

## *Introduction: Faith and Imagination*

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## 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 is 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 comedy ....are 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 Mattheiessen 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, Mattheiessen 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.