

FAITH AND LOVE

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Chapter IV

FAITH AND LOVE:

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

An Occasion of Sin and Summer at the Lake

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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