

FAITH AND REASON

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Chapter II

FAITH AND REASON:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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