The Catholic Church teaches through the priests that history is the story of the on-going manifestation of God’s gratuitous love towards humanity. The story of Dermot and Nuala tells us that marriage is really an ever-flowing sharing of love between the partners which is a symbol of the unconditional divine love.

An evaluation of *Irish Mist* makes it clear that all the good characters are persons who frequent sacraments and maintain healthy relationship with priests. Dermot's brother, George, is a priest. Tudor and Kevin were in good relationship with the Church, especially in their last years. The same can be said about the life of Lady Augusta, who became the Mother Superior. All these characters are proud of their Catholic faith and very much interested in receiving the sacraments. All Catholics, no matter if one is a priest or a lay person, are expected to have a combination of faith and imagination in his or her character and way of living. Those persons who neglect or lack one or two of these characters appear to be defective or problematic in individual and social life. In short, *Irish Mist* seems to remind the priests of the necessity of improving their own understanding of the correlation between faith and sacramental celebration, and of preparing the community for a meaningful celebration of the sacraments. To recapitulate, both the clergy and the laity have to realize better the sacramental significance of liturgical functions and all of them ought to incorporate into their words and deeds the characteristics of a healthy blending of faith and imagination.

Another novel in which Greeley has portrayed the Catholic teachings on the Sacraments of Confession and Marriage is *A Christmas Wedding*. The entire novel is overwhelmed by an aura of forgiveness without which Confession will not be complete and Marriage will not withstand its challenges. The central story in *A Christmas Wedding* is the marriage relationship of James Patrick, known as Chuck, a member of the O' Malley family of Chicago, and Rosemarie, born of Joseph Powers and late Helen. This novel reaches its climax when it unfolds the mystery of the death of Clancy, Rosemarie's mother, and it proves that Rosemarie is not a murderer but a redeemer of many families, and, above all, instrumental to the popularity and success of her own husband. Greeley presents Chuck and Rosemarie as persons firmly rooted in Catholic faith and are guided

by Catholic imagination. A Catholic priest can make use of the story of this couple when he has to illustrate the themes of mutual respect, mutual understanding and acceptance, in family life. For, Chuck and Rosemarie are persons who survive all concussions on their way and live together despite their temporary misunderstandings and complaints. The discussion here shows how and to what extent *A Christmas Wedding* highlights the Catholic teachings on the Sacraments of Confession and Marriage, through the example of the chief protagonists, Chuck and Rosemarie, better than an ordinary priest does it on his pulpit. This serves as an eye-opener to the Catholic priests convincing them of their pastoral obligation to prepare the lay people for making the confession and receiving the Sacrament of the Holy Matrimony.

At the outset of the novel, Chuck and Rosemarie are college students. As passionate lovers, they are awaiting 'a Christmas wedding'. Both of them fear that they are too young and too unprepared for marriage. Moreover, Rosemarie is always hunted and haunted by her traumatic past, at the hands of her father who had molested and raped her many a time (123). She is under the bondage of guilt and shame. The fear that she has killed her mother is tormenting her day and night. Rosemarie's liberation is brought about by the confession of Peg, her husband's sister and a close friend of hers, which is, perhaps, the most striking event in the whole novel. Peg confesses that it was she who bashed the brains of Clancy in order to save the life of Rosemarie, her friend. She did so only because she felt sure that Clancy would murder both Rosemarie and Peg with a poker (441). Of course, Peg's is not a priest assisted confession. But, this confession makes Rosemarie a free person, a new person. According to Catholic faith, confession assures God's forgiveness and results in mutual forgiveness in the community. The Church teaches that the spirit of reconciliation is the hallmark of a good confession. A flame of forgiveness is enkindled in the heart of Rosemarie. She is forgiven by others and

she is willing to forgive all others including the Church and her lover. She readily forgives Chuck who never revealed to her the fact of infidelity that he had in Germany a lover, by name Trudi, and a son, Karl. Rosemarie reconciles with Trudi and enfriends her who now lives with Herr Weiss, a former pilot (412). The scene of their mutual confession is really touching and fully Catholic. Chuck confesses his infidelity saying, "I am the one who needs to be forgiven". At that she responds in tears, "I do forgive you... the way you forgave me" (435). This mutual forgiveness is only an inauguration of a series of reunions which will be explained shortly.

Peg's confession does not occur in a confessional. There is no priest to absolve her. But it works wonders. This confession sanctifies Peg and relieves Rosemarie of her sense of guilt and despair. Nobody condemns her for what she did. Father Raven thinks that she is a heroine (441). Chuck praises Peg and thanks God in these words, "Dear God in heaven, how You must have loved my Rosemarie to send such a fierce and tender woman to protect her" (443). The newly born Rosemarie is bent upon making her husband a man of worth. He takes initiative to publish his photos. Again, she conducts an exhibition of those photos in Germany. But for his wife's active support, Chuck will be a mere accountant and occasional photographer. The novel attains its zenith as President Jack Kennedy appoints him to serve as his ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany. Already Chuck is a Pulitzer Prize winner (306). Now he is a renowned journalist and artist. At a time when he lacked self confidence, Chuck thinks that he is a good for nothing fellow. He says, "A published photographer not quite twenty four was bad enough, Irish and Catholic was worse, and from the West side of Chicago settled the matter. How could I be any good?" (225). A Catholic priest who wants to narrate the story of Chuck and Rosemarie must know what is responsible for these changes and achievements in the life of Chuck. As far as Rosemarie is concerned, Peg's confession is

her retrieval to Catholic imagination. Both Chuck and Rosemarie are very steadfast in their spiritual life. As a Catholic, Chuck has strong faith. As an artist, he is endowed with a high degree of imagination. Many critics are of the opinion that Chuck's pictures have great sacramental and evangelizing effects. For example, *New York Times* comments on his pictures, "Perhaps only a Catholic artist could see so much religious quest implicit in the bodies of two adored women. Mr. O' Malley is a photographer of Sacraments" (261). The fact that both of them work for the Christian Family Movement is a clear expression of the Catholic imagination in them, as their guiding principle. Any Catholic priest can employ the experience of Chuck and his wife to explain the behavioural changes which are effected as a result of making confession or receiving some other sacraments. Those who listen to this story will really believe that faith and imagination are not mere ideas or ideals, but that they are the source of energy enabling the recipients of the sacraments to be better persons in the Church as well as in the world.

As already hinted, Peg's confession has corresponding effects in the life of Rosemarie. In the first part of *A Christmas Wedding*, Rosemarie has a miserable appearance. In Greeley's words, "Grief had blotched her face... a wounded, frightened little girl. All the hurt of her life was branded on her face and her shrunken frame" (173). She is a sinking ship. She takes to drinking. As a result of Peg's confession and Rosemarie's readiness to forgive, the latter turns out to be a new person, a born leader, who accomplishes great things in life. She is also in possession of certain mystical traits, and intuitive and imaginative experiences reminding one of Nuala in Greeley's Irish novels. She gives up her drinking habit and attends to therapy. Rosemarie can be said to be an incarnation of the transforming possibility of Catholic imagination. In Dr. Stone's opinion, she has been a blessing to all crazy O' Malleys (477). She is not a temptress as she has never been accused of any adulterous relationship. Rosemarie's prime concern

seems to be making aware that God gives second chances to renew one's life. This is what every sacrament is supposed to be. This is what all Catholic priests are expected to be doing. Hence, one can say, Rosemarie is a sacramental character, a sanctifying sign.

As the title of the book indicates, marriage is the most important subject dealt with in *A Christmas Wedding*. Greeley has stuffed the mouths of the important characters with a lot of ideas which he wants the priests to listen to and witness to in their preaching. Actually, this novel narrates the story of how Chuck and Rosemarie wait and prepare themselves for their Catholic marriage on Christmas and how their co-dwelling obtains its fulfilment, notwithstanding many a struggle on the way. An inquiry into their lives tells that for both of them the first and best partner in life is the Catholic Church or the faith. They love the Church and gladly abide by her teachings on sex and marriage. As college students they deeply regret at the sight of young people deserting the Church for not changing her teachings as fast as they want. Greeley expresses their anxiety, "We feared that many young people would be lost to the Church unless Catholic scripture teaching was modified to take into account what Bultmann had taught about the process of demythologizing" (16). As lovers they complain that the Church has not taught them sufficiently about the meaning and purpose of sex and marital life. As Chuck comments, "The Church once again was doing too little, too late for its laity" (106). For them sex is not evil and love is to be expressed. They learn to shed all taboos attached to the subject of sex and its use. As any other favourite character of Greeley, Chuck and Rosemarie believe that God is a passionate lover. She asks, "Anyway, do you think God is going to send us to hell for a little gentle loving? Isn't it the way He made young people? Isn't that how He prepares us for marriage?" Chuck makes a pertinent reply, "I think God probably understands, but the Church doesn't" (79). When Chuck was in Germany, he had immoral relationship with one Trudi. But, ever since his engagement to Rosemarie he claims to be

cent percent faithful to his partner. Though he has many women-fans he does not any more entertain either dating or a new affair. When Millie Edward makes some amorous advances to him in her parlour, Chuck refuses saying, "I am sorry, Millie... I am a Catholic" (378). In short, Chuck as a true Catholic husband is determined to obey the Church's teaching that sex is to be enjoyed with another one of the opposite sex in the context of marriage.

As a true Catholic, Rosemarie is in unison with her husband with regard to their approach to the matrimonial sacrament. She thinks that the Church has to withdraw the stigma attached to matters related to sex. She does not fear that the loving God will punish anybody for some 'necking and petting'. Rosemarie's assumption is that the Catholic Church will gradually change or lessen the gravity of some of the conventional laws regarding the use of sex. With reference to the difficulties of the married couples in sexual life, she regrets, "God understands that, even if the Church doesn't" (385). But, for the time being, she gladly submits to the precepts of *Humanae Vitae*. She has delivered five children. Rosemarie has neither inhibition nor any shame to proclaim, "I want everyone to know that I am not practising birth control" (199). Christmas is the day of the birth of the Lord. 'A Christmas wedding' is always open to more and more births. It is one of the basic teachings of Catholic sexual morality that the parents shall not obstruct this openness to new life in their conjugal relationships. In this respect, Rosemarie and Chuck are responsible and practising Catholics devoted to their faith and committed to abide by the teachings of the Church on marital sexuality.

The long awaited Christmas wedding takes place at St. Ursula Church in 1950, in the presence of Father John Raven and Monsignor Branigan. Chuck's brother Michael, a seminarian, is the altar server. The lovers are so happy. Rosemarie is a delightful and mysterious obsession to Chuck. In Greeley's words, they melted in each other's warmth

like butter in warm apple syrup. Sometimes it happens that the couple consider their career and family as an excuse to avoid the challenge of maturing intimacy and their love, because it is not tended, grows cold and perhaps dies. At one time, Chuck and Rosemarie are seen on the verge of separation. But the Catholic spirit of forgiveness overtakes them. They consider every problem as a blessing in disguise. For them their love is a reflection of God's love. In the light of Catholic imagination they have learnt that the love of parents in the family is a continuation and expression of Christ's love for the Church. As far as the married people are concerned their family is the altar in which they make their offerings and in doing so they are fulfilling the obligation of their Baptismal priesthood. Seeing his sister and her husband, huddled on the couch, Chuck exclaims, "What a wonderful picture of forgiving love it was" (370). These words are more than enough to vindicate the attitude of Chuck and Rosemarie to Catholic marriage. Chuck confesses how much he and his family are indebted to Rosemarie in the following words:

I would not be a photographer if she had not edged me into it. Both my sisters' marriages would have fallen apart if she had not intervened, rather dramatically in fact. My brother wouldn't be a priest, much less the effective priest he is, if Rosemarie had not installed herself as his confidant. My parents would not be as happy as they are today if Rosemarie hadn't mandated that they be happy. God only knows how much she has helped our nieces and nephews and our friends. (476)

A Christmas Wedding does not deal, in detail, with any other sacrament except that there is a partial reference to a Holy Mass being offered in memory of the soldiers who are killed in South Korea. This mentioning of the Holy Mass is so casual and brief that it does not deserve any detailed analysis. But, this reference to the celebration of the Eucharist assumes great significance when we anticipate a scene from *Irish Love*, the last

and the next novel to be discussed in this chapter. The people of Maamtrasna are so poor that they can't afford a priest to offer the Holy Mass. The murdered victims are buried in the open ground, with no priest to bless their graves. Unable to afford the Eucharist, the illiterate people say the rosary. The absence of the priest in a burial is a matter of shame to the Church. Saying the Mass in honour of the dead is an expression of the Catholic faith in the communion of saints. The Catholic Church has always upheld the custom of remembering the dead people, especially, on special occasions like the death anniversary, and praying for the repose of the souls. In *Irish Love*, Greeley vehemently criticizes the clergy for not being present during the funeral of the poor victims. Here, in *A Christmas Wedding*, the novelist specially mentions that a Holy Mass is offered in memory of the dead soldiers. As the leader of a Eucharist-centred community, and the Eucharist being the highest expression of God's love and presence, a Catholic priest has great responsibility to administer the Eucharistic Sacrament in the most appropriate manner.

To conclude, all sacraments are efficient prayers and they cannot be administered by a priest who does not pray. His prayer life has to be a model for others. A last point to raise is related to the priest's appreciation and encouragement of the lay apostolate. Even the pedagogical part of the sacraments can be made use of by the priests for the promotion of lay leadership and women empowerment which have always been Greeley's favourite topics. In this democratic age, clericalism and triumphalism do no more make any appeal to the faithful. The priests and lay people shall go forward as collaborators, in the process of bringing about God's Kingdom on earth. This venture is to be inspired by Catholic imagination and nourished by sacramental grace. The role of the parish priests in this attempt is that of catalysts or facilitators.

The last novel to be analyzed in this chapter is *Irish Love*. This is the fictionalized version of actual historical events related to the cold-blooded murders of the five

members of John Joyce's family, in their house at Maamtrasna, near Connemara, in the West of Ireland on the 17th August, 1882. The novel is based on the document prepared by Edward Fitzpatrick, a journalist, for *Chicago Daily News*, and is also indebted to *Maamtrasna: The Murders and the Mystery*, a book written by Father Jarlath Waldron, and the findings of Michael Mc Greil S. J.. *Irish Love* can be said to be an elaborate report which gradually reveals the real motive and identity of the true murderer responsible for the tragedy. In connection with the trial of Maamtrasna murders, Greeley makes a vehement criticism against the corrupt legal system which the English hegemony perpetuates in Ireland. Simultaneously, his chief protagonists - Dermot and Nuala - the new Watson and the new Sherlock Holmes respectively - through their detective expeditions solve some current problems like bomb explosions, killing of Russians in the hotel, and the attempts at the heroine's life. In the background of these two stories, one ancient and the other recent, the main concern is Greeley's sacramental preoccupations. This inquiry will convince of the importance of sacraments not only to the life of the priests who administer them but also to the religious experience of the lay people who participate in the sacramental celebration. What follows is the individual treatment of all the sacraments which Greeley portrays in the novel. An examination of how a mixture of Catholic faith and Catholic imagination is essential for the effective functioning and the fruitful reception of the sacraments also forms the integral part of this chapter.

The one sacrament which enjoys greater emphasis in *Irish Love* than in other Greeleyan novels seems to be the last one, the Last Sacrament known as the Anointing of the Sick. This does not mean that there are many scenes in this novel where priests are seen administering the Last Sacrament to dying persons. In fact, there is not a single case of a Catholic priest performing the last rite in an official manner. But, Greeley has upheld the nobility of this sacrament surprisingly by the absence or denial of the same, to persons

when and where they need it most. The most pathetic episode in *Irish Love* is the fact that the innocent people brutally murdered by John Casey are denied a decent burial. The bodies are buried in the open ground with no priest to bless the graves. According to the Catholic tradition, the priest has to anoint the sick person with holy oil in the death bed, he has to officiate the funeral ceremony and it is his duty to offer the Eucharist in memory and honour of the dead, for the repose of the departed soul. In the case of the victims of the Maamtrasna tragedy the situation is worsened by the absence of the Catholic priest. Unable to afford a priest in the right time, the poor people say a rosary instead of offering a solemn Mass. And Greeley asks, "Where was the priest for the people when they needed a priest?" (106). The presence of a priest by the death bed is for a Catholic believer more valuable than the best service of an expert doctor. The denial of a priest to a believer especially at the moment of death is more cruel than even the severest physical torture or the pain of any sickness. For an average Catholic, the absence of a priest at the time of the funeral is a matter of insult to the dead person and a shame to the relatives. The novelist really feels pity for the poor villagers who say a rosary knowing very well that any number of rosaries will not be a proper compensation for the Eucharistic celebration. As the assistance of the priest is indispensable and irreplaceable, every Catholic priest must try to be available to the people in the moments of their distress, and strengthen them by prayer and consolation.

The uniqueness of the presence of a priest when someone dies can be understood better if one compares this episode with the death of Myles Joyce at the stake, though he is totally innocent. All attempts to redeem this man fail. At the stake, Joyce proclaims his Catholic faith and hopes in resurrection. He compares his martyrdom with that of Christ. He derives great satisfaction, even as he dies at the stake, seeing a priest standing below, praying for him. At the last moment Joyce shouts, "I will see Jesus Christ soon. He was

hanged in the wrong too... But now I have my priest with me" (225). The man dying at the stake is sacrificing his life. The priest standing below is offering his priestly service. Both of them witness to their firm Catholic faith. According to Fitzpatrick, as long as Irish men are alive anywhere in the world the memory of Myles Joyce and his horrible death will never be forgotten. In the eyes of a dying person who has Catholic faith like Joyce, nothing gives more solace and peace than the presence of a praying priest. This is how Greeley argues in *Irish Love* that the Last Rite is the right of all Catholics and that faith is an essential characteristic of all sacraments. So, priests have to be very careful not to deny this rite and right to the people. In the case of Confession or the Mass, one can receive them later. But, in most of the cases, the Last Sacrament is really 'the last'. Once denied, there may not be any more chance to repeat it.

Another sacrament to which Greeley attributes great importance in this novel is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Confession, Greeley presents in *Irish Love*, is quite different from the usual way of one going to the confessional, in private, confessing the sins and getting absolution for them. The unique confession in *Irish Love* is the declaration of Thomas Casey as to the villainy of John Casey and the innocence of Myles Joyce. Thomas Casey makes this confession in public, on 12th May 1883, before Bishop Kane, in full regalia, assisted by two priests on either side (268). That Joyce is innocent is confessed by Casey, under the inspiration of Father Corbett, the new parish priest and it is done in the presence of Nora, the wife of Joyce, and their child. The novelist stresses that this programme takes place during the Mass, on a Sunday. Corbett, the parish priest prepares the community for this confession of truth by preaching about informers and perjurers on a few consecutive Sundays (260). After Casey's confession the Bishop speaks, "Denouncing the killers, violence, the silence of the valley about the crimes, and the English" (268). Though the English court does not change its verdict on Joyce, under

the pressure of this confession, this function proclaims truth and proves who the real villain is. It is to be noted that the legal system is corrupt and innocent ones do not get justice either from the court or from the police. Perjury is the mark of the jury of an Irish court which is the manifestation of the tyranny and hypocrisy of English imperialism. Fitzpatrick finds most of the jurors sleeping and many nodding when the trial is on. In this context, the services rendered by Father Corbett has to be insisted on.

Corbett makes use of the altar on which he offers sacrifices and officiates the rites in order to create public opinion in favour of the innocent Joyce, unjustly punished by the court. It is because as a priest he is endowed with Catholic faith which never makes any compromise with falsehood. A priest known as the custodian of truth, has to fight for truth. In this undertaking, he is activated by Catholic imagination. The parish priest does not fulfill his prophetic mission by simply reciting prayers or performing rituals. He has to safeguard truth, protecting the weak persons who are liable to be victimized by the unjust and inhuman social structures. The fact that Joyce makes his confession in the presence of a Bishop and his two priests also deserves special mention. Besides, Bishop Kane writes two letters to Earl Spencer, the Lord Lieutenant requesting him to order an inquiry into the proceedings of the court, though of no use. This miserable condition reminds Greeley of the words of Lord Acton, "Power corrupts and absolute power absolutely corrupts" (319). Money and power are the driving principles of Casey, the villain and his accomplices. Justice Barry who pronounces the judgement also shares the same corrupt character. According to Greeley, these people do not have Catholic imagination. Faith and truth do not make any appeal to them. The same can be told about Colm Mc Manus, Matt Howard and Tomas O' Regan who planned the explosions and the blowing up of houses in order to scare the inhabitants so that they can possess all the gold

lying beneath the Maamtrasna mountains (315-317). These people who lack faith betray truth and indulge in all kinds of crimes. Nothing seems to prick their conscience.

At the same time, *Irish Love* presents another set of characters who subscribe to sacraments as per the Catholic tradition and live according to their faith and the guidance of their Catholic imagination. Their respectful attitude to sacraments, and sacramentals which refer to various pious practices followed in the Catholic Church, is very clear in their speech and life style. Since, some exemplary priests appearing in this novel have already been mentioned, the consideration goes to examples of two pairs, Dermot and Nuala, and Fitzpatrick and Nora. All these characters are practising Catholics. They love the Church and respect priests. Their daily life is an extension or a manifestation of Catholic imagination. When they receive the sacraments and follow the sacramentals they are actually witnessing to their Catholic faith. Their love of God is expressed in the service they render to the poor people. *Irish Love* is replete with examples which illustrate the merging of faith and administration of sacraments in the lives of these protagonists.

Dermot and Nuala are ideal Irish lovers. They are staunch Catholics. Their Catholic faith is best evinced by their frequenting the sacraments and their investigation for the hidden truth. They are not tempted by money or power. Dermot is in possession of intellectual faculties and physical might. Nuala is adorned with Irish spirituality, psychic sensitivity and physical fitness of an athlete and looks like a Celtic Goddess (22). If Dermot has more of faith, Nuala has more of imagination. The husband is a writer whereas the wife is a singer. Both are seasoned with faith and imagination. In her hyper imaginative moods she is able to sense dangers (252), predict the future, get clues to solve mysterious phenomenon and foresee if the enemies will attack again (46). On one occasion when Nuala makes the sign of the Cross, Dermot asks, "Should I get the holy water?" (233). Nuala puts into her lover's mouth a scone, "With the same reverence a

priest might have put the host on the mouth of an elderly person who didn't want to receive the Eucharist in the hand" (142). When Jack Lane, the young priest, serves him tea, Dermot thinks, "He did so with the grace of a Bishop presiding over a solemn liturgy" (50). They are aware of the sex-abuse scandals, some priests are accused of. Yet, Dermot and Nuala firmly believe that still most priests are good persons (49). All these show that both of them are earnest in their Catholic faith, committed to the cause of the Church and really interested in fulfilling the obligations of their lay vocation. Besides, they are fully satisfied with their marital relationships, especially with regard to sexual matters. Nuala's words prove this beyond doubt, "Isn't the greatest pleasure for a woman in that moment when she gives herself to her man?" (26). The couples are very happy about their mutually satisfying and generous co-operation in sexual intercourse. Referring to such an occasion Nuala asks, "How is it, Dermot M. C. lyne, that you know exactly what I want, exactly when I want it?" (23). They consider it as sacred and enriching as a religious experience. The mutual love existing between Dermot and Nuala and their attitude towards the Church are clear indications of the authenticity of their sacramental life which nourishes their faith and imagination.

The story of Fitzpatrick and Nora also is characterized by their sacramental life and their devotion to Catholic faith. There are ever so many episodes in the novel supporting their spiritual life. Fitzpatrick leaves Chicago and arrives at Ireland in order to be "an ideal Catholic gentleman" (69). To Nora's question if he is a religious man, he answers, "I try to be good Catholic" (10). Nora is an Irish Catholic whose treasures are the Rosary and her father's books which include the Bible (162). When Joyce dies at the stake, urged by the virtues of Catholic faith and charity, Fitzpatrick determines to protect her, and he prays to all saints, especially, the Irish ones (166). He later marries Nora and saves her. Fitzpatrick and Nora enjoy their married life with their children. The novelist

specially records that they are both involved in Church activities (323). They never go after money and power, but remain as law-abiding members of the Catholic Church. Even after becoming one of the leading journalists in Chicago, Fitzpatrick finds time to receive the sacraments regularly. The parish records certify that the couples celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of their wedding, and that they died respectively in 1936 and 1938. The last chapter of *Irish Love* reveals that Nora's daughter has become a holy nun, which substantiates the Catholic character of her parents.

The inquiry into the religious preoccupations of the two couples has made it clear that all of them are practising Catholics or persons who consider their faith as more valuable than everything else. As mentioned in the first chapter, faith can neither exist nor can it be understood without relating it to imagination. When the Catholic priest officiates a sacrament, the main target is the spiritual nourishment of the participants. But, the ultimate aim of the sacramental celebration ought to be the total growth of the human person. Hence, the priest must have a comprehensive view regarding religious, physical and moral requirements and aspirations of the people. Hence, a detailed analysis of the character and achievements of the above said pairs will be beneficial to all priests. In addition to having a high degree of Catholic faith, Dermot and Fitzpatrick are saturated with imagination. Both of them have earned name and fame in their literary career. Dermot is a novelist and the other is a journalist. No one can produce a literary piece without making use of the imaginative faculty. In the case of Dermot and Fitzpatrick, their imagination is not merely romantic or natural. They are endowed with what Greeley and other analogically thinking theologians call a Catholic imagination. Writers of this type are motivated by their religious faith and they give utmost priority to truth and to the reorientation and the restructuring of the personality and behaviour of the readers. For them writing is a medium of evangelizing the world. In this respect, a special mention

must be made of Nuala, who is endowed with hyper imagination. By means of this special faculty she knows beforehand that there is a bomb in the car (252) and that final document is lying under a stack of old church records dumped into a closet (272). In this way all the important characters in *Irish Love* are in possession of Catholic imagination. They live in harmony. They love the Church and their brethren. For them, there is nothing more decisive than faith in God as love, truth and forgiveness. When he administers any sacrament the Catholic priest must remember that his primary duty is to activate the Catholic imagination of the participants and to empower them in the process of leading an exemplary life.

The study of *Irish Love* so far has been focused on the Sacraments of Anointing the Sick and Confession. It has also referred to the Sacrament of Marriage as it is understood and practised by the two pairs, Dermot and Nuala, and Fitzpatrick and Nora. One common effect of every sacrament is that it sanctifies the recipient and the celebrant. As Casey stages a public confession in the Church, he makes amends for his sins and his conscience is purified. He assumes a new personality. A court verdict can punish a culprit physically, but, it is unable to clean his or her heart, the seat of all sinful motives. Any sin first originates in one's heart and is, then, translated into action. It is what comes out of the heart and not what comes from outside that makes a person unclean. Purification of one's heart is possible by means of a priest-assisted sacrament. Since, sanctifying is one of the important obligations of a priest he must be aware that in order to make the sacramental celebration more effective and meaningful there should be co-operation or correlation at two levels. Firstly, sacraments are manifestations of faith in God's intervention, and they are symbolic in nature. That means, in every sacrament there should be a co-ordination of faith and imagination. Secondly, every celebration is a collaborated activity. A better harmony and understanding between the priest who

officiates and the persons who participate in the function are likely to magnify the efficacy and beauty of the celebration.

To wind up this discussion, one finds in *Irish Love* that 'Irish Love' which is basically love of God not excluding love of others and sexual love, makes better citizens and committed lay missionaries of people who frequent sacraments and abide by the Church leadership. 'Irish Love' is not against sexual love provided it is expressed and enjoyed without prejudice to one's faith and imagination. 'Irish Love' does not exclude sexual love. But, sexual love does not necessarily reach the level of 'Irish Love'. As has been suggested, in the case of Dermot and Nuala, sexual love is a sacramental experience or 'Irish Love' is a Catholic experience which caters to the growth of one's faith as well as imagination. Sex or love as a sacrament ought to sanctify the person or persons, as the case may be. That is why, Greeley demands that the priests who administer sacraments for the sake of sanctifying himself and the people, must speak about the sanctity of sex. In order to do this successfully, a priest must first let himself be guided by Catholic imagination which presupposes a healthy blending of one's faith and the administration of sacraments. Greeley attaches great importance to this component of Catholic imagination because, as *Irish Love* has proved, beyond doubt, a priest without administering Sacraments is as unthinkable as administering a sacrament without faith. In other words, faith and imagination are as inseparable as the priest's personality and his pastoral ministry. Hence, the priests must always take care to maintain a cordial concordance between his faith and his sacramental celebration.

The above analysis of the five selected novels of Greeley has proved beyond doubt that the correlation of faith and administration of Sacraments is an important component of Catholic imagination. Besides being a teacher and leader, every priest is a sanctifier. He has to sanctify his own life as well as those of others. The most effective source of

sanctification for the priest is the administration of sacraments. This can be done only as and if the priest is endowed with the merging of faith and administration of sacraments. Greeley appeals to all the priests to subscribe to the qualities of Catholic imagination in their officiating the sacramental celebration. Let me just recapitulate here, how these five novels highlight the inevitability of this correlation. One must bear in mind that none of these novels elaborates on all the seven sacraments. But, all of them refer to some of them, in varying measures. Whenever a sacrament is referred to, Greeley repeats that a sacrament has to be administered meaningfully and effectively, which is enabled and embellished by the correlation of faith and imagination.

The first novel, *The Angels of September*, narrates how Anne Reilly, suffering from the bondage of fear, shame and guilt, are liberated by the assistance of three angels, that is Blackie, the priest; Michael Casey, the lover; and Mary Kate Murphy, the psychiatrist. The novel reports the total transformation of Anne, which reaches its climax, as she marries Jim Reilly. This book has direct and indirect references to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Marriage. It is only when Anne forgives everyone and admits truth, that her renewal starts. Equally important it is, as Greeley insists, that the officiating priest must have deep faith and rich imagination. There is also a partial reference to the Baptism of Jennifer, who is christened as James Reilly. Every sacrament is the inauguration of new life. In Greeley's opinion, not only does Anne become a new person but also, does she herself become a sacrament. Anne emerges as a sign of God's love and forgiveness. It is not enough for a Catholic priest to be the celebrant during the administration of a sacrament but he has to train the people in such a way that the recipients of a sacrament will become like sacraments in life.

Happy are the Oppressed, the next novel, narrates how Jane Chantal Reynolds Cardin tormented by sense of guilt and fear regains her peace of mind and emerges as a

new person, when Blackie administers the Sacrament of Reconciliation to her. As a result of Jane's readiness to forgive the past, peace is restored to the whole family. If a sacrament is administered with the accompaniment of a high degree of imagination, it will intensify the faith of both the priests who officiate and the people who participate. Both the clergy and the laity are co-celebrants as members of the Baptismal priesthood. This novel also contains some reference to the priestly vocation, as well, and Greeley presents Blackie as his ideal priest, in whom one finds the culmination of faith and administration of sacraments. There is detailed treatment of the Sacrament of Matrimony in this novel. As it is typical of Greeley, here he emphasizes the Catholic attitude to the human body, the sacredness of sex, the mutual and parental responsibility of the couple and the relevance of the empowerment of women.

The unveiling of the mystery involved in the desolate death of General Tudor, the disappearance of Lady Augusta, and teaching a lesson to Marve Doyle, for having tried to endanger Nuala, are the main concerns of *Irish Mist*, the third novel. The entire novel is centred around the anniversary Mass of Kevin. The fact that Kevin died forgiving his murderers is very much stressed by Greeley. Kevin's death reminds one of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As one reads, a priest is summoned, in no time, to the spot, and so it anticipates the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Father Placid's apology or confession, depicted in chapter 35 recalls to our mind the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As it can be reasonably expected of a typical Greelean novel, *Irish Mist* contains detailed discussion on the uniqueness of the Sacrament of Marriage and it highlights God's unconditional love as expressed in the self-giving sexual relationships of Dermot and Nuala. In short, this novel explains how a priest must sanctify himself as well as others by administering the sacraments, with due regard for their correlation with faith, as is inspired by Catholic imagination.

A Christmas Wedding, as the fourth novel discussed in this chapter, revolves around the marriage relationship of Chuck and Rosemarie. As a result of their mutual encouragement Chuck becomes a famous photographer and Rosemarie emerges as a writer. Both of them are known for their Catholic faith and imaginative and artistic tastes. As the title of the novel indicates, Marriage is the mostly enumerated Sacrament in the book. They believe that the love of parents in the family is an expression of Christ's love for the Church. *A Christmas Wedding* demands that the priests can administer the Sacraments worthily, only if they are men of prayer. Prior to the blessing of their long-awaited marriage both Chuck and Rosemarie make a whole-hearted mutual confession, though not in the confessional, which purifies them and unifies them in marriage. Thus, this novel highlights the transforming effects of two Sacraments; one is Holy Matrimony and the other is Reconciliation. The novel also contains a casual reference to a Holy Mass offered in memory of the soldiers, killed in South Korea. No priest can ignore the essential correlation of faith and administration of sacraments, and at the same time the necessity of the merging of faith and imagination in the celebration of the sacraments.

The last novel scrutinized in this chapter is *Irish Love*. The novel being an elaboration of the report of Ned Fitzpatrick, originally, prepared for *Chicago Daily News*, the main thrust of the writer is targeting the villain responsible for the Maamtrasna murders. The most pathetic aspect of the end of the innocent victims is that the bodies are buried in the absence of a Catholic priest to bless their graves. The denial of a decent funeral to them, marked by the priestly absence, proclaims the greatness of the Last Sacrament. Each priest has to be very careful never to miss the right of the Last Rite to the believers. The public confession of Thomas Casey, which he makes in the church, is suggestive of the forgiving effects of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There are a few references to the Holy Mass being offered during the course of the novel. The two pairs,

Dermot and Nuala, and Fitzpatrick and Nora, frequent the sacraments, and each one of them seems to be a sacrament to the other. A comparative study of these two pairs, proves beyond doubt that they combine in themselves strong Catholic faith and proper imagination. Whenever they participate in sacramental celebration, they witness to their faith. And these couples do wonders in their families and in the Church. Hence, each parish priest shall always maintain the correlation between faith and administration of sacraments.

To put it in a nutshell, the three Sacraments of Marriage, Reconciliation and the Eucharist or the Holy Mass enjoy more prominence in Greeley's novels. At the same time, as we have noticed in the selected novels, there are casual references to Baptism, Priesthood and the Anointing of the Sick. Anyway, most of the sacraments have been mentioned in his novels. That means, the correlation of faith and administration of sacraments is an important component of Catholic imagination. It is equally true that a priest can administer the sacraments only with the accompaniment of his imaginative faculties. Before winding up this survey of the correlation between faith and sacramental administration, let me have a quick glance at Greeley's non-fictional works, and try to assess how the same preoccupation of the novelist is perceivable in them.

Greeley has always stressed that the Catholic religious experience is sacramental and that Catholic imagination is analogical. A Catholic learns Catholic sensibility in the parish, which, for the priests and the laity, is their 'Church immediate'. Hence, he insists on the priests to conduct religious functions with unction and to develop a symbolic language with the help of Catholic imagination. Commenting on Greeley's *The Sights and Insights of a Parish Priest* and *Furthermore – Memories of a Parish Priest* (1999), David Lauter refers to these ideas in *Los Angeles Times* (2000). In his words, "Catholics are bound to the Church because of the attractiveness of Catholic metaphors: the emotional

and spiritual resonance of the sacraments, the symbols and the stories” (2). The administration of the sacraments and the telling of stories with happy endings unite the believers inalienably with the Church. In Greeley’s opinion, and as the Catholic Church teaches, all sacraments are signs of God’s love and forgiveness. For example, with regard to the Sacrament of Marriage, he writes in *The Catholic Imagination* (2001), “Our experience of falling in love parallels God’s falling in love with us and reveals to us God’s grace. God’s love and our love correlate – they disclose each other” (109).

Greeley is dissatisfied with the way in which sacraments are administered in the parishes, at present. He complains that the Church does not care for the mysterious and imaginative aspects of celebration. In his introduction to the book, *The Devil, You Say!* (1974), he writes, “Catholics, of course, seem to be always the last to catch up. We abandoned the mysterious, just about the time the counter-culture was discovering it” (10). The only solution to this problem is an immediate retrieval of Catholic imagination. In his opinion, the liturgical celebration does not always impress or transform the people. In the book, *Everything You Wanted to Know About the Catholic Church- But Were Too Pious To Ask* (1978), Greeley makes a dig at the clergy saying that sacraments are, above all, signs, and that many priests are showing bad signs. And the result is, he explains, “A poorly said Mass, a hastily mumbled baptism, a shuffling confirmation, a tasteless marriage ceremony, the presence and operation of God’s loving graciousness is not adequately revealed” (131). That is why, he insists on the inevitability of the combination of faith and imagination in the administration of sacraments.

No Catholic can undermine the relevance of the sacraments. The very word ‘Catholic’ is reminiscent of a person who takes part in the celebration of sacraments. Catholic life is sacrament-oriented. As Greeley himself explains in his *That Most Distressful Nation* (1972), “To be Catholic, of course, was to go to church, to receive the

Sacraments, and pass on the symbols of faith to one's children"(82). According to Greeley, there is still hope for the Church as there are many Catholics who assemble in the churches to take part in the sacramental celebrations, and to listen to a good sermon. One reads in, *My Love: A Prayer Journal* (2001), "All kinds of people will turn out for the Masses, proof that they are still Catholics and perhaps proof that they still hope for a good sermon – or at least have not given up hopes on the sermons" (174). Each Catholic priest must train himself to make the liturgical performance more appealing to the community. The lay people have to be made familiar with the meaning of symbols and rubrics involved in the administration of sacraments. The understanding of a sacrament and active participation in its celebration will be impossible without employing Catholic imagination. Therefore, all the priests have to improve the quality of organizing, and officiating the sacraments. Greeley is of the opinion that this can be done only by means of fostering the correlation of faith and administration of sacraments without which a priest cannot think of fulfilling his pastoral obligation of sanctification.

For Greeley, his literary career is only an extension and continuation of his administration of sacraments inside the Church. The purpose of his writing, as it is the case with the sacraments, is revealing God's loving nature. In *Letters To A Loving God: A Prayer Journal* (2002), he prays to God, "Help me to do a good job, especially, since I want to write about who and what You are" (190). That means a priest is always a priest, not only during the celebration of a sacrament. He has the duty of being God's sign and spreading the Gospel inside the Church as well as outside it, during and after officiating the sacraments. Greeley wants all Catholic priests to do this after his own model. A priest who does it will be a sacrament himself.

Chapter VI

FAITH AND SUFFERING:

*Wages of Sin, Fall from Grace, The Bishop and the Missing L Train,
Irish Stew! and Priestly Sins*

The human being is one of the most vulnerable creatures on earth. Suffering is part and parcel of human existence. Natural catastrophe, wars and contagious diseases cause suffering beyond description. Failures in life, guilt feeling, traumatic experiences of childhood, isolation from others and many more factors add suffering to man's life. Some people suffer as a result of their own immoral and criminal character. No person is immune to suffering. This is true irrespective of the differentiations of religion, race, region, sect, sex and status. One finds that Catholics and non-Catholics suffer, and similarly, believers and non-believers also suffer. One common feature of suffering is that nobody has found out a readymade solution or an all conclusive answer to this problem. Science is groping in darkness in order to arrive at a satisfactory answer to this universal problem. Even, religious teachings in this regard do not convince all people. It is in this context that an inquiry into some novels of Greeley and an examination how his characters respond to the problem of suffering is made.

Catholic faith teaches that God is love and Catholic imagination supports one's faith in God's providence. For Greeley, the correlation between faith and suffering is one of the components of Catholic imagination. Apart from faith, suffering makes people helpless, aimless and hopeless. Suffering usually draws people away from God, Church and her sacramental life. From a purely secular point of view, suffering is nothing but manipulations of fate devoid of any faith-content. For the materialists and hedonists suffering is nothing more than an unavoidable evil or an inescapable predicament. But,

Greeley's characters relate suffering with faith. His protagonists experience that suffering has got some creative and redemptive value. His ideal characters are seen transforming their lives and improving their relationship with God and other people during the process of suffering. Whereas, some of his villainous characters either seek refuge in suicide or take devilish pleasure in inflicting pain upon others. Most of the good characters suffer silently and undergo a process of spiritual renovation. A common feature of such characters is their readiness to forgive all others unconditionally as a result of which they experience God's love in their personal and social life.

A Catholic priest is a guide and counsellor for his people. He is bound to give a Catholic answer to the problem of suffering. He too, as an individual, will have to suffer a lot from others. At the same time, some priests due to their scandalous ways cause suffering to others. Greeley's contention is that a priest cannot understand the meaning and relevance of suffering except in association with Catholic faith. A survey of Greeley's selected novels proves that priests and lay people who follow Catholic imagination emerge phoenix-like as new persons out of their suffering whereas the characters who neglect Catholic imagination meet with some tragic end to mark the peak of their suffering. A Catholic priest who is to assist the people, especially, in their suffering can derive a lot of lessons and examples, both good and bad, from the analysis of these novels. The five novels selected for a detailed study in this chapter are *Wages of Sin* (1992), *Fall from Grace* (1994), *The Bishop and the Missing L Train* (2000), *Irish Stew!* (2003) and *The Priestly Sins* (2004). An examination of each one of these novels will show how far Greeley's claims have been realized in them and how far a Catholic priest can draw insights from these books which will be of great help for him in dealing with the problem of suffering.

Wages of Sin, the first novel to be discussed is the story of unveiling the mystery regarding the fire on the Labour Day, 1954, killing Joseph T. Meehan, the Congress man, and his whole family, a case written off as fire by accident. After thirty five years, Lorcan James Flynn, assisted by Bishop Blackie and other investigators find out the truth. They prove that Maeve, the mother of Lorcan Flynn, is the fire-setter, and they remove the misunderstandings about the alleged involvement of either Maura, Lorcan's lover, or the British people, Joseph Meehan being a supporter of the Irish cause. This novel can be said to be an exposition of how suffering is inevitable in human life and how it has to be tackled with Catholic imagination, therapeutic counseling and family reunion. The novelist is also making a strong appeal to the priests, to be always readily available to the suffering people empowering them to face the problems in life in the light of Catholic faith and a corresponding imagination. An analysis of *Wages of Sin* helps us understand how disregard for Catholic imagination eventually leads one to suffering in life and how this situation can be transformed for the better with the interference of a Catholic priest like Blackie. Suffering, in general, is likely to make human life gloomy and desperate. But, the Catholic approach gives it a salvific and sacramental look.

The worst sufferer in this novel is Maeve and she is the one who causes maximum suffering to others. In her case, the pyromaniac tendency is due to her personal suffering which is perpetuated by her husband's inability and indifference to realize how much she has been suffering. She tells Lorcan, her son, "I hope you realize how much I'm suffering"(142). It is in her tense and nervous moods that Maeve sets ablaze the house of the Meehans, not knowing about the explosives kept inside it by the Congressman, for the use of the Irish rebels. Her action results in the suffering of many innocent ones, the chief being Maura, the lover of Lorcan. Maeve's aim is to prevent Lorcan from marrying Maura. Hence, her real target is the would be daughter-in-law. The immediate cause of

fire is Maeve's shock at having seen, together with Patrick Flynn, Lorcan and Maura, in embrace, at late hours in the beach. She sets fire to the house, for, she fears that if Maura is not killed, she will marry Lorcan and then the mother will lose him for ever. As one reads in the novel, Maura would have succumbed to the fire, had she not gone to New York. One finds that Maeve behaves abnormally mostly because of the prejudice of the Meehans against psychotherapy and counseling. Blackie and his collaborators succeed in altering her attitude to life and, as a result, she herself and the whole family are saved. So, despite its preoccupation with various kinds of suffering, *Wages of Sin* concludes with a romantic note, typical of a true Catholic story, presenting the long awaited reunion of Lorcan and Maura.

Greeley makes aware of the fact that there would not be any fire if Maeve underwent some counseling sessions in time and in that case, a lot of suffering could be averted. He seems to argue that the therapeutic counseling is as helpful to a person, in distress, as the Sacrament of reconciliation is to a sinner in the Church. The first one cures a person of emotional and mental discomforts, where as the second one relieves him or her of the spiritual and moral ailments. This novel will be of intense interest to Catholic priests who have to console people who are at a loss in front of suffering. They are bound to make the faithful realize the usefulness of psychological treatment, the importance of mutual forgiveness, and the necessity of reestablishing broken relationships with God, the Church and the other people. The Catholic imagination which is the stronghold of a Catholic priest enables the sufferer to survive the ordeals in life, and to regain and maintain one's peace of mind and relationship with God and His people. It has to be emphasized that Greeley's characters never advocate immediate punishment for the wrong doers. He is more concerned with the purifying and redemptive element of suffering, understood in the light of a solid Catholic faith and imagination. The Catholic

Church teaches that there is no necessary correspondence between the suffering and the sinfulness of a person. However, the title of the novel, *Wages of Sin*, taken from the first part of Romans 6: 23 itself, suggests that very often the mode and whereabouts of suffering are directly or indirectly related to the culpable or scandalous ways of some of the important characters, figuring in this novel.

As one examines the theme of suffering portrayed in *Wages of Sin*, s/he finds that the suffering of the married people is more prominent than that of the clergy. Most of the underlying causes of suffering are related to and even based on relationships among the members of the family. Of course, there are priestly characters in this novel. Father Edward and Father Gregory are examples. This inquiry will be confined to how and why people suffer in the family. One has to evaluate what should be the attitude of a Catholic priest to the reality or problem of suffering. How Greeley's characters tackle with the issues causing suffering to oneself and others is of great relevance to this context. Bishop Blackie who is equipped with Catholic imagination and Dr. Murphy who is endowed with psychological insights are the two important characters who manage to transform the lives of the suffering ones into a better situation. In order to understand how they do this one must, first of all, have an idea of what a Catholic family is expected to be. In a sense, suffering is an absence or negation of the perfect good. When the family loses its perfect good, it suffers. Those who solve the problem of suffering are supplying or introducing to the diseased family or a broken relationship what it is lacking. In other words, as the problem is solved, whatever has been absent so far, is being restored to that family or friendship. So, a brief attempt is done here as to how a Catholic family is expected to be, in accordance with *Wages of Sin*.

The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a sacrament and she has always upheld the indivisibility of family life. A Catholic marriage is not a temporary adjustment.

Rather, it is a life-long commitment. When the couples live in harmony they witness to God's love and when they fulfill their obligations in an exemplary manner, they are actually performing their priestly role. Greeley wants the parents to foster a sacramental and respectful approach to the family life. As one reads in the novel, "That sexual passion is a hint of God's passion", the little priest insisted, "will shock only prudes and those who know nothing of either the Scriptures or the history of Christian Symbolism" (242). According to Blackie, God the ever youthful lover is the ideal of the married people. In one of his sermons, Blackie suggests to reflect on "This image of our ever-youthful God, a God for whom it is always spring and early spring at that" (45). It is the duty of every priest to have strong faith in God, the eternal lover, and to be able to interpret this belief with the help of Catholic imagination. Greeley always reminds the Church leaders of their obligation of teaching or evangelizing the world. His preoccupation with the prophetic task of the Church is perceivable in the novel. He writes, "Fortunately, John Paul has no doubts on that matter. He is appointing bishops who will make it clear what the Catholic teaching is" (213). If the couples attach inhibitions and taboos in matters of sex, they will not be able to maintain healthy relationship in the family, for, they fail to recognize the liberating and sanctifying value of the sacrament of marriage. Hence, it is the duty of the Church to educate and prepare the young people.

Lorcan's parents are Patrick Flynn and Maeve. The relationship between these parents cannot be said to be Catholic or exemplary. Maeve is the one who suffers most in the novel. She is also the person who is instrumental to the worst tragedy portrayed in the novel, causing a lot of suffering to many. Patrick is an ex-service man who returned from war in 1945, when Lorcan was fourteen. His sessions with Dr. Murphy reveals that Lorcan hates his father. He thinks that he has been spoilt by his father. The mental restlessness which makes Maeve a fire-setter is mainly thanks to his irritability and

indifference to her. She is at present a neurotic psychochondriac (143). A psychotherapist can easily cure her of her nervous exhaustion and make her a responsible mother. But both the parents have a strong stigma for psychiatric treatment and counseling. Maeve decides to murder Maura who loves Lorcan. She is so possessive of her son Lorcan, that she can never tolerate his marriage with Maura. Maeve is both the worst sufferer as well as a trouble-shooter. The family of Patrick and Maeve is not altogether un-Catholic. For, one of Patrick's brothers, Frank, is a priest. But, the couples, as a whole, do not exhibit any interest in matters of Catholic imagination. Patrick is cruel and Maeve is possessive. This loveless behaviour of the parents adversely affects the character of Lorcan.

In order to prevent Lorcan from marrying Maura, the couples tell them a lie that Maura is Lorcan's sister. As a result, Maura is compelled to marry Halinan. Since, she went to New York after the explosion, Lorcan marries Dorothy Kramer who later goes after one Mark Reed. Lorcan and Dorothy are separated by two blocks of February ice and millions of light years of alienation (38). Lorcan inquires about the origin of Maura. He learns that Maura is not his sister as his father had lied. Really, she is born of Tim Meehan, a womanizer and brother of the Congressman, and Betty Jane Lyndon. Betty conceives Maura just as she is out of her teens. Lorcan and Maura can marry each other legally. They are passionate lovers from young days onwards. Both of them are compelled to marry someone else. The opposition of Lorcan's parents, Maura's wrong conclusion that Lorcan hates her and the misunderstanding regarding the true origin of Maura necessitate the postponement of their marriage. Truth and transparency are lacking in their relationship. Lorcan's inquiries and Blackie's suggestions succeed in finding out the truth which takes away the ignorance. They fill up what ever has been lacking in the mutual relationship between Lorcan and Maura.

One day Lorcan meets Maura, now a widow, on a business tour to Chicago. He tells her that both her parents Tim and Betty are alive. At Dr. Murphy's instruction, Lorcan meets Maura again and they decide to be united in marriage. Though, she has suffered a lot, Maura readily forgives her own parents and that of Lorcan's. As Greeley writes, Lorcan and Maura become one with "A torrent of emotions of desire, affection, passion, tenderness" (352). Thus true lovers get united in a real marriage with full consent and mutual dedication. Their suffering has sanctified them and made them authentic followers of Catholic faith and imagination.

The most striking aspect of the relationship between Lorcan and Maura is the fact that their marriage, despite their initial intimacy, is delayed for about thirty five years and that, in the meanwhile, both of them marry someone else. The postponement of marriage is mainly caused by Lorcan's misunderstanding about Maura's love for him. This strains their relationship and gives rise to a lot of suffering. His Catholic faith urges Lorcan to find out the truth. His imagination empowers him to abide by Blackie's suggestions and trace Tim Meehan, the arch villain, from his hide-out, who eventually becomes a transformed person. The discovery of truth eradicates all misunderstandings and as a result there is a reunion of broken relationships, and many a suffering, thought to be immovable and irremediable, comes to a cease. At the root of the suffering of Lorcan and Maura, one notices the absence of Catholic faith and in the management of suffering there is abundance of faith and patience. When Catholic faith itself causes suffering in the life of a believer by way of challenges and sacrifices, the Catholic imagination provides the person ways and means to withstand it.

In his pursuit after truth, Lorcan has to suffer a lot. Lorcan's younger brother Hank asks him, "Don't open up the case again" (35). He receives many threats over phone like, "If you don't want anything to happen to your grandsons, you'll stop asking questions"

(170). He is accused of having been responsible for the fire in 1954. There are attempts to murder Maeve and Lorcan's kids in a car accident (193). He is asked to forget and not to inquire about the mystery of the fire in 1954. Once Tim threatens Lorcan, "If you value your life and the lives of those you love, you'll forget about what happened that night, got it?" (303). Two special agents from FBI, raid Lorcan's office, and threaten him (84-87). Though he misunderstands the genuineness of Maura's love, because, her love letters and telephone calls do not reach him, he never gives up his search for truth. Nothing less than complete truth will satisfy him. He deals very tactfully with Tim, the man behind all threats, and makes him a true Catholic with a conscience. It is really edifying that Lorcan is growing as a person even in the midst of his sufferings.

Another deep-rooted cause of Lorcan's suffering is his fear of his own father and all women, in general. As a boy, he has been abused by his father and has seen him ill-treating Lorcan's mother. Due to these traumatic experiences, it is very difficult for Lorcan to be reconciled with his father. He fears that his father will take away Maura and make her his own. As he tells Dr. Murphy, "My father took her away from me once. If he can, he'll take her away again" (188). He is also afraid of women, even Maura. As he confesses to Dr. Murphy, "I love her but she scares me" (147). Lorcan is sure that he cannot solve all these problems all by himself. What he needs is healing, both spiritual and psychological. Spiritual healing is impossible without faith and psychological healing is unthinkable devoid of imagination. Dr. Murphy, the therapist, gives him therapeutic counseling and she sends him to Blackie, her brother, for spiritual healing who invites Lorcan to the Cathedral rectory for a detailed discussion (314). A Catholic priest has to learn from Lorcan's story that suffering can have no remedy without faith which in its turn, necessitates the assistance of Catholic imagination.

Tim and Betty constitute another couples in *Wages of Sin*. They never bother about sin which in Greeley's words is "A great preoccupation with Catholics" (324). Tim impregnates Betty at a young age. He is a real villain. There is no trace of Catholic imagination in him. He is after money. The wages of his own sins have made it impossible for him to stay in his own place. He has absconded. In fact, he cooks up a scheme to fake his death. As Greeley writes, Tim is "Irish and Catholic and without a conscience" (334). This statement has a great moral significance for a Catholic priest. One who follows Catholic imagination cannot betray one's own conscience. He can never enjoy peace of mind nor can he ever have a comfortable life with his wife and children. He has somehow created the impression that he is no more. He does all he can to obstruct Lorcan's search for truth. People have only contempt for his deceitful living. Finally, Lorcan traces him and brings him to lime-light. The influence of Blackie changes him into a new person. Lorcan convinces him that he is Maura's father and that Betty is her mother. Tim feels guilty for having tried to murder his own daughter, though unknowingly. He asks pardon and is readily forgiven. He decides to lead an exemplary Catholic life. As a renewed person he has learned not to cause any more suffering to others. He has also grown as a Catholic to value faith more than money, power and everything else. Towards the end of the novel, Tim appears to be very generous and grateful to Lorcan in spite of his previous threats and attempts on the latter's life. In Greeley's words, he experiences "A total transformation of personality" (336).

As already hinted, Betty has always been leading a care-free life. She marries first James Patrick O'Learing, then Bobby Riordan and finally, Keeley Allen. In matters of sex she is always unsteady and very indulgent. She undergoes a gradual process of purification and condescends to be at the service of Catholic imagination. A maturing of the Catholic personality is evident in the life of Betty who is now "A pillar of

Catholicism, a friend of whoever happened to be Cardinal, a member of the Board of Catholic Charities, a daily Mass-attender,... Eucharist-celebrator” (190). It is clear that Betty’s denial of her maternal responsibilities to Maura is one of the causes of the latter’s suffering. For Betty, life is never a bed of roses. She suffers a lot at the hands of three husbands, one after the other. This saga of suffering does not make her either an agnostic or an atheist. Rather, she is drawn to religion and prayer. As a result, she has become a sound Catholic who forgives everybody and is forgiven by all. This pretty story of Betty deserves to be referred to by the priests in their presentation of the theme of suffering and its correlation with faith. Betty’s life is an illustration of how God makes good out of evil, how He works miracles through zigzag ways and how He transforms a person giving him or her second chances.

Towards the end of *Wages of Sin*, there is the blessing of the marriage between, Marie, Lorcan’s daughter and Rob Halinan, Maura’s son. Father Edward officiates the ceremony. Blackie gives the message. He explains how God always likes the love stories of the human beings. God complains to Gabriel that contrary to His expectations, they don’t make plenty of love stories all the time. Blackie says, “So, gentle persons, we are here to celebrate this admirable chapter in the love story between Rob and Marie because God loves love stories – all love stories and each love story” (288). He concludes the sermon stating that God loves Rob and Marie even more intensely than they love each other. As Dorothy, Lorcan’s former wife, tries to spoil the marriage celebration of Marie, her daughter, Maeve and Lorcan manage the situation and save everyone from shame and disgrace (290). The readers of *Wages of Sin* are likely to think that the new couple will have a peaceful and cordial married life. For, Marie has learned a lesson from the suffering of her father, Lorcan, and Rob has witnessed to the suffering of his mother, Maura. Being Catholics and followers of the Crucified Christ, this couple have trained

themselves to survive the struggles which form part and parcel of life. Suffering ought to strengthen their individual faith in Catholicism and mutual love in the family. When the lovers suffer together for the good of the family it intensifies and sanctifies their love and solidifies their mutual commitment.

One finds a lot of similarity between the story of *Wages of Sin* and Catholic theology. According to *The Holy Bible*, Eve, the first woman, instigated by the devil, betrays Adam and brings suffering to herself and the whole humanity, as one finds in the *Book of Genesis*. Later, the same Bible presents St. Mary who suffers silently throughout her life and is instrumental to bring about joy and peace to humanity. Maeve is the modern counterpart of Eve whereas Maura is that of Mary. These two characters correspond to two kinds of people. Eve and Maeve remind us of those who cause suffering to others, and who later suffer in their own lives for their wicked nature. Mary and Maura are typically Catholic characters who never inflict pain on anybody else and at the same time, are ready to suffer for the sake of others. A Catholic priest can benefit his own life and his pastoral activities out of this comparison. Together with them, Greeley expects priests to suffer in favour of or on behalf of their people, but, they shall never perpetuate or increase the suffering of the people. The Church wants her priests to be signs of joy and hope even in the midst of and, if possible, unmindful of personal suffering. If a priest who has no sympathy for the suffering people and does not work hard in order to redress their distress, he is not a Catholic priest, worthy of the name. It must be emphasized that it is Catholic imagination which enables the priest to imbibe these ideas and to practise them.

Greeley approaches the problem of suffering in *Fall from Grace*, from a new point of view. In this second novel, the author explains how the pedophile habits of certain priests bring about various kinds of suffering in their own lives and in that of the victims.

Greeley claims to have finished the first draft of this novel before the pedophile scandal of clerics made a sensation in the media during the 1990's. The usual response of the Catholic Church to this problem has been to deny, to cover up and to protect the accused priests appointing them elsewhere. *Fall from Grace* teaches that the root cause of suffering due to pedophile scandals is psychological, that this problem is not exclusively clerical and that the alleged priests have to be sent for medical treatment. The closer look at the characters of this novel reveals that the prevalence of suffering is suggestive of the neglect or absence of Catholic imagination in the life of those priests which necessitates 'fall from grace'. One cannot be an ideal priest without maintaining the basic correlation between faith and imagination. Likewise, a priest can neither perceive nor manage the problem of suffering in all walks of life without following the Catholic imagination.

Fall from Grace is centred around the suffering of Kathleen Donahue in her family, as well as the suffering of many others thanks to Gerry Green, a pedophile priest. Kathleen is forced to marry Brien, forsaking her lover Patrick O' Kerrigan, known as Kieran. As Brien is a woman-beater and homosexual, Kathleen has to suffer a lot. Referring to her long years of suffering she says, "He [Kieran] didn't keep his word. He left me. Or did I leave him? I don't know how it all happened. Suddenly he was gone and my life has never been the same" (69). Brien never cares for her nor does he respect either her body or her soul. He blames his wife for all his failures. At the most Brien is a perpetual torturer. He suffers a lot in his personal life and adds to the suffering of the others in the family. Maeve, one of their girls, finds Brien, the father, swinging a golf club at Kathleen's head. She kicks him to protect her mother. Brien falls against the nightstand, fractures his skull and dies instantly. Greeley does not accuse Maeve of patricide, but he applauds her as the heroine of the story (349). Thus, Brien who is the source of suffering for the whole family reaps his due exactly as he sows.

The family of Brien and Kathleen is marked by frustration and discord. Brien fails to satisfy his wife sexually as he is the last homosexual victim of Gerry Green. The cohabitation of this couple cannot be said to be a sacramental relationship. Their's is not a Catholic marriage. Their understanding of the partner is not in accordance with Catholic faith. One who does not possess Catholic imagination cannot respect the body of the other and he or she will not be able to maintain a healthy relationship with the other partner. And as a result, the whole family suffers. Brien is too late to change his way of living. But, Kathleen makes use of second chances in life. She gets united with Kieran. Kieran and Kathleen are real lovers from early days onwards. They take real interest in fostering the sacramental nature of their marriage. Together they outlive the ravages of suffering. What enables them to remain as one even in the midst of suffering is nothing but their Catholic imagination. How this couples do it is a relevant question which each priest has to take into account.

Viewed from the angle of faith, suffering helps Kieran and Kathleen in many ways. Both of them are purified by suffering and then their mutual love embraces greater heights. Suffering deepens their Catholic faith and widens their Catholic imagination. It intensifies their longing for reunion and it improves their relationship with all others. Again suffering assists them in their attempt to practise Christian virtues, especially, forgiveness. Though Brien has caused a lot of suffering to Kathleen, she forgives him unconditionally. She tells Kieran why she has to forgive Brien. In her words, "I am a Christian; I believe in forgiving even as I have been forgiven" (254). It is Catholic faith which urges Kathleen to forgive others wholeheartedly. When she hears her three children blame their grandparents, Kathleen admonishes them to forgive their offenders, which is an important Catholic precept. She tells the girls, "We are Christians, remember? We believe in forgiveness, don't we? ... We still forgive whatever they do to us, just like God

forgives what we do to other people, right?” (363). Sometimes, forgiving the wrongdoers is more excruciating than suffering physical pain and mental tensions. One cannot admit the meaning and value of suffering except in the light of the Catholic faith.

In the case of Kieran and Kathleen, suffering turns out to be the constituting power and sustaining source of their Catholic faith and imagination. When they renew their love, Kathleen thinks, “The good Lord had made us for one another, body and soul, and was now giving us a second chance” (327). Suffering does not draw them away from their faith in God and the Church. None of them hates the Church. The more they suffer, the more they cling to the Church. Being accused of stealing Kieran has to disappear and live in a distant place for two decades. When he returns, he realizes that it is impossible for him to forget his faith as well as the house. In Greeley’s words, the reason is, “Once a Catholic, always a Catholic” (106). While explaining how the Church inculcates even in the new-born babies, the seeds of faith by means of various symbols and an imaginative language, Kieran tells Jean Commins, a young woman, “Once a Catholic, always a Catholic. They fill your heads with gorgeous images when you are a child and you never get rid of them, no?” (193). When Kathleen asks Kieran if he was a practising Catholic, his reply is again, “Once a Catholic, always a Catholic” (178). Even as they suffer in life these characters do not distrust God nor do they ever leave the Church.

Kieran, always assisted by Kathleen, does not remain as a silent sufferer. He is not satisfied with merely loving the Church. Rather he is determined to serve the Church. He tries his best, as a qualified therapist, to solve the problem of pedophile priests whose scandalous activities are instrumental to a lot of suffering. Seeing the pedophile reports, Kieran expresses his shock in these words, “What’s happening to the Catholic Church?” (109). Though he is a lay person, he thinks that he is, by virtue of his baptismal priesthood, obliged to fight against the evils which are rampant in the Church. Kieran

studies the pedophile problem in detail and gives suggestions to Bishop Leary, with the intention of restoring the credibility of the Church and the confidence of the people in her. He sees to it that his recommendations are implemented by the Bishop who takes steps to send the alleged priests for treatment and not to re-assign them to new parishes. One must always remember that he owes his commitment and courage to work in this area to his Catholic imagination.

When a believer is exposed to suffering on account of some of the teachings of the Church or some activities of the priests, the natural response in most cases is that he or she becomes a rebel or a critic and stops going to the Church. One characteristic of Greeley's main characters is that they never quit their faith in and allegiance to the Church. Catholicism is so deeply rooted in their innermost self that it is impossible for them to alienate themselves from the Church. Take the case of Kieran in *Fall from Grace*. Because of Bishop Leary, he has to suffer the charges of bribery, theft and conspiracy. Despite all these sufferings Kieran loves the Church. He empowers Leary in order to purify the Church though she has wronged him a lot. Kieran's attitude to suffering in his personal life and his relationship with the Church are lessons which every priest has to imitate in his own life. Not even once he turns out to be either revengeful or desperate. He perceives suffering in the light of Catholic faith and he manages it with the help of Catholic imagination. In his character and performance one cannot but notice the merging of faith and suffering.

In *Fall from Grace*, Gerry Green is a priest, unfortunately, a pedophile. In Greeley's words, Green is "A deeply disturbed man with a Sadomasochistic fixation on boys" (353). He even endorses satanic cult. He officiates Black Mass and demands the immolation of a woman, Brijid. A priest as Green, is a sign of contradiction to all and reminds us of Father Lenny Lyon in Greeley's *The Priestly Sins* which is the last novel to

be studied in this chapter. One cannot think of a Catholic priest, who has to officiate the Eucharistic celebration, going after Black Mass. A priest is expected to provide the suffering people with consolation, counseling and rapport. Green gives nothing but suffering to boys, their parents and the like. Any Catholic priest is expected to assist the human life at all levels of its growth i.e. from the womb to the tomb. But, Green is seen demanding the real sacrifice of a virgin. He even presides over a group of sexually active priests at his summer home at Goose Lake. Thus, the suffering resulting from his scandalous ways is simply indescribable.

Green has played a role in spoiling the life of Kathleen, too. Brien, her husband, was a homosexual prey to Green. He cannot satisfy Kathleen sexually, as he is even now, entertaining a male lover. Green has to be taken to task for distorting the sexual behaviour of Brien, which later makes him incapable of managing his life with Kathleen. At the same time, Kathleen has a healthy approach to sexuality which is in tone with the Catholic teachings, as is evident from what she asks Leary, "Didn't they teach you in the seminary that the body is a sacrament?" (78). To the great dismay of the readers, in response to Kieran's questions, Leary admits that he has had homosexual relationship with Green, but, never after his consecration. The novel also reveals that Leary and Green are close friends. The birds of the same feather flock together.

Actually, *Fall from Grace* is Greeley's dig at the integrity of the Catholic Church and her clergy. He blames the Church for not giving proper education on sexual matters, for unjustly protecting the accused priests, for hesitating to take actions against them, for finding fault with the parents of the abused boys, for not taking into confidence the expertise of therapists like Kieran and Murphy, and for threatening priests like Brendan who try to support the right of the victims. The novel strikingly highlights the fallible nature of the Church personnel and the inevitability of relating the causes and

circumstances of suffering with Catholic faith. All Catholic priests ought to know and teach that they cannot witness to Catholic morality in sexual matters without respecting the other's body as God's abode and without abiding by the sacrificial dimensions of love, as stipulated by Catholic imagination. The novel is an eye-opener even to Bishops like Leary. All need conversion and gradual transformation of one's character and attitude to other people. The basic message of the Church is one of healing and consoling to all those who are poor and suffering.

Fall from Grace appeals to all priests to consider themselves as vicars of Christ, the Good Shepherd. As shepherds of the flock, they have to protect their sheep by feeding and guiding them. The shepherds must take special care of the weak ones among the flock. They are bound to heal the wounds of the followers. The pedophile priests are torturers and not healers. They are assaulters and not saviours. Such priests fail to be sacraments of Christ. They augment the suffering of the poor people who are already suffering a lot, on account of various reasons. Those priests are a threat to the virtue/vow of celibacy. Hence, the Church is really anxious about the pedophile problems. She has to take strong actions against the accused priests. Otherwise, the Church will become a cash cow feeding the advocates and the legal systems as it actually happened in the United States of America. In this sense, *Fall from Grace* has a prophetic relevance which every priest has to pay attention to. Anyway, this novel strongly urges priests to improve their moral standards, reminding them of their priestly obligation of nursing and healing the community and never to be perpetuators or instruments of suffering.

One finds in the end of the novel, Kieran and Kathleen going to the Cathedral in order to exchange their sacramental vows. So, *Fall from Grace* has a happy ending which, according to Greeley, is the hallmark of every Catholic story. He comments, "The happy ending in the story anticipated the happy ending in reality, much to my surprise" (369).

Suffering and years of waiting and prayerful preparation have purified Kieran and Kathleen and they are really worthy of receiving the Sacrament of Marriage. Both of them are seasoned with faith and imagination. They are capable of uniting their Catholic faith with their suffering and their living together under the same roof. Kieran and Kathleen substantiate the salvific and eschatological aspects of suffering approached from a Catholic point of view. Every Catholic priest can derive inspiration from the story of *Fall from Grace* as to how suffering leads to happiness and reunion. In this sense, suffering is a blessing in disguise. It is not an evil in itself or a curse to be avoided. Catholic theology maintains that as Christ resurrected on the third day after his crucifixion and indescribable suffering, those who suffer in and because of faith will be rewarded after the model of Kieran and Kathleen. Both of them are driven by Catholic imagination which assures all those who suffer for noble causes of nothing less than celestial bliss.

In short, the story of Green declares that the corruption of the best is the worst. His saga of falling from the sublime heights of grace to the mire and mud of disgrace should be an eye-opener to all priests. They should not be trouble-shooters or problem-creators. Instead, priests ought to be peace-makers. They should be sources of consolation and encouragement for others. Priests are not actors on the altar. They are not mere celebrants. They have to be exemplary persons who are able to guide the community on the road to holiness. Nobody appreciates a lazy and selfish priest. As priests, they have to be available to the people even if they have to suffer and sacrifice many things personally. Suffering, however severe it is, must not disappoint or frighten a priest. After, all he is the ambassador of the crucified Lord. A priest who does not suffer in life, as a genuine follower of the suffering servant of Yahweh, cannot be a committed priest.

The mission of a Catholic priest is not confined to preaching the Catholic views on the reality of suffering. He has to alleviate the suffering of his people. He cannot do this

all by himself. One lesson every priest must learn from the study of *Fall from Grace* is that he must make use of the assistance of psychologists and therapists, in his healing ministry. He shall not be prejudiced against other professionals. Priests have to realize how much service is rendered by lay persons like Kieran, in the realm of redressing the suffering of others. A final point to be stressed in the light of this study is that every priest has to admit the inevitability of applying insights and perspectives of Catholic faith and Catholic imagination to the reality of suffering. Both in his words and deeds he has to be overwhelmed by the correlation between faith and suffering. To sum up, *Fall from Grace* ought to inspire the entire clergy to re-examine their involvement in the area of human suffering, and to re-evangelize their own attitude to suffering in personal lives.

The next novel is to be analyzed is *The Bishop and the Missing L Train* which tells the story of how and why Bishop Quill Guz, newly appointed in Forest Hills, is kidnapped and later recovered. At the request of Sean Cronin, his Archbishop, Blackie undertakes a successful expedition. The missing train which is only a single car, and Hector Gomez, its driver, are found out in a drugged condition. Blackie proves that Guz has been kidnapped by a gang of drug-agents, at the instigation of Theodore Coffey, another priest, who is known for his envy and vanity. Here, Greeley is narrating a story of how priests, who are preachers of love and are models of Christ, cause suffering and insult to the whole priestly class, and how the degeneration among the clergy makes the lay people also suffer. The novelist actually wants to illustrate who an ideal Bishop or a priest is. As this study is expected to make clear, this book also highlights the necessity of more co-operation between the clergy and the laity. Besides, this is a strong declaration of the novelist's insistence on the necessity of ordaining women, and married people, as a remedy for the present suffering caused by the shortage of priests.

While reading the *The Bishop and the Missing L Train*, it is surprising to note that though, kidnapping of a Bishop is rare and shocking, the people of Forest Hills are not affected at all, by what has happened to Guz, their new Bishop. They seem to think that his kidnapers have done a favour to them. They are relieved of a great burden. When he was working in Roman Rota, he was known for his incompetence and stupidity, always signing against annulment cases to the dismay of both the judges and the clients. Having taken charge of Forest Hills he has done the worst harm to the people. Blackie learns that Guz has dismissed the parish council, insulted the catechists, broken the choir and offended the whole parish. He humiliates the staff in public. He fires some of the directors, deacons and officers without any consultation. Every Catholic priest is a shepherd of the people. It is his duty to unify, strengthen and nourish them with the Word of God and His grace. Guz gives them nothing but suffering and frustration. So, the kidnapping of Guz is, in a way, a self-inflicted punishment for this careless and scandalous manner of administering a parish. Greeley warns all parish priests that they cannot work effectively in a parish displeasing all the people.

According to Catholic faith and tradition, the parish is a family. It is the mystical body of Christ. The priest and the faithful together form one body. There is no ideological dichotomy between these two sections. They are one in love and co-workers in service. The priest is not a dictator. The relationship between the priest and the people is not like that of a master and his slaves. The contact Guz has with his people is very poor. He is very demanding and the lay people turn to be revengeful. That means his behaviour is not in accordance with Catholic faith and imagination. He is not able to respect them as persons who are God's children nor are they willing to respect the priest as their spiritual head. The fact that they do not stand united proves that they are not guided by Catholic imagination which has great unifying force. Guz is not a sign of love and unity which

indicates the absence of Catholic faith in his life and ministry. Finally, the people themselves decide to punish their priest. Unfortunately, another priest, by name, Theodore, exploits the situations, hires a group of drug-agents, and thus, Guz is kidnapped. So, the root cause of his suffering and failure as a priest is owing to the neglect of Catholic faith and imagination.

Another apparent feature of his character is that Guz is a man of vaulting ambition. Though, he cannot manage a single parish, he expects to be the next Archbishop, replacing Sean Cronin, the ruling Archbishop of Chicago (153). He claims that he is directly inspired by God and that he does nothing but His Will. Sometimes, he thinks that he will be appointed as the Rector of the Cathedral after Blackie. He appears to have the same fervour of an iconoclast (69). Guz boasts that the Pope has sent him to put Chicago in order. In his words, "I would do great things for the Church back in America" (45). Despite his claim, he is a good-for-nothing fellow who is known as an idiot. As Ted Coffey comments, "Guz terrorized secretarial staff. He is a Nazi" (101). Jenny, one of the innocent persons accused of kidnapping Guz, says, "I hate that bishop even more than I hate my husband. He is a gross, vulgar, evil man" (104). Peter Quill, a businessman who is the brother of Guz complains to him that the latter has really spoilt the parish. Quill says, "All the things you have done at the parish – firing those people, dismissing the parish council, closing down the sports programme. People hate you and they hate me because I am your brother" (119). There are allegations about his contacts with the Mother Superior (147). All these taken together, one must conclude that Guz who cannot manage even a parish will never become an efficient and exemplary Archbishop. His assumed role of a prophet cannot be justified by Catholic faith. His priestly ministry is neither natural nor normal. He is a total failure. Guz is not driven by Catholic imagination. A parish priest must, hence, admit that without having the mutually

enriching Catholic faith and imagination he will be unable to maintain a healthy relationship with God and the people. In other words, the shame of being kidnapped and the consequent suffering which Guz undergoes are all pointing to the absence of Catholic imagination in his character.

Through the characterization of Theodore and Guz, Greeley gives a strong message to all priests. They should not be undemocratic like Guz and they should not be power-thirsty like Theodore. Their activities are often scandalous. The net result is that both of them suffer physically and mentally and on account of them the Church, as a whole, is put to shame. They are anti-witnesses to Christ and His Gospels. Both Guz and Theodore are negligent in matters of Catholic faith and imagination. Neither do they grow as persons qualitatively nor do they let others grow in faith and charity. In their craze after becoming Bishops both of them disregard their priestly obligations. They cause havoc in the parish. The unity as well as the peaceful atmosphere of the parish is at stake. None of them rises up to the expectation of the people. *The Bishop and the Missing L Train* is an appeal to all the priests not to imitate priests like Theodore and Guz. Instead, they shall adhere themselves to Catholic faith and imagination which, in case, they neglect, they will fall short of the sublime ideals of priestly vocation.

This novel presents Blackie as an ideal priest and bishop worthy of emulation by all the priests. Blackie is the embodiment of Catholic faith and imagination. One thing which distinguishes Blackie from Theodore and Guz is related to the theme of suffering. Both Theodore and Guz suffer a lot of shame and disgrace on account of their own wrong doing, as a result of their neglect of Catholic faith and imagination. Blackie does not have to undergo this kind of suffering. Many innocent people are made to suffer because of their scandalous and irresponsible way of life. For example, two youngsters, named Jenny and Tommy are accused of involving in the kidnapping of Guz, and they are taken into

custody. Gripped by shame, Christie, the lover of Tommy, leaves him. Ned, the lover of Jenny, also does the same. In short, Theodore and Guz are instrumental to aggravating the suffering of innocent people. They don't seem to have any prick of conscience. It is mainly because, they are not concerned with Catholic teachings. But, never does one find an innocent one suffering because of Blackie except some criminals like the drug-agents. In Greeley's opinion, Blackie is the ideal model of all Catholic priests as well as Bishops.

The Bishop and the Missing L Train presents Blackie as the personification of Catholic faith and imagination. One notices the merging of faith and suffering reflected in his words and deeds. By virtue of his Catholic imagination, there is no such a thing as an insolvable mystery for Blackie (262). He gives great importance to the healing aspect of his priestly ministry. He finds out the truth and identifies the real villain. Blackie is bent upon mitigating the suffering of other people. He succeeds in reuniting the broken relationships between Jenny and Ned, and Christie and Tommy. Blackie has a unique faith in God as a sufferer. "God", he says, "suffers when we suffer. Jesus reveals to us the suffering of God. He is always nailed to the cross. God is always suffering" (105). If the priest is really a sacrament of this God, he will have to suffer for and with his people. He has to help them get rid of their suffering, if it is changeable. If the suffering is irremovable he has to train them to endure it patiently and boldly. Again, Blackie says, "I think God loves us all as a parent loves a child. He doesn't hate anyone.... When we do suffer, God suffers with us" (177). A Catholic priest should have strong faith in God's existence and His love. This Catholic faith is essential because, as Blackie says, "The parish priest's concern is with the spiritual welfare of his people" (141). If he is not endowed with genuine faith, he will not be able to administer the sacraments effectively. For example, in Blackie's opinion, "We have failed to explain what the sacraments are and hence, the faithful don't understand what it means when we talk about marriage as a

sacrament” (139). Greeley expects all priests to equip themselves with Catholic faith and reminds them of their obligation to sympathize with those who suffer. Because, they are representing Jesus Christ who went about doing good, healing the sick and consoling the suffering people during His public ministry.

Besides, Blackie is abundantly gifted with imagination which provides him with original ideas, insights and solutions to mysterious problems. But for this imaginative faculty, he will not be able to find suitable answers to various problems. Imagination assists Blackie in all his investigative and intellectual pursuits. He says, “I was born with that knowledge” (170). Sometimes he gets premonition about futuristic events. Regarding the villain behind the kidnapping of Guz, Blackie says, “For a fraction of a second I thought I saw a picture of the explanation. As so often happens, it vanished before I could recognize it” (33). As Blackie thinks about the kidnapping of Guz, he says, “An image of the enemy flickered in my preconscious, danced for a moment, and then slipped away” (154). In the light of his Catholic imagination, he believes that the Catholic Church can be renewed and that one of her important duties is healing the sick and the suffering, which is to be carried out by the clergy. His hope is expressed in these lines, “Because we still have the dream of a Church renewed according to the spirit of the Vatican Council II” (175). In short, Blackie, who is Greeley’s ideal priest, is in possession of Catholic faith as well as right imagination. Accordingly, his behaviour is exceptionally Catholic and exemplary.

By the grace of Catholic imagination Blackie solves mysteries which is impossible for others, even the police force. Empowered by Catholic imagination Blackie endeavours to enable the Church to get rid of some of her acute problems. As a pioneer of renovating the Church, he makes her aware of the intensity of the problem of paucity of priests. The Church really suffers from clerical shortage. Since she does not have as many priests as

needed and hence, the Bishops are forced to appoint the problematic priests to new parishes. As Father Matt Dribben, the predecessor of Guz at Forest Hills tells Blackie, "Since Rome won't ordain women or married men, we have a priest shortage" (172). Blackie has always been Greeley's mouth-piece. The novelist has always upheld the significance of ordaining women of quality and integrity, and also married men. Similarly, Blackie believes that the problems related to the shortage of priests can be remedied by extending priesthood to women and married men. In the absence of good priests, the Bishops become helpless and they have no other way except re-assigning the accused priests also to other parishes and institutions and not to treatment centres. If the Church introduces these revolutionary changes, different from the present system of ordaining male and celibate persons only, she can remedy the suffering caused by clerical insufficiency. If the Church changes the practice of reserving ordination to male celibates alone, she can easily avoid persons like Guz. With the same intention of lessening the suffering of the Church as well as the innocent people, Blackie pressurizes the Archbishop to take drastic steps against priests like Guz and other suspicious clerics. In the end, the Cardinal orders Theodore, "You resign as pastor of St. Regi effective at once... I will suspend you and appoint an administrator" (279). Priests shall make Blackie, their role model.

The Catholic Church teaches that when someone suffers except for one's own reason, it has redemptive value and sanctifying effects. Those who suffer innocently and patiently because of others, participate in the vicarious suffering of Jesus on Calvary and they step into the shoes of the martyrs. The Biblical story of Job illustrates this idea. His saga of suffering sanctifies him and it only strengthens his faith in God. When God tests the faith of Abraham he has to suffer a lot, as he has to sacrifice his only son. Ultimately, this experience of suffering amplifies his religious faith and to this day, he is known as

the father of all faithful. This can be applied to the youngsters Jenny and Tommy in *The Bishop and the Missing L Train*. They are caught by the police, taken to the prison and so misunderstood and insulted by all. Both of them miss their lovers. What follows immediately is an estrangement between the lovers which is nothing but severe suffering for all of them. But, the same suffering does not separate them for ever, instead, it intensifies their love, and as a result of Blackie's interference all of them get reunited and they are happier now than ever before. In this sense, suffering can be viewed as a creative and binding force.

The cross on which Jesus died is a universally acclaimed symbol, of suffering. As a symbol, the cross reminds one not only of how much Jesus suffered physically, but also of how God loved him/her and continues to love them unconditionally. From this point of view, suffering for a noble cause has a sacramental value. It is not a sign of God's indifference to man or His helplessness. Rather, it is a sacrament of God's saving and transforming love for us. This Catholic understanding of suffering can be applied to all the lovers figuring in the novel under consideration. As they are reunited, the lovers realize that the previous suffering is beneficial to all of them. Many women characters appearing in Greeley's novels, as some of them have already been referred to in this chapter itself, have had similar experiences. This kind of an approach to suffering presupposes Catholic faith and imagination. Exclusive of faith, suffering is always disappointing and it invariably makes the sufferer a pessimist. Hence, each priest must be ready to present the creative and challenging aspects of suffering. No one can say 'no' to the reality of suffering. Even Blackie, being a human being will have some sort of suffering. Since the human life is enveloped in suffering, every priest must be in a position to deal with personal suffering and that of his people, in concurrence with the Catholic faith and imagination. That means, the only one who suffers reasonably is the

person who has correlated faith and suffering. This is something which every priest must understand and witness to.

The Bishop and the Missing L Train renders an important message for all the priests. As a human being in flesh and blood no priest is immune to suffering. The triple virtues / vows which every priest has to abide by, also necessitates some suffering in priestly life. In the eyes of the media-dominated world which highlights sexual permissiveness, a celibate priest is a challenge, and, many a time, a misfit. He has to suffer humiliation for not being in the world as it appreciates. This is a period of survival of the richest. The rich are the fit. The poor are to be dropped, uncared and unwept. This makes the spirit of poverty absurd and obsolete. Again, the poor priest will have to suffer a lot. These are days of self-fulfilment and self-assertion. Obedience is neither respected nor followed. To obey is equal to be a slave. The modern world prefers an efficient priest to an obedient priest. And as a result, the priest who remains loyal to his superiors or the Bishop is put to shame, occasionally. In short, all these three qualities of the priest bring to him some kind of suffering. Good priests like Blackie view the three virtues always in the light of Catholic faith. Then, they cease to be sources of suffering but make them more Christ-like, more committed to the people and more proud of their own vocation. These three virtues or vows are not three problems, but they are springs of satisfaction and sanctification. No priest can do justice to these three virtues without maintaining the correlation between faith and suffering which is an important component of Catholic imagination.

To wind up, *The Bishop and the Missing L Train* is Greeley's interpretation of the Catholic views on the theme of suffering which is part and parcel of human life. No one can run away from it. So, the Church is determined to strengthen her faithful to face suffering in life. The Church is discharging this duty through her priests. Hence, every

Catholic priest is bound to train his people to undergo suffering in a befitting manner. Greeley has written this novel as part of realizing his own priestly duty of preparing the community to face the reality of suffering. As this analysis has proved, only in association with faith, suffering becomes intelligible. In accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, the novel maintains that the fact of suffering does not deny God's mercy and providence, but, it inspires and initiates the readers to believe in a loving God. Blackie will definitely remain as a source of motivation for all priests, worthy of emulation and illustration.

The next work selected for a detailed treatise is *Irish Stew!*, the latest in the Nuala Anne McGrail novel series. Dermot and Nuala solve two mysteries in this novel, as in the other novels of this series. The present issue of finding out the real culprits, responsible for the attempt on the life of Seamus Costelle, is narrated by Dermot. The story of how they solve the puzzle of Chicago's infamous Haymarket Riot that happened on May 4, 1886, is narrated by Ned Fitzpatrick, the same person who reported the hanging of Myles Joyce and his friends, as seen in *Irish Love*, a book just mentioned above. The story of Seamus, a leading lawyer from the south side of Chicago, illustrates how one's own wrong activities boomerang to oneself in the form of suffering. Ned's account of the Haymarket Riot highlights how the innocent people have to suffer and how justice and other human rights are denied to them. The theme of suffering seems to be hovering around the whole novel. That is why, a special analysis of *Irish Stew!* is included in this chapter. As the inquiry into the novel proceeds, an evaluation on how far the idea of correlation between faith and suffering can inspire and empower a Catholic priest to perform his pastoral obligation in a more exemplary way is also made.

Initially, one finds that many attempts are made on the life of Seamus. He suffers a lot because of these and similar threats. It is very natural that one feels pity for this

suffering person. But, this attitude changes, as Dermot and Nuala make clear that Seamus has cheated many of his partners and subordinates. First, everybody believes that an innocent man is suffering and feels grudge against all those who are responsible for this. Gradually, one begins to understand that Seamus is simply suffering which he deserves as punishment for his wrong-doing. The reader recognises that Seamus himself is the criminal. In the wake of the guidance given by Dermot and Nuala, he survives all attacks and becomes a transformed person. Originally, in all his transactions Seamus is activated by his monetary motives. But, in the next stage he is overwhelmed by the values of Catholic imagination. Now, he gives due importance to faith and imagination in the light of which he trains himself to approach and manage the reality of suffering. Eventually, he realises and confesses his role in aggravating suffering in his own life. And he is ready to amend his ways, as is clear from his confession.

In spite of his legal profession, gentlemanly appearance and social status, Seamus has done ineffable harm to his associates. All of them have been cheated, humiliated and threatened by him. The first attempt on the life of Seamus is done by Helen Shepherd, one-time partner of Seamus, and now his rival's wife. Dermot and Nuala find out what provokes Helen to shoot at Seamus. Helen forces Seamus to divorce his Diane and be her own for ever. Being at a loss, Seamus dumps her to go with Len Shepherd. Nuala is the first one to tell her husband that the killer is Helen (331). Another one, who appears in the robe and role of the murderer, is Hector Papageorgiou, the brother of Nicholas Papageorgiou whom Seamus has betrayed. There are many others like Jim Gigante, Brian McGourthy and Kevin McGourthy, who have to suffer various set backs because of Seamus. It is known to all that he has amassed millions of dollars from an Insurance Company to the detriment of his collaborators. Gradually, it becomes clear that the amount of suffering caused to Seamus is far less than the suffering caused by him to the

partners mentioned above. Seamus never thinks about the suffering he causes to others. He is always worried about his own suffering caused by them and takes all steps to avoid them.

Catholic faith upholds God's love and always insists on human fraternity. Catholic imagination provides people with ways and means for maintaining love and fellowship in the society and human relationship. Catholic Church attaches equal status and importance to love of God and love of one's brethren. This is what a Catholic priest is supposed to promulgate. The priest who leads the prayer inside the Church is actually preparing the community to engage in service and other charitable activities outside the Church. Seamus and his colleagues, now opponents, do not allege any significance to Catholic imagination. Nothing is said about their religious orientation. None of them has any relationship with a priest. Since, they lack in faith they don't trust anybody. Each one cheats the other. What they want to have is money. They want to make money by all means even at the expense of others. Those who follow Catholic imagination give priority to the welfare of others even at the expense of one's own interests. When one is driven by the money motive truth is at stake. The other is regarded as a threat. The other is another hell. Only in the eyes of Catholic faith one can respect the other as a person to be respected and cared for. The story of the relationship between Seamus and his associates is one of mutual distrust and it leads to suffering on both sides. All of them feel threatened by the other persons and spoil their peace of mind and sense of security. Here, is the role of the priest to make them aware of the correlation between faith and suffering.

This priestly duty is performed by Dermot and Nuala who are practicing Catholics. They establish steady contact with Seamus and save his life many a time from his assaulters. The protagonists lead Seamus to a final confession and conversion. Dermot and Nuala help him understand who his enemies are and that it is none but himself or his

craze for money that made them his foes. Finally, Seamus is seen sobbing, saying, "It's all my fault" (336). Dermot and Nuala are guided by Catholic faith which always demands self-purification and conversion. Under their influence Seamus recognises his deceitful nature and this awareness transforms him. John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus, prepares the people for His advent. Jesus also emphasises the need for conversion and reconciliation. A Catholic priest is bound to continue this process of conversion. As one reads the lives of saints, one is often struck by the fact that suffering acts as a catalyst for change in life. In their relationship with Seamus, Dermot and Nuala are performing the priestly duty of transforming a person making use of the situation of suffering. The conversion of Seamus will influence the nature of his rivals. They will no more be his rivals. The Catholic imagination unifies and always brings people to reconciliation. As a result, suffering leaves space for joyfulness and co-existence, as darkness paves the way for brightness. Thus, the priest has to remind the faithful of the inevitability of the correlation between faith and suffering. It is nothing but this correlation that saves Seamus from his suffering, and it is to be stressed that it is neither the police nor the advocates that save Seamus.

A question as to how the two protagonists solve the mysteries, is significant. As have already been established in the detailed study of the Irish novels *Irish Eyes* and *Irish Gold*, Dermot and Nuala are strong Catholics who attribute greater importance to faith than to anything else. Catholic imagination has endowed them with some special sort of inspiration or revelation which is beyond logical or rational analysis. *Irish Stew!* applauds their Catholic faith and the richness and efficacy of their imagination. Even as they suffer, because, their third child Socra Marie is in a Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit, their faith is not shattered. They believe in a God who is love and forgiveness and in their opinion He is one who sheds tears as His children suffer. They frequent the Church and receive the

sacraments which enable them to counteract any and every suffering on their way. Nuala tells Dermot, "There are only two Absolutes in the world, Dermot, a Swedish Vodka and God's love. Who are we to budget his forgiveness" (351). On another occasion, Dermot asks Nuala, "Do you think God loves you more than you love Socra Marie at this moment? Does He touch us the way you touch her?" (10). Both of them fully believe that God loves them more than they love each other. Even as their little child is in a critical condition they do not question either the presence or the providence of God. They pray to God for the sake of their sick child and remain unwavering in God's mercy. Nuala tells Dr. Foley, "Perhaps a Catholic couple would be more likely to take a chance on a very premature child" (360). All these prove beyond doubt that they have staunch faith in God's love and mercy and both of them are gifted with Catholic imagination abundantly.

With the help of the Catholic imagination, they are able to perform unnatural feats. For example, in her imagination Nuala accurately predicts the gender of children (4). Seeing Seamus, Nuala sees "The mark of death is on him" (17). Nuala and her child, Nellie, are able to hear the explosion that occurred in the year 1886. As Dermot says, "My wife had heard the noise. Her daughter knew all about it" (16). Again she tells her husband that there are people who want to kill him [Seamus]. She is sure that another killer would try to kill him (310). Nuala knows the name of the second killer of Seamus beforehand, and writes the murderer's name, and puts it in an envelope (190, 261). If Dermot and Nuala are able to solve mysteries, it is only because, they are guided by Catholic imagination. Suffering does not frighten them, for, they are sure that even God is a suffering one. So, they approach suffering as a sign or sacrament of God's love. Whenever one is in trouble, God who suffers, is by his or her side. They are sure that God loves Socra more than her parents. The little Bishop visits the sick child in the Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit. After reading a passage from the Bible, he explains how much God

loves the sick child and how much He suffers when the human beings do suffer. In his words, “He might say that He loves her more than you do and that as a good parent He suffers with her, even more than you do. When she cries, He might insist, He weeps” (110). Since, the God in whom he believes is one who suffers and one who sympathises with those who suffer, Dermot considers it as his duty to alleviate the suffering of others. In accomplishing this task, he is very much helped by the fey gifts of Nuala.

As already stated, Dermot and Nuala are Catholics and they are proud of their Catholic faith. Even amidst suffering, they love and serve the Church. They strive for truth and are ready to suffer for safeguarding her. As true Catholics, they train their children i. e. Nellie Coyne, Mick and Socra Marie, in Catholic faith. Both the parents have no doubt that their three children will be active and proud members of the Catholic Church. The novel comes to an end with such a bold declaration. Nuala boasts that the children will cheer for the Pope whenever they are in Rome, and asks him if he knows, why. His reply is, “Because they are Catholic”, he admitted. “Always will be, can’t ever be anything else” (377). It is in fulfilment of the Baptismal priesthood that the Church insists on her priests and the parents that it is their duty to educate the children in matters of faith and morality. In order that this be done, effectively, what is essentially required is, the exemplary living of the parents. In this respect, Dermot and Nuala are ideal persons, whom every priest can refer to, whenever he has to handle the theme of parents’ responsibility of imparting Catholic formation to their children. The young generation must be helped to develop a faithful approach to the fact of suffering as the protagonists of *Irish Stew!* do in the novel. The priest has to make the children aware of the fact that those who dissociate faith and suffering, will end up in suffering, and that those who correlate them, will transform themselves for the better.

Regarding the Haymarket Riot of 1886, Dermot and Nuala, assisted by Ned Fitzpatrick, trace the real criminal who threw the bomb. Seven policemen are killed in the explosion. The police version is that some workers and anarchists organized the demonstration against the Government and attacked the police. Half of the convicted persons are hanged. Ned, in his report prepared for *Chicago Daily News*, proves that these convicted persons are all innocent. In his opinion, they died exactly like Nora's husband, Myles Joyce and it is because, "The powerful people in Chicago want them to die" (76). The peaceful meeting is changed into a riot by the police officers, as an excuse to get rid of these people. Ned and the media people, in the presence of a Judge, raid the house over on Grand Avenue, in which Bonfield and Schaack, the corrupt police officers, have stored their stolen treasures. Ned recovers a letter written by Inspector Thomas Cowan to Captain Bonfield warning him of the Fenians, a group of Irish rebels, who have sent one Captain Mayo, a big man with broad shoulders and an odd gait, to murder him. This letter and a group photo in which Mayo figures with a circled face serve as the key to the Haymarket mystery. When the police created the riot, it is this Mayo who throws the bomb at Captain Ward mistaking him for Bonfield. Unfortunately, the bomb hit poor Degen, Ned's neighbour. After reading Ned's report, entitled, "Haymarket 1886" (70), John Peter Altgeld, the Governor, declares on June 26, 1893, "I, therefore, grant an absolute pardon to Samuel Fieldon, Oscar Neebe and Michael Schwab...." (344).

Ned's report lays great stress on the suffering of the innocent people caused by the crooked police officers, corrupt judges and the misinterpreting media. Ned, being a Catholic, is motivated by Catholic imagination. He is committed to give consolation to those who are suffering. He is equally determined to fight for justice, when it is denied to the poor people who are powerless and voiceless. Ned is also encouraged by certain intuitive insights, which form part and parcel of his Catholic imagination. He experiences

some flashes of truth and some sort of psychic revelation. As he claims, “Suddenly, I understood everything as though a streak of lightning that had exploded in my brain. Then the light faded and with it my insight. It would come back, however” (183). Greeley presents Ned on equal par with Dermot and Nuala. These persons are truth-seekers, peace-makers and the source of solace to the suffering people. Josie, whom Ned saves from Ireland and brings to Chicago, along with Nora, as narrated in *Irish Love*, tells him, “Uncle Ned, you are a real angel. You saved Nora and you saved me and now you are going to save my poor Jimmy. God sent you into the world to save people” (186). Ned here, witnesses to the basic vision and mission of the Church.

In Ned’s narration, the execution of the innocent victims is pathetic. None of them curses religion or God. Nor does anyone appear to be timid or despondent. The Chief of the prison informs Ned, “They’ve been reciting poetry and singing hymns all night... They all seem ready to die, eager even” (297). Even during their excruciating suffering, they do not relinquish their faith. They court death with bravery befitting a martyr. The way they are hanged, reminds us of Jesus’ crucifixion, and the hanging of Myles Joyce, the husband of Nora. Their death has eschatological significance. They are sure of their innocence and they hope the world will realize it and the worth of their sacrifice in years to come. That is why Spies, one of the victims, shouts at the last moment, “The time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are throttling today” (298). These inspiring words express their wish and prayer that the world must come to know the truth. The police can torture the body but, no one can thwart the will of a person. Ned proudly records that they died for the working class.

Courts and police stations are institutions where the poor people expect justice and human treatment. But, most of the judges and police officers, figuring in *Irish Stew!*, are so corrupt that they have no concern other than catering to their own vested interests.

They are perpetrators of suffering. After the execution, the police officers take pleasure in persecuting the families of the deceased. They try to incriminate Ned, too, but, in vain. They argue that he is an anarchist and that he is part of the conspiracy to kill cops. They are the people supposed to be custodians and protectors of the weak sections. But, the corrupt system makes them torturers. They influence the media and all of them join together in distorting historical facts. Ned is a Catholic who is fully devoted to the cause of Catholic imagination. He can never betray or crucify or falsify truth. Every Catholic priest has to preach the truth. If he does not do it properly, ignorance and falsehood will prevail over the society. In such a situation the rich will exploit and liquidate the unorganized ordinary people like the immigrants in Chicago. They misinterpret history in such a way that it serves their own vested interests. This is what causes inexplicable suffering to the poor people.

Irish Stew! proves that those who follow Catholic imagination become protectors of life. It provides the people with peace of mind and courage to undergo suffering. The correlation between faith and imagination gives orientation, satisfaction and justification to their lives. Dermot and Nuala save the life of their child, Socra Maria. Then, they save the life of Seamus. Ned saves the good name of thousands of immigrants in Chicago who are unjustly accused of extremism and violence. He has given security to Nora and Josie. They strengthen and console the suffering people, and try their best to remove the possible causes of suffering. Sometimes, these characters themselves have to suffer. But they never inflict pain on others. On the other hand, there is another category of characters who never care for the dignity of life. They neglect faith and imagination. They do not seem to respect either their own lives or those of others. They do not even hesitate to commit homicide and suicide. The example of Mayo will substantiate this point. He is a notorious criminal and is the one who throws the bomb, killing seven people, six of

them, policemen. Later, he himself is killed by someone else. His corpse is found in a ditch with a bullet through his head (321). Mayo's tragic end recalls to one's mind, the words of Jesus, "For, all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26: 52). He has paid the penalty for leading a life without either faith or Catholic imagination. This story suggests that one who inflicts pain on others will have to suffer in this world itself. Hence, the priests shall teach the faithful to abide by moral principles, which presupposes and necessitates a correlation between faith and suffering.

As part of his transformation, Seamus undergoes a process of self-purification, which is expressed in his confession. What begins in the form of a conflict and confrontation, gradually, develops into intimate relationship. The net result is that Seamus becomes a purified Catholic under the influence, and after the model, of Dermot and Nuala. This is more or less the way God deals with people in suffering. Initially, God seems to be unmindful of the suffering persons. But, He provides them with joy and peace in the end.

Thus, *Irish Stew!* proves that a good person is one who is able to develop a correlation of faith and suffering in daily life. Even if the novel abounds in various kinds of suffering, it comes to a happy ending, as every typically Catholic story, in Greeley's opinion, has to. The novelist expects the Catholic priests to appreciate the corrective and redemptive aspects of suffering and to highlight this message in Sunday sermons. They have to motivate the faithful to be saviours in daily life, by consoling and supporting those who are suffering. At the same time they have to fight against social causes, which necessitate suffering. To sum up, the believers must be trained to approach the reality of suffering from the angle of Catholic faith and lead a life as inspired by Catholic imagination.

The last novel to be discussed in this chapter is *The Priestly Sins*. As the name itself suggests, this novel is an account of how sins in the life of a priest result in suffering to himself as well as to others, and on account of which many innocent ones also have to suffer a lot. The title, the theme, and the message of this novel remind everyone of *Fall from Grace* discussed as the second one in this chapter. As the ensuing analysis is to reveal that there are many similarities between these two novels. Father Gerry Green (*Fall from Grace*) and Father Lenny Lyon (*The Priestly Sins*) are sources and causes of suffering mainly due to their pedophile tendencies. There are two worst sufferers in these novels; Kathleen in *Fall from Grace* and Father Herman Hoffman in *The Priestly Sins*. Both of them survive all sorts of suffering and their stories are worthy of being illustrated by priests in their sermons. Two lay persons, Kieran in *Fall from Grace* and Horst Heller in *The Priestly Sins* love their Church so much that they come forward and urge their respective Bishops to enact laws in order to solve or control the pedophile problems. *The Priestly Sins* can be said to be Greeley's strong warning to the Church authorities not to cover up the sexual crimes of the clergy. This novel takes the leaders of the Church to task for incarcerating or crucifying the innocent ones in the wake of sexual abuse charges, instead of punishing the guilty.

The Priestly Sins opens with the trial of Father Hoffman in connection with the sexual abuse of a boy named Todd Sweeney, by another priest, Lenny Lyon, by name. Hoffman has seen Lyon raping Sweeney at the quarters of Theodolinda parish which belongs to the Archdiocese of Plains City. For having complained to the Bishop against Lyon, an influential person in the Church, Hoffman has been locked up for six months in St. Edward's Centre in New Mexico. Horst Heller, a lay advocate, takes up this case, releases Hoffman from the treatment centre and argues in favour of him. The Judge Arthur Sturn expresses his shock at the cruelty meted out to Hoffman, the stupidity of the

medical reports presented in the court against him, and the malignity of the Church leadership which punishes the innocent ones and protects the culprits. Seeing the medical certificates prepared at the instruction of Blackie Ryan, the problem solver, the Judge declares that Hoffman is a healthy heterosexual celibate. Treating such a person for homosexuality is nothing but absurdity. The Judge, specially, praises Hoffman for the latter's dignity, courage, integrity and restraint, despite his manifold sufferings. He says, "You have behaved with dignity and restraint, and, if I may say so, courage. I still have some hope for the Catholic Church" (354). It has to be stressed that it was Hoffman's patient suffering and the spirit of forgiveness which prompt him to praise the Catholic Church.

The judgment issued by Sturn necessitates drastic changes. The Archbishop, Simon Isidore Louis, already notorious for corruption and alcoholism, is forced to resign. Father John Horwath of Lincoln Junction parish, a zealous priest, is made the new Archbishop. Dr. Michael Strauss, the director of the treatment centre, is dismissed. All the accomplices of the old Archbishop are removed from their positions. According to Greeley, the hallmarks of these priests are "more stupidity and incompetence than malice" (179). These priests are more concerned with decency, docility, decorum, and doctrinal orthodoxy and they never sympathize with the poor people who are always suffering. They are not driven by Catholic imagination. They cannot or do not exhibit any interest in Catholic faith. They are administrators and not pastors of souls. Very often they are not nice with the lay people. If scandalous persons like Lyon thrive, it is mainly because of the support of these kinds of priests. Every priest has the duty of healing the sick and caring for the needy. Such a priest shall not degenerate to the level of a torturer. A priest who has to sanctify his life as well as that of others must not be as immoral and impure as Lyons. He shall not add sorrow to others, but he has to provide them with joy and hope,

especially, in the midst of suffering. Greeley expects his ideal priest to be at his best, as an eschatological sign of hope, when he is surrounded by various types of suffering.

Hoffman, the priest, is the one who suffers the most in *The Priestly Sins*. For having complained against Lyons he is to endure the worst suffering. Nobody believes what he has witnessed. Justice is denied to him both by his Archbishop and his fellow priests. Even the father of the abused boy blames him. Dr. Thomas Sweeney denounces Hoffman as a liar, and alleges that it is he [Hoffman] who has hurt his son, Todd. Lyons has been accused of similar cases in all the parishes he has served. But, the Archbishop and the police clear him of all charges. He is kept, under lock and key for six months in the treatment centre. It is really ironical that a priest who has reported a homosexual priest to the superiors is forced to undergo treatment on charges of homosexuality. Hoffman says, "I am not a gay, was not gay, and was not cured of being gay" (235). Some priests and doctors who are supporters of Lyons do their level best to prolong the stay of Hoffman in St. Edward's Centre. They fake certificates and threaten Horst Heller, the reputed lawyer who is bent upon saving Hoffman. Many priests think that Hoffman is a Judas Iscariot who is betraying the Church and spoiling the good name of the clergy. On account of all these, Hoffman turns to be a man of suffering.

In fact, Hoffman does not deserve any of these sufferings. He joins the seminary with the purest of intentions, giving up his fascination for Kathleen. He wants to be a good priest. In Hoffman's words, "It was clear to me, nonetheless, that I was called by God to be a priest, a parish priest, to work and pray for and with the people in a parish, to share my life with them and their life with me" (147). When Dr. Goodwin, one of Hoffman's professors, declares, "The Roman Catholic Church needs good priests these days" (170), he thinks that he will become one of the best. Despite all his sufferings, Hoffman continues to be a sincere priest, fully committed to the people at all costs. It

must be remembered that he has no grudge against Lyons who is mainly responsible for all his suffering. Later, when Lyons suffers from AIDS, Hoffman is the only priest who visits him and looks after him. When Lyons dies, Hoffman officiates the Mass and preaches therein, about which he comments, "One pariah presiding over the obsequies of another" (286). He seems to be an embodiment of silent and perennial suffering and typically Catholic forgiveness. For him, even Lyons is not an enemy. Even as he suffers so much, Hoffman always tries to protect others from dangers and tries to mitigate their suffering.

Hoffman knows very well that he is innocent. He is equally aware of Lyon's culpability. As a priest in possession of a moral conscience, it is Hoffman's obligation to protect a boy being raped by a scandalous priest. The Archbishop is expected to be impartial and should have punished Lyons. Instead, Hoffman is insulted and incarcerated. He finds nowhere any justification for his personal suffering except in association with Catholic faith. Jesus the High Priest, the model of all priests, is suffering on the cross for no fault of His. Hoffman believes that he becomes a genuine Catholic priest only as he suffers like the crucified Lord. Exactly as he forgives his offenders, Hoffman unconditionally forgives Lyons and all his accomplices. Naturally speaking, anybody would have clamoured for the punishment of Lyons. What Hoffman aims at is the conversion and purification of Lyons. He is happy when he finds Lyons dying in peace. The Archbishop and his collaborators pay their unavoidable penalty by renouncing their posts. When all of them are put to shame the court praises Hoffman. Finally, the truth wins. This is how God acts. A person who has Catholic imagination alone will have so much patience to wait until the end. A Catholic priest must always train his community to understand and approach the reality of suffering in the light of Catholic faith and imagination.

From his school days onwards, Hoffman has a lover, that is Kathleen. One is likely to think that, as we find in some novels written by Greeley himself, she will be a source of suffering or a constant botheration throughout his priestly ministry. When he reveals to her his plan of becoming a priest, she responds like a perfectly mature person. She tells him, "Have a good life. Be a good priest, I'll look you up on, Judgment Day" (160). She neither seduces him nor bothers him not even once in future. But, she appears as the wife of one Liam to support Hoffman's fight for justice in the Church. On another occasion, he evaluates his affair with Kathleen. He asks himself, "Had she been a temptation? Or was she perhaps a grace?" (220). In no time Hoffman realizes that her presence is really a grace or God's sign in his life. Kathleen, on her part, remembers Hoffman with ineffable feelings of reverence and gratitude. As she writes, "You saved me from my anger, from my bad language, from my melancholy, from my temper ..." (314). Kathleen respects Hoffman as a priest and, on account of that, restrains herself from all physical contacts with him. Being a priest, he refrains from all genital expressions of love, in his relationship with Kathleen. This is possible because they are moved by not biological instincts, but Catholic imagination.

The Priestly Sins presents the priestly life of Hoffman, as already mentioned, as one of suffering. But, wherever he is, he does excellent work. He is a grand success even in the worst parish. Though, he is always suffering, he is a model priest. As a priest he officiates sacraments and his life itself is a sacrament, that is, a sign of God's love and grace. For example, while visiting Lyon in the AIDS Treatment Centre, Hoffman shows mercy and gives his blessing to many sick people. One of the nurses comments, "It's good to see a priest. You're a sign here of God's forgiving love" (265). There are many priests who administer the sacraments. But very few of them succeed in being sacraments of God's love for all. Hoffman really loves his priestly work. So, celibacy does not create

any problem to him. Many people wrongly think that celibacy is the most important cause of suffering in the life of a priest. In the life of Hoffman, celibacy is the unending source of happiness, inspiration and freedom. On this occasion what Dr. Stephen McAteer tells Hoffman during his confinement, is very relevant. In his words, "Celibacy isn't the reason priests leave; the reason is that they don't like the work" (325). Hoffman does not suffer because of his celibacy, but it is because he is celibate, that he is able to work so much for those who suffer. Viewed from the angle of Catholic imagination and faith, Hoffman is really satisfied with his priestly vocation. The priests who do not like their work and go astray are those who neglect Catholic faith and imagination.

In all his frankness Hoffman who suffers a lot, convinces his people that there are sinful priests which means that they are human beings. Priests are not saints directly imported from heaven. There are a few rotten apples among them. It is possible. The people should not follow them blindly. They should know that the priests are not immune to suffering which is natural and unavoidable as far as one is a human person. Whether the priest bears with the suffering in accordance with the Catholic faith and imagination is more important than the question, why the priests should suffer. To the people who came to receive him, when released from the treatment centre Hoffman says, "Never put your faith in us poor priests. Always cling to God's love for us and the beauty and goodness of the Catholic heritage" (358). Bishop Blackie shares the same idea in his conversation with Kathleen. In his words, "You must put your faith in God and in the Lord and His Blessed Mother and our whole glorious heritage and not in us poor priests, even if we are bishops and popes" (367). Any priest has to admit that this kind of an attitude to priests and their sufferings and failures is impossible without Catholic faith. In Hoffman's opinion priestly suffering need not alienate the priest from priesthood nor shall it detract people from their priests.

Hoffman being a man of silent suffering and having no much influence with the Archbishop, he alone cannot bring about any changes in the Church. But, *The Priestly Sins* presents a strong character, Horst Heller, an advocate, who is bent upon curtailing suffering in priestly life. Though, Heller is a lay person, he believes that his baptismal priesthood empowers him to involve in the case of Hoffman and to see to it that justice is not denied to him. If he never interfered, Hoffman would end up in the treatment centre. The honourable court readily accepts his findings and Hoffman is released immediately. His demands are approved by the Church which is resolved to deal with the pedophile priests seriously and impartially, unlike in the past. In Greeley's opinion every Catholic priest must aim at enabling the laity to fulfill their priestly duties. Heller has to meet a lot of threats and criticisms from priests as well as lay persons for taking side with Hoffman. Disregarding his own suffering, he does his maximum to minimize Hoffman's suffering. It is the duty of a Catholic priest to suffer for others on certain occasion and they have to make the lay people aware of doing the same in their own circumstances. It is promising to see that a layman like Heller is able to bring about a lot of changes in the Church. He launches a priestly fight for justice and transparency in all spheres of the Church. Many priests join him in the venture. He is mostly helped by Blackie, the Episcopal detective. Searching for truth is a collaborated endeavour and it is one of the primary duties of priests as well as the laity. Heller systematically proves that pedophilia is not a spiritual problem. It is a psychic one. This problem is not exclusively of the priests.

The Priestly Sins is a typically Greelean novel in the sense that there is a lay woman, named Kathleen, who heroically makes substantial contribution to the Church. In Heller's legal fight for Hoffman, she assists him. Kathleen, the one time lover of Hoffman, is at present the wife of Liam Shannon and they have two children. Even after Hoffman joined the Seminary and became a priest, Kathleen loves the Church. As one

traces her family, s/he finds that she grew up as a motherless child. She is nourished by Catholic faith and imagination. She is a regular Mass server and she sings in the choir. Thus, she has formed a Catholic integrity in her personality. She never attempts to possess Hoffman, the priest. At the same time, she always supports the Church in all her activities. Kathleen encourages Hoffman during the period of his suffering behind the bars. She feels greatly relieved when the corrupt Archbishop steps down and Hoffman is re-assigned to a new parish. Considering the fact that Kathleen is a lay person, and that too, a woman, one cannot but admire the services she renders to the Church. As she tries to help Hoffman, what Kathleen sees is not the body of a lover but the respectful person of a reverend priest to whom justice is denied. This is inevitable for her because, she is driven by Catholic faith and imagination which teaches everyone to regard the other as a valuable person and not as an object.

The Priestly Sins is not so much about the victim of a pedophile priest as it is about the suffering of another innocent priest on account of the same. A pedophile person never cares for the suffering of the victim as he does not want anything else except his own gratification. It is clear that such a person is not endowed with Catholic faith and imagination. A genuine Catholic priest suffers for others after the model of Christ and for the sake of his people. A pedophile priest is an anti-witness to this, in the sense that he inflicts pain on others for his own corporal pleasure. Such a priest never becomes a sacrament of God's love. Hoffman who suffers in spite of his innocence becomes a sacrament. As a firm Catholic, he imagines and believes that God, who is nothing but love, will turn his suffering to happiness. He has hope that He will reward him with celestial bliss. In the light of this faith and this imagination Hoffman never yields to despair. The success of Hoffman as a suffering priest is due to the excess of Catholic

imagination he maintains in his character. The failure of Lyons is owing to his lack of the same imagination.

In short, *The Priestly Sins* is Greeley's response to the problem of suffering of priests because of themselves or other priests. No one has ever been able to present an all conclusive explanation of this problem, which satisfies all. Anyway, Greeley has been successful in convincing his readers that without relating to Catholic faith and imagination a priest will not understand the meaning of suffering. Devoid of faith considerations, suffering is likely to lead a person to the abyss of helplessness and aimlessness. In such a situation, even a priest may relapse into despair. In and through Hoffman's story, it becomes very clear, that a priest, when he correlates faith and suffering, derives a kind of peace, joy and holiness in the midst of bitter experiences and painful incidents in life. This novel upholds beyond doubt the fact that for a Catholic priest celibacy is not a source of suffering. For a priest, who is really serious about his vow/virtue of celibacy, it is a fountain of liberation, availability, sharing and holiness. In the case of those priests who do not possess the merging of faith and imagination the same celibacy may be instrumental to make some of them at times scandalous and perverse in many ways. Though, such cases are rare and exceptional, the entire Church is put to shame, and the dignity of the whole clergy is challenged. That is why, *The Priestly Sins* strongly demands that the pedophile priests have to be sent for treatment, and not to be re-appointed in new places.

In Greeley's opinion, each Catholic priest has to admit that a pedophile priest who causes suffering to others is a scandal. At the same time, a priest who suffers for a noble cause is a martyr. He becomes a sacrament, a sign of God's own love and grace. The suffering of an innocent priest leads to his own sanctification and the conversion of others. One's priestly ministry will not be complete without actively taking part in

programmes and projects with the intention of obstructing suffering as far as possible, which incurs personal suffering in the priest's life. When the priest suffers for no fault of his, he turns out to be an eschatological sign of hope and bliss. This suffering will result in God's glorification and his own resurrection. For this what is needed is the correlation between faith and suffering. The priestly life must be a reflection or cross section of this correlation and it is his duty to motivate the lay people to abide by the same. In doing so, the priests have to assure the co-operation of the lay people, including that of the women. This seems to be the message of *The Priestly Sins*.

The examination done in this chapter was on how Greeley handles the problem of suffering, with special reference to five of his selected novels. His ideal characters are those who analyze the cause and extent of suffering in relation to Catholic faith. Apart from the correlation of faith and suffering, a Catholic will not find joy and peace in daily life. Destined to be a guide and a model of a given community, a priest must equip himself with this correlation. Only then he can survive the suffering in his own life and console those who suffer for various reasons. In brief, *Wages of Sin* is an account of how Lorcan James Flynn finds out that Maeve, his mother, is the fire-setter, responsible for the tragedy of Joseph T. Meehan's family. Greeley argues that suffering can be cured by the application of Catholic imagination and therapeutic counseling leading to family reunion. Each Catholic priest has to remember and teach his people the fact that, in most cases, it is neglect of Catholic imagination and faith that expresses itself in the form of suffering.

Fall from Grace narrates how the pedophile priests necessitate suffering in their own lives as well as in the lives of the victims. The novel is a strong appeal to the Church leaders to take actions against such priests. In spite of the bitter experiences, Kieran and Kathleen have suffered, they love and serve the Church. In Greeley's opinion, suffering is so rampant all over the world that the celibate priests alone will not be able to solve all

the problems. So, each priest must motivate the lay people, especially, the women, to take up the cross in order to provide those who are suffering, with consolation and encouragement. All priests have to be at the service of the people, in fulfilling the healing ministry. The message of the novel seems to be that the correlation between faith and suffering empowers a person to consider suffering as a blessing in disguise.

The Bishop and the Missing L Train enumerates how Blackie redeems Bishop Quill Guz, who is kidnapped by another priest with the support of the parishioners, who suffered a lot because of him. Greeley makes it clear that suffering in priestly life is mostly thanks to the jealousy of the fellow-priests. He appeals to all priests to realize that their task is to unify, strengthen and co-ordinate the people and different activities, and not the other way. Every priest must lead a life in accordance with Catholic imagination. They ought to maintain the correlation of faith and suffering, if not, suffering can easily enfeeble, dissociate and disarm one's self-confidence and spiritual life. This novel also contains Greeley's controversial recommendations for introducing married clergy and women priesthood in the Church. He earnestly requests each and every priest to imitate Blackie, for, he is a personification of proper correlation between faith and suffering. Summing up, one must say that this novel highlights the redemptive values and sanctifying effects of suffering.

As in the other Irish novels, Dermot and Nuala solve two mysteries in *Irish Stew!*. The protagonists find out the criminals hunting for the life of Seamus Costelle and they solve the mystery regarding the Haymarket riot of 1886. This novel portrays how innocent people have to suffer because of the corrupt legal systems and the police officers. Dermot and Nuala convince Seamus that he himself is responsible for his suffering. He is transformed and he submits himself to be overwhelmed by the correlation of faith and suffering. *Irish Stew!* teaches that one's life becomes joyful and peaceful only

when the person is in harmony with the Catholic imagination. Under the influence of Catholic imagination, Seamus decides not to cause suffering to others. Ned, a journalist, is always motivated by the correlation of faith and suffering and engages himself in all sorts of activities meant for saving other people from suffering. Greeley presents this novel as a clarion call for self-purification and complete transformation. Every Catholic priest has to derive inspiration from Catholic faith and imagination in order to deal with his personal suffering and to convince others of the medicinal and liberative aspects of suffering.

The Priestly Sins is the last novel discussed in this chapter or in this thesis. This narrates the suffering of Father Hoffman owing to the sins of another priest by name Lenny Lyon. The story of Hoffman proves that a Catholic priest will have to suffer, even if he is innocent, like the true follower of the crucified Lord. As a result of Hoffman's forgiveness Lyon becomes a new person and dies peacefully. Two prominent characters in the novel, Horst Heller, an advocate, and Kathleen, Hoffman's former lover, are lay persons, yet, they are of immense service to the Church and the clergy. Their attitude to suffering is modified by the considerations of Catholic imagination, and they remind us of what St Paul writes to the Thessalonians. In his words, "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted ... it is for your consolation and salvation" (2 Thes. 1: 5-6). To sum up, *Priestly Sins* argues that those who lead scandalous lives are instrumental to aggravate the suffering of themselves and that of others. The Catholic priest has to understand and teach the people that they cannot meaningfully and effectively deal with suffering without connecting it with faith. Suffering turns out to be heroic and salvific only in the context of Catholic imagination.

Before concluding this chapter, some of the non-fictional writings of Greeley where he refers to his own suffering and explains how he has survived all of them with the guidance of Catholic imagination, is given. Enquiring about the probable reasons of suffering in his life, one finds that due to his controversial ideas Greeley has been subject to severe criticism and suspicion in the Church circles. The media people have sidetracked Greeley to a great extent. Many a high-browed academician undermine his literary excellence. A lot of people are explicitly jealous of his profuse and prolific publications and the ensuing popularity. The number of people who have accused him of pornographic and pot-boiling stories, is never less. He has suffered a lot being alienated from the fellow-priests and misunderstood by the Church leaders. As he writes in his prayer journal *My Love: A prayer Journal* (2001), at one time he thinks he has been “A permanent pariah” (111). One comes across so many passages in this book, which are relevant to the discussion on suffering. With regard to his personal sufferings, Greeley writes, “My dreams were troubled by memories of the past, disappointments, frustrations, betrayals” (206). Again, he states “I’ve survived through worst taumas in the Church...” (209). These references are more than enough to substantiate that Greeley has been a man of suffering inspite of his popularity as a writer and professor.

In response to the accusations of being very rich, leading a life of luxury and writing trashy novels, Greeley writes in *The Prayer Journal-Letters to A Loving God* (2002), “Obviously he knows nothing about me or my life or my work. The letter tells more about him than it does about me, yet, I must realize that most priests think about just the same about me though perhaps in less violent fashion (and sometimes more violent)” (124-125). Despite a lot of publicity as to his having left priesthood or about to do it immediately, Greeley still remains a Catholic priest proud of his achievements in priestly ministry and contributions to literature. In one of his earlier prayer journals, *My Love:*

Prayer Journal (1978), he declares, "I have no regrets about being a priest and few about what I have done as a priest" (164). However criticized or alienated, Greeley is resolved to be a priest thanks to his love for priesthood and the Church. Referring to how he persists in the Catholic priesthood, Greeley writes in *A Piece of My Mind on Just About Everything* (1978), "I will remain both a priest and a writer. I can be thrown out of papers, but I won't leave the priesthood even as they try to throw me out for saying what I think" (213). All these references prove that as far as Greeley is concerned suffering in his personal life is not a hindrance to priestly satisfaction or literary performance. He manages suffering and survives all other ordeals by means of his adherence to Catholic imagination. He has anchored himself in the correlation of faith and imagination.

For a Catholic, suffering is a period of spiritual renewal. Greeley also realizes more and more about God's love, as he advances in years withstanding various forms of suffering. He realizes that God is not one who causes suffering but He is one who sustains him during suffering. With reference to how bitter experiences in life enable him to modify his idea of God's nature, he explains in the *Prayer-Journal-Letters to A Loving God* (2002). His first image of God was one of awe and, perhaps, terror. Then, "The image of a father, a consoling spouse, and finally, a vulnerable God who needed me" (66). The main purpose of Greeley as a priest, writer and storyteller is witnessing to this loving and forgiving nature of God. In order to emphasize this real nature of God, Greeley has written many non-fictional works. Most important among them are *Jesus Myth* (1970), *Sinai Myth* (1975) and *The Mary Myth* (1977). His views on God's loving nature are best expressed in these triple myth studies. In these books Greeley argues that God is not a grave judge waiting for punishing man. He is not a sadist who enjoys seeing people suffering. He is not one who is not bothered about their suffering. God should not be envisaged as a distributor of suffering. But, He is the source of solace and strength to all

who follow Catholic imagination. About God's Catholic nature, Greeley writes in *The Catholic Imagination* (2001), "She [Mary], the Mother Love of God, the generous and loving, life-giving power of God, the tenderness of God, the fertility of God, the nurturing of God" (90).

The core of the Catholic theology is the Passover Mystery, which includes the whole of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. As Greeley writes in his latest book, *Jesus* (2007) the life of Jesus is "The greatest story of all. And the widest surprise of all" (169). Jesus is the only Son with whom God the Father is well pleased (Matthew 3: 17), and He is also, the one who suffers the most and the worst in crucifixion. Greeley reminds all the priests that they are to preach this Christ, the suffering servant of Yahweh. First of all, the priests have to face suffering as the Church expects them to, and they must conscientize the lay people to approach the reality of suffering from the angle of faith. According to Greeley, there is nothing more powerful than the memory of Good Friday which can motivate the clergy as well as the laity to take of the cross in daily life. He confesses his belief in a God who suffers with us and strengthens us in our suffering. He writes in *My Love: A Prayer Journal* (2001) "The lesson of Good Friday is that God suffers with us. Like a very good parent, he suffers when his children suffer... The Catholic crossifix is the symbol of the ongoing suffering of God with us" (203). The belief that one is not alone in moments of suffering but in God's company, is, infact, vivifying.

Without resorting to a correlation of faith and understanding, life misses all its value, charm and surprise. Priests must allow themselves to be bound by this correlation. Otherwise, they will find life meaningless and miserable. Even as he suffers, the Catholic priest has to witness to the loving nature of God. If he does not convey the image of a loving God, he will be counter-witnessing, and thereby, damaging Catholic sensibility. Greeley's readers have to take up the challenge of suffering, putting all their trust in a

God, who is vulnerable and suffering. This is what and how Greeley's ideal characters, and, to a great extent, the novelist himself, is doing in the middle of suffering. The fundamental teaching of his fictional and non-fictional corpus is that this type of an approach to the fact of suffering is possible only in the light of a combination of Catholic faith and imagination. Hence, the message of this component of faith and suffering is very significant to all the believers, and especially, to the Catholic clergy.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

The study made here has been to formulate an innovative understanding and presentation of how the correlation of faith and imagination enables Andrew M. Greeley to formulate imaginative plots into literary edifices. It has been also showed how the same correlation empowers his characters, both clerical and lay, to fulfill their priestly obligation in a greater exemplary manner. The analysis has made it clear that the imagination is at work when the priest involves himself in various dimensions of priestly life. As this study has revealed, Greeley, the priestly fictionist, is one who not only did not find it a problem to combine faith and imagination, but also always upheld the truth that combining the two, constitutes the very basis of his literary creations and the pastoral activities of his priestly characters. All the chapters have attempted to establish that a priest will not be able to do justice to his call and to the people, if he is not following the precepts of imagination.

The introductory chapter, 'Faith and Imagination', which forms the theoretical basis of this thesis, has attempted to elaborate on the concepts of imagination and faith. This effort helps one to understand the meaning and usefulness of faith and imagination, and upheld the inevitability of following Catholic imagination in priestly life, liturgical celebration and in all aspects of human life. After referring to various definitions and interpretations of imagination, a record is given about the views of some leading writers and critics who have comprehended and employed it in literature down through the ages.

The presentation of the major theories of imagination has been followed by an account of various aspects of faith, as viewed by the Catholic Church. Among the Catholic writers, Andrew M. Greeley is considered the foremost, preoccupied with

preaching Catholic faith and portraying Catholic priesthood in his writings. With reference to *The Holy Bible*, the teachings of the Church, the findings of theologians and the like, it has been established that faith is basically a gift of God, though it is essential for salvation. Faith also involves an intense relationship between God and the human being. Faith is not confined to the recital of prayers and administration of sacraments, instead, it compels the believers to fight against social evils and to struggle hard for justice and equality. By its very nature, faith has to be expressed. And one has seen how, many artists and writers considered fine arts as the media for promulgating their religious faith.

In the light of the understanding of imagination and faith, the next steps taken was to explain the religious imagination and, especially, 'Catholic imagination' which essentially means acceptance of faith as revealed by God, who is the fullness of truth, and as interpreted by the Catholic Church. Catholic imagination has its inspiration and justification from the example of Christ Himself. In this context, the significance of merging faith and imagination, and the use of stories and symbols in liturgy is shown. The study also presents various advantages and uses of employing the Catholic imagination, which is analogical, best distinguished from 'Protestant' imagination, which is dialectical.

After highlighting the common features of Catholic imagination, its most important components are enumerated in the following chapters with illustrations from Andrew M. Greeley's novels. The five components are identified as Faith and Reason, Faith and Preaching, Faith and Love, Faith and Administration of Sacraments, and Faith and Suffering. These components have been duly elucidated in the ensuing chapters in relationship with the various priestly duties. Hence, the explanation of these components ultimately portray who a Catholic priest is and what his obligations are, since this has

been a study of the priesthood as portrayed by Greeley in his novels. Five novels each have been analyzed in each of the five chapters. As stated in the first chapter, a detailed survey of these constituents of Catholic imagination became a must, since the very hallmark of Greeley's literary corpus, fictional and non-fictional, is inspired and overwhelmed by Catholic imagination.

Before winding up the first chapter, a restatement of the hypothesis is made to the effect that without resorting to a dialectical merging of faith and imagination, in other words, in the absence of Catholic imagination, a Catholic priest portrayed in Greeley's novels cannot fulfill his pastoral obligations of preaching, shepherding and sanctifying. The introductory chapter has also given an account of a very short bio-data of Greeley and his achievements with special reference to the extent to which he has been influenced by Cardinal Newman, G. K. Chesterton and Graham Greene.

Faith and Reason is the first correlation that has been analyzed in the second chapter. As Greeley's novels reveal, a combination of faith and reason is essential for grasping truth and witnessing to God as the Ultimate Truth. Life becomes meaningful only when a human being knows who he or she is, and what the aim of life is. Hence, this chapter has been an attempt to understand the identity or the meaning of one's vocation especially that of a priest. In concurrence with the Catholic Church, Greeley is of the opinion that, by virtue of one's Baptismal priesthood, even a lay person is a priest and is bound by the priestly obligations. The five novels studied in this chapter convince one that it is the duty of each priest to represent and interpret truth. He is God's ambassador to the world. The identity of a priest consists in his being and becoming a sacrament of God who is the Truth. A priest on earth is the vicar of Jesus Christ, the Highpriest, who is the Truth. That means, a Catholic priest has to search for truth, and witness to it, and fight against falsehood and misinterpretation of history. That is why Greeley's favourite

priests, especially, Blackie and George, are always presented as truth-finders and its custodians. No one can attain truth without abiding by the correlation of faith and reason. As the study has attempted to prove, those who are guided by Catholic imagination go after truth, and those who neglect Catholic imagination, spoil their life as a result of their pursuit after wealth and worldly pleasures.

Ascent into Hell, the first novel dealt with in this chapter, is actually a strong appeal to all to realize their genuine vocation, that is, the will of God inscribed in them. Hugh Dunlon leaves his priesthood and marries Maria, and both of them experience fulfilment in life. In their pursuit after the real vocation and identity, both of them have been empowered by the correlation of faith and reason. The novel has claimed that the attainment of truth and the commitment to one's vocation are impossible without resorting to this component of Catholic imagination. The central theme of *Patience of A Saint* is an illustration of how Blackie interprets Redmond P. Kane's religious experience and thereby, transforms him into a new person. Blackie, who is always a problem-solver and investigator, is a subscriber to Catholic imagination. In and through the portrayal of Blackie, the priest, Greeley is making an appeal to all readers that they must keep the balance between faith and reason. A priest has to be truthful to his ministry and he ought to train the lay people to stand by truth. *Happy are those Who Mourn* tells how Blackie, making use of the correlation of faith and reason, solves the mystery regarding the murder of Charles P. McInerney. Greeley has also portrayed how Father Joe Keefe degenerates into a murderer, mainly because of his neglect of this component of Catholic imagination. A priest who does not live up to the demands of the correlation of faith and reason, can only be a contradiction in terms, and a shame to the entire clergy. In *Irish Gold*, Greeley has presented how the couples, Dermot and Nuala solve the mystery with regard to the murder of Michael Collins. As strong Catholics, both the protagonists are guided by

imagination, and they arrive at truth. The novelist enthusiastically praises both of them for having decided to spend the whole of the gold treasure for educational purposes, which shows their commitment to the cause of faith and truth. *White Smoke*, the last novel scrutinized in this chapter, written against the background of the papal election of John XXIV, upholds the primacy of truth and transparency in all dealings. The new Pope announces a new era of truth and transparency. In attaining and maintaining truth, what is most needed is nothing but the correlation of faith and reason.

To sum up, all the five novels analyzed in this chapter reveal the inevitability of establishing the correlation of faith and reason. Greeley challenges all the faithful to be truthful. Without abiding by this correlation of faith and reason, the first component of Catholic imagination, one cannot recognize one's own genuine vocation nor can anyone fulfill its obligation. Thus, this chapter has made us aware of the fact that every priest, by his profession, is bound to be a seeker of truth and its interpreter. He must motivate the lay people also to do the same. It is the assistance of the correlation of faith and reason that enables and guides the priest in his fight against falsehood and pursuit after truth.

The third chapter entitled 'Faith and Preaching' has tried to establish that preaching is one of the most important duties of a priest and that in order to perform it effectively, the correlation of faith and preaching is essential. The analysis of the five novels convinces one that, in Greeley's opinion, preaching is not the monopoly of the clergy but an obligation of the laity as well. Preaching is inexplicably important, as faith by its very nature, has to be proclaimed and the Catholic Church by her very nature is called and sent to preach. Greeley provides his readers with ideal priests as well as exemplary lay persons who preach the message of the Gospels by means of their words as well as daily life in accordance with the teachings of the Church and the Word of God. These characters obey, interpret and implement the Gospel message.

Nora, the lay woman figuring in *Happy are the Peace-Makers*, always maintains an inseparable relationship between faith and preaching. By virtue of her Catholic imagination, she emerges as a sacrament of God's love and forgiveness. At the same time, Blackie proves how a Catholic priest has to be an ideal preacher, by not only interpreting the Sacred Scriptures but also applying the Gospel values to the life situation. *The Bishop and the Three Kings* is an eye-opener to all priests to realize their role as the promulgators and custodians of faith. This novel presents Blackie, the priest, as filled with Catholic imagination and achieving great things in priestly life. At the same time, the priests who undermine the combination of faith and imagination have very little scope of success. This novel also presents Cindausue as a model for all the lay people, especially, the women, with regard to fulfilling the obligation of witnessing to the Gospels. In *The Bishop and the Beggar Girl of St. Germain*, Claude, the priest and Chantal, his lay and twin sister, appeal to every priest to make diligent use of the media in preaching the Good News, which is possible only as long as the priest or the lay preacher is motivated by the merging of the preaching with Catholic faith and imagination. *Irish Eyes*, which is basically an account of the recovery of the stolen Irish chalice, symbolically justifies the perennial nature of Catholic faith. Though the chief protagonists, Dermot and Nuala, are not technically priests, they 'sell', like the novelist himself, Catholic values, because, they are in possessed by value based imagination. In the same novel, there are people like Roger and Farmer who never care for the preaching of faith, as they are bent upon earning money and fame. *September Song*, the last novel analyzed in this chapter has shown, how and why art and literature ought to be 'manipulated' with a view to preach the Gospels. Charles Cronin, the photographer, and Rosemary, the storyteller, illustrate how this can and has to be done.

In short, this chapter is a strong appeal to all Catholics, both priests and lay people, to become aware of their role as preachers of the Good News. All the believers by virtue of their Baptismal priesthood are bound to be preachers. In order to do this, each one must always abide by the correlation of faith and preaching which is an important component of Catholic imagination. All the five novels, in unison, urge the Catholic priests to struggle hard to improve the quality of their preaching. All the Catholic priests, especially, those who are serving in the parishes, have to take special interest in promoting the cause of women's empowerment and lay leadership. A priest must not be satisfied with preaching from the pulpit; rather he has to resort to other methods of proclamation, as well. The lay people should not be satisfied with silently receiving the sacraments and listening to the priest's sermon, but, they should try to be witnesses to the Gospels, outside the church, too, in their own walks of lives.

All the Catholic teachings are centred around the paternity of God, the Creator, and the fraternity of all human beings. That God is love, is the most fundamental teaching of the Church. Considering the prominence of the theme of love, which has been elaborated by its correlation with faith, the fourth chapter is entitled as, 'Faith and Love'. This study of the mutually binding and enriching relationship between faith and love shows the sacramental character of love, sex and marriage. Greeley's preoccupation with the Catholic understanding of love, both divine and human, is highlighted in all the five novels taken for analysis in this chapter. Exclusive of Catholic imagination, love is a physical urge or biological instinct to make use of the other for one's own gratification. The analysis here has attempted to prove that in association with faith and right imagination, human love, particularly in the context of the Sacrament of Marriage, is the most powerful medium to experience God's love and His forgiving nature. As has already been found in the novels, there are many people, who are haunted and tormented by a

sense of guilt and fear of sex. A Catholic priest has to guide and shepherd his flock. He cannot do this work if he himself lacks in a Catholic approach to the reality of love and sex. In Greeley's opinion, no one can claim to have comprehended love in its Catholic sense, without a correlation of faith and love. According to him, a Catholic priest must be seasoned with this component of Catholic imagination, otherwise he cannot perform his leading or shepherding ministry fruitfully, which is as important as the preaching and sanctifying roles. Only such a priest will be able to do justice to the observance of celibacy and only then, he can maintain healthy relationship with the fair sex. Hence, this correlation of faith and love is of utmost importance to this study.

Even though there is a male chauvinistic tendency to consider a woman as a seducer or temptress, *The Cardinal Sins* proves that she is a sign of God's love and therefore, a sacrament, very much like the Church herself. This novel challenges all priests to mature in their interpersonal relationships and in their contacts with women. The novelist has strongly argued that, without this component of Catholic imagination, one can neither appreciate the beauty of body help another to sanctify his or her body. It is Nora, his [Sean's] brother's wife who, in *Thy Brother's Wife* helps Sean, the Cardinal, recognize his own vocation and remain faithful to it accepting the Pope's order. Greeley has beautifully shown how a woman of integrity and commitment can serve the local church by assisting the priest in fulfilling various pastoral activities. In *Virgin and Martyr* Greeley has narrated how Catherine Collins, the ex-nun, experiences God's love in marrying Nicholas and in the consequent sharing of love. The novelist has also upheld the role of Blackie, the priest, who guides her in the direction of attaining self-discovery and experience of love, divine as well as human, as a result of her possession of the correlation of faith and love. In *An Occasion of Sin*, Greeley has asserted that the presence of a woman, Marbeth, does not disqualify John Mc Glynn from being considered for

canonization. This novel argues that a celibate priest is nothing less than a saint. Greeley expects the priests to regard women as a sacramental vehicle of God leading to the transformation of the believers. Hence, the priest who is the shepherd, has to abide by this component of Catholic imagination. Through the character of Leo Kelly, figuring in *Summer at the Lake*, one learns that God's love can be experienced only as forgiveness, which must be practiced in human relationships. Every priest has to guide his people, above all, setting his own life as an example, to forget and forgive the wrong-doers. Catholic faith cannot be practised or witnessed to, either on the altar or in the family, without the spirit of forgiveness. Thus, all the novels analyzed in this chapter emphasize the correlation of faith and love.

To sum up, Greeley is driving home the idea that a Catholic priest cannot live like a monk in solitude. He is the leader of a community. He has to get involved in the individual problems as well, those related to the family, and other social evils. He has to teach the people how to respect the body of the other and to honour the dignity and sanctity of a human person. This is possible only when he relates love to faith in the context of Catholic imagination. That is why, the correlation of faith and love becomes very essential in the life of a priest. There will not be peace and co-operation in the parish, if the priest does not abide by this correlation. There will not be genuine human relationships within a family, if the parents are not bent upon following this component of Catholic imagination.

Chapter V, entitled, 'Faith and Administration of Sacraments', is intended to identify how each Catholic priest in Greeley's fiction seeks to fulfill his role of sanctification meaningfully and effectively. Every priest is a spiritual leader aiming at the spiritual transformation of the believers, through a process of sanctification. The novels discussed in this chapter, as a whole, appear to convince the reader of the priest's

obligation to offer prayers and sacrifices on behalf of the people with the intention of their sanctification. Each priest is trained to officiate the administration of sacraments, which are signs of God's love and grace. While administering the sacraments, a priest becomes the mediator between God and His people. A survey of these novels has showed that one cannot think of a priest who is not prepared to officiate or celebrate the various sacraments instituted by Christ through the Church. Every sacrament is an exposition of the Catholic faith that God is love, that He is pouring down His graces upon the people, and that His love can and is to be experienced in and through the administration of sacraments. Hence, the priestly existence and ministry essentially presuppose the correlation of faith and sacramental administration. Sacraments being symbols loaded with meaning, they cannot be administered in the absence of Catholic imagination. Greeley's ideal priests figuring in these novels are seasoned with religious faith as well as imaginative faculties.

There are three angels in *The Angels of September*. They are Blackie, the priest, Michael Casey, the lover, and Mary Kate Murphy, the psychiatrist. They assist Anne Reilly to shed her fear, shame and guilt. Anne receives the Sacrament of Marriage only after forgiving all others, which reminds one of the relevance of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Finally, Greeley presents her as a sacrament of God's love and forgiveness. The novelist appeals to the priests, who administer the sacraments, and the people, who take part in them, to be sacraments in their respective walks of life. *Happy are the Oppressed* upholds the efficacy of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Marriage. One has already seen how Jane Chantal, hitherto tormented by guilt and fear, emerges as a new person after making her confession to Blackie. Chantal enjoys the good results of Reconciliation, and peace is restored to the whole family as a result of the combination of faith and imagination, channeled through the administration of sacraments. The most

important events portrayed in *Irish Mist* are Kevin's death, forgiving his murderers, and his anniversary Mass. This novel proclaims the relevance of these sacraments and the last rites to the members of the Catholic Church. In this work, too, Greeley argues that a priest ought to resort to the fusion of faith and imagination in his administration of sacraments. *A Christmas Wedding* is also centred on the transforming effects of the two sacraments, Reconciliation and Holy Matrimony. The protagonists, Chuck and Rosemarie, make a whole-hearted mutual confession and receive the Sacrament of Marriage. The novel reminds all priests of their obligation to prepare the congregation for receiving the sacraments worthily. *Irish Love*, the last novel studied in this chapter, highlights the necessity of administering the Last Sacrament. Greeley warns all the clergy not to deny these rites to the believers. The most touching scene in the whole novel, next to the hanging of Myles Joyce, is Thomas Casey's public confession in the church, appearing to fulfill the requirements of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Both the pairs appearing in *Irish Love*, Dermot and Nuala, and Fitzpatrick and Nora, frequent sacraments and always abide by the demands of the binding of faith with imagination.

In other words, Marriage, Holy Mass and Reconciliation are the three Sacraments chiefly depicted in these five novels. The ideal priests portrayed by Greeley in these books, are men of prayer, who officiate the sacraments very effectively making sure that the people who participate in them are transformed. The priests must understand that the liturgical functions will be appealing to the people, only, if and as the celebration is accompanied by rich imagination. Each priest has to improve the quality of his liturgical performance. It is his duty to explain the meaning of liturgical rubrics and symbols to the people. Priests are instrumental to the upliftment of the people. Thus, these novels assert the indivisibility of the correlation of faith and administration of sacraments for which every priest must be moved by imagination. In Greeley's opinion, an ideal priest should

not be satisfied merely with offering sacrifices and celebrating the sacraments. Instead, he has to be another sacrament, in other words, a sign of God's love and grace expressed in forgiveness.

The Sixth Chapter, labelled as, 'Faith and Suffering', was an attempt to understand how a Catholic priest, in spite of his vulnerable human nature, can counsel and console his fellow sufferers. According to Greeley, suffering is a problem which bothers all. In the five novels studied in this chapter, Greeley is seen portraying priest as a man susceptible to suffering. All his ideal priests do suffer for their Church, after the model of Jesus, the suffering servant of Yahweh. The central theme of this section is that a person cannot survive in life without associating suffering with faith. If a priest does not equip himself with this correlation between faith and suffering, he will neither be able to survive his own personal suffering nor will he be able to give consolation to those who suffer. It is the assistance of Catholic imagination which empowers him in the healing ministry. It has been observed in these novels that, some priests who undergo suffering on account of their own scandalous living, lose themselves on account of their neglect of the correlation between imagination and suffering, which is an important component of Catholic faith. This is true with regard to the experience of the clergy as well as the laity.

In *Wages of Sin*, Greeley has proved how suffering can be cured by the application of Catholic imagination and therapeutic counseling. It is the story of Lorcan, the truth-seeker, and Maura, the silent sufferer. When truth is perceived, suffering ceases and reunion takes place. Grace of God wins in the end. When Blackie tries to solve suffering, there is Father Gregory, who embezzles money and causes suffering to many innocent people. Apart from imagination, one cannot understand the mystery of suffering. *Fall from Grace* is essentially a portrayal of the suffering of many owing to some pedophile priests. The novel proves that sin is at the root of meaningless and un-purposeful suffering

in the life of a priest. Sin is nothing but a neglect of the inalienable fusion of faith and suffering in the crucible of imagination. Greeley stresses on the priest's obligation to visit the suffering people and to fill their hearts with hope. The novel narrates in detail how Kieran and Kathleen, even as two married people, and despite their own suffering, do a lot of service for the priests and the Church. *The Bishop and the Missing L Train* portrays how a priest has to suffer at the hands of his own parishioners for his mismanagement. The kidnapped Bishop Quill Guz, has caused a lot of suffering to his people. The analysis has shown that this unfortunate priest was not following the lessons of Catholic imagination. Blackie, the embodiment of the correlation between faith and suffering, redeems Quill Guz and transforms him. By the application of this component of Catholic imagination, Blackie has solved the mystery successfully. In *Irish Stew!* Greeley shows how Dermot and Nuala, who are known for their allegiance to Catholic imagination, saves Seamus Costello from his suffering and make him a new person. The novel also portrays Ned, the journalist, who engages himself in various activities for protecting people from suffering. It is the duty of each Catholic priest to lead the suffering people to self-purification and complete transformation. *The Priestly Sins* narrates how Father Hoffman is compelled to suffer a lot, thanks to another priest, by name, Lenny Leon. A scandalous priest, on account of his neglect of Catholic imagination, causes the suffering of himself as well as others. Greeley has applauded in this novel the services of Horst Heller, the advocate, and Kathleen, who are motivated by their faith and imagination.

To be brief, the correlation of faith and suffering is very important in the life of a priest. Without this correlation he will not be able to survive his own suffering nor will he be able to provide the suffering people with consolation and guidance. Catholic imagination alone empowers the priest to appreciate the redemptive aspects of suffering. He must train the lay people to undertake the ministry of healing in the parish. All these

novels seem to teach that a healthy life is possible only with God's grace and the experience of suffering is the best time to realize it. If a priest is there to guide, suffering will not take a person to despair and helplessness.

At the very outset of the introductory chapter, it is stated that some acquaintance with the fundamental beliefs of Christianity is almost essential for understanding and appreciating the works of Chaucer, Donne, Hopkins, Eliot, Faulkner and the like. This study has proved that such a statement is all the more true in the case of Andrew M. Greeley. For, as it has been established, his novels are all saturated with Catholic faith which is presented with the accompaniment of his rich imagination. This analysis of Greeley's selected novels has, thus, proved that there exists an inalienable relationship between literature and religion, and that the combination of faith and imagination is mutually enriching and complementing. Devoid of Catholic faith, Greeley's novels have neither value nor any message. Likewise, devoid of imagination, his works do not bear either beauty or appeal to the world of literature. In other words, one cannot separate Greeley, the best-selling fictionist from Greeley, the preaching priest. In the process of highlighting the merging of faith with imagination in Greeley's novels, this thesis has, with reference to the five components of Catholic imagination, also enumerated how he has portrayed priesthood in and through them. Hence, this work is an exposition of various aspects of the identity and the ministry of a Catholic priest, as well.

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