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# Psychology and American Catholicism after Vatican II: Currents, Cross-Currents and Confluences

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past and present, will be essential in making sense of these trends and helping pastoral leaders develop vision.

It will also be affected by these developments. As diocesan leadership and offices move away from a central resource role, a central question in the continuing transformation of the Catholic Church will be how to identify, strengthen, and network those who provide such resources in the future. This is central to the future of pastoral planning, and to pastoral sociology in general. A turn towards networked rather than vertically linked relationships will be central in all this, and new forms of pastoral sociology will surely continue to emerge, reflect on, and serve the faith communities of the future.

## Psychology and American Catholicism after Vatican II: Currents, Cross-Currents and Confluences

C. Kevin Gillespie, S.J.\*

American Catholic culture has gone through significant transitions in the decades since the Second Vatican Council. The changes have often been described and analyzed ecclesiological, sociologically and even politically.<sup>1</sup> It can be difficult and indeed somewhat presumptuous, however, to describe the changes within and among the various psychological forces within the American Catholic world. Still, some transformations and putative patterns can be observed by examination of some of the individuals, institutions and issues involved between the culture of psychology and the culture of American Catholicism.

The Catholic Church in the United States, with its 205 dioceses and 236 higher educational institutions, is not an institutional monolith.<sup>2</sup> It seems better to speak of its possessing an interlocking system of shared symbols and structures. These, in turn, form a matrix of meanings for American Catholics, with a fair amount of differences. Consequently, just as one would hesitate to suggest that American Catholics speak with one voice, either sociologically or politically, one would be wise to refrain from stating that there exists a distinct American Catholic psychological voice. Some individuals, institutions and issues, nevertheless, reveal a psychological matrix of meanings. This essay, therefore, seeks to provide an overview of American Catholicism's psychological matrix since the Second Vatican Council.

### Historical Overview of Relations Prior to the Council

Since psychology's professional inception at the end of the nineteenth century, Roman Catholicism and professional psychology have had a complex and at times con-

\*Special thanks are owed to Phyllis Zagano, Ph.D., who assisted in the editing of this essay.

1. Peter Steinfels, *A People Adrift: The Crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003).

2. <http://www.usccb.org/comm/statisti.shtml>

flicted history. As the "new psychology" of experimentalism emerged from Western Europe and then traveled to the United States in the 1890s it tended to separate itself from both philosophy and theology, especially from the Catholic synthesis that had, since the time of Thomas Aquinas, united these and other fields of knowledge. The "new psychology" was followed shortly by the psychoanalytical psychology of Sigmund Freud at the turn of the century. Due to Freud's atheism and philosophical determinism, there developed a great deal of animosity between psychology and religion, especially between psychoanalysis and Roman Catholicism. In response to these developments, as Gillespie<sup>3</sup> (2001) and Kugelman<sup>4</sup> (2005) have shown, early Catholic psychologists such as Edward Pace (1861-1938) and Thomas Verner Moore (1877-1969) at The Catholic University of America attempted to develop a Neo-Scholastic psychology that would be both a clinical and empirical psychology that still had room for the soul.

As the twentieth century progressed there emerged a growing number of Catholic mental health clinicians such as Sr. Annette Walters (1911-1978), Dr. Francis Braceland (1900-1985) and Dr. Leo Bartemeier (1895-1982) who became recognized leaders in the fields of psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis, respectively. As they and other Catholic mental health clinicians became influential the hostility between psychology and Catholicism gradually abated. Besides The Catholic University of America, institutions such as St. Louis University, Fordham University and Loyola University of Chicago developed reputable psychology programs approved by the American Psychological Association. These, in turn, produced clinicians, educators and experimentalists for psychology's emerging fields who had trained in Catholic settings.

The founding of the American Catholic Psychological Association (ACPA) in 1947 led by Rev. William Bier, S.J. (1911-1980) served as an important instrument to "bring psychology to Catholics and Catholicism to psychology."<sup>5</sup> The latter objective became especially realized by the St. John's Summer Institute. Held at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, from 1954 to 1973, the Institute brought together leading psychologists, psychiatrists and even psychoanalysts to teach hundreds of clergy and religious alike the principles and findings of the clinical world. Pope Pius XII addressed the participants of the 1953 International Congress of Psychotherapy:

Be assured that the Church follows your research and your medical practice with her warm interest and her best wishes. You labor in a terrain that is very difficult. But your activity is capable of achieving precious results for medicine, for the knowledge of the soul in general, for the religious dispositions of man and for their development.<sup>6</sup>

3. C. Kevin Gillespie, *Psychology and American Catholicism: From Confession to Therapy?* (New York: Crossroad, 2001).

4. Robert Kugelman "Neoscholastic psychology revisited," *History of Psychology* 8, no. 2 (2003): 131-175.

5. Virginu Staudt Sexton, "William Christian Bier, S.J. Ph.D. (1911-1980)," *Newsletter: Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues* 5 (Summer 1980): 2.

6. Pope Pius XII, "Psychotherapy and Religion: An Address to the Fifth International Congress of Psychotherapy and Clinical Psychology," *Catholic Mind* (July 1953): 435.

The pope's address served as impetus to the Summer Institute and the opening of great dialogue between Catholicism and clinical psychology.

#### *Catholic Institutional Appropriation of Psychology*

The *aggiornamento* of the Second Vatican Council enhanced the incorporation of psychology into Catholic thought. One particular pathway for greater appropriation was how "experience" as a construct was given greater emphasis in pastoral theological circles. As a consequence, clinical writings about "experience" by psychologists were given greater value by Catholic authorities. For example, the sacrament of marriage was seen as having the dual purposes of the procreation of children and the *partnership* of a husband and wife. This second but equally important purpose, defined canonically in terms of the *consortium vitae*, led to marriage tribunals granting of a greater number of annulments when a partner or a couple were deemed to have been psychologically incapable of a mature partnership at the time of marriage. Such a development, however, did not come without controversy.

Moreover, considerable controversy developed shortly after the Council when Pope Paul VI issued the encyclical, *Humanae Vitae* (1968). In particular, the encyclical's prohibition against artificial contraceptive methods of birth control drew criticism from laity and clergy alike. Among those critical of the encyclical's statements about contraception were many members of the ACPA. In 1969, representatives of the ACPA signed a letter declaring their reservations through the following questions:

- Does the encyclical reflect a consistent view of the human person?
- Does it at times employ a faulty psychology which is no longer accepted as fully adequate?
- Does the encyclical give evidence of an understanding of the complexity of conscious and unconscious psychological factors operative in the total experience of marriage?
- Does the history of the encyclical's development and promulgation conflict with the Church's teaching that responsible human beings must develop a mature conscience?<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, during the years following the Council, more psychology departments opened in Catholic colleges and universities, while extant ones expanded. As America's public consciousness became increasingly awakened to the issues of mental health, psychology as a profession benefited from the augmented funding that flowed from private foundations and government programs. At the same time, an increasing number of clergy and religious, as well as Catholic laity, sought training in clinical psychology and counseling, including pastoral counseling. Ongoing and midlife formation programs for clergy and religious were encouraged, many of them

7. "Report: The American Catholic Psychological Association Meeting," *Bulletin of the National Guild of Catholic Psychiatrists* (June 1969): 45-46.

with a psychological emphasis. In addition, pastoral programs in dioceses, parishes, schools and retreat centers used the methods and understandings advocated by psychologists in initiating and deepening programs for those considering marriage, those already married, as well as those who experienced separation, divorce or the death of a spouse. Pre-Cana programs in many dioceses included psychological surveys such as FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study) and PREPARE-ENRICH.<sup>8</sup> While such surveys are not strictly considered psychological tests, they do provide avenues whereby a priest or deacon preparing couples for marriage is able to more clearly discuss with them important psychological issues pertaining to their forthcoming marriage.

The growing use of psychological instruments also was seen among those applying for admission to seminaries and religious life. After the Council it became even more commonplace for applicants to undergo a series of psychological tests and interviews. Instead of simply a round of interviews with a vocation team of clergy or religious, applicants were given batteries of psychological tests that usually included the Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory (MMPI), the Rorschach Inkblot, the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and the WAIS III intelligence test.<sup>9</sup> More recently, due to issues surrounding HIV and abuse by clergy, more intensive psychological screening has been required. Not only is an applicant's past sexual history and psychological development explored in general, but it has also become standard practice to assess in detail their sexual histories.

Given the enhanced American public consciousness of psychology combined with the appropriation of such consciousness by American Catholics, it became evident by the mid-1970s that most of the conflict between Catholicism and the clinical psychologies had subsided. As a result, instead of psychology being alienated from religion, it became more and more appropriated by religion. It became popular for Catholic parishes, schools and retreat centers to offer programs that provided psychological insights, strategies and tests.

At the same time, pastoral counseling and spiritual formation and direction programs at Catholic universities have proved that psychology can be appropriated within the framework of Catholic theology and pastoral ministry. A growing number of Catholic colleges and universities have developed graduate programs in the areas of pastoral counseling and spiritual direction. Catholic institutions that house these programs now include Boston College, Creighton University, Fordham University, Iona College, Loyola University of Chicago, Loyola College of Maryland, Neumann College and Seattle University. The popularity of these programs and the pastoral

8. It should be noted that FOCCUS and PREPARE-ENRICH are more surveys than psychological tests and hence do not demonstrate whether or not a couple should marry. They can, however, reveal potential future problem areas in a marriage.

9. The MMPI, the Rorschach, the TAT and the WAIS are the most commonly used measurements to indicate a person's affective and cognitive abilities and capacities. While not without limitations, the battery of these tests when interpreted professionally has proven to provide useful indicators of present and future mental health.

contributions of their graduates have demonstrated how far the appropriation of psychology has come within Catholic circles.

On the other hand, there were some Catholic writers, who cautioned that Catholic individuals were too accommodating in their appropriation of psychology. Most notably, Paul Vitz<sup>10</sup> criticized this tendency as he cautioned against some of the humanistic psychological writings of Erich Fromm, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and Rollo May. Vitz believed that these writers had a tendency to make psychology a religion in the ways by which the "self" is emphasized and even glorified. Indeed, as Christopher Lasch described in his noteworthy description of the 1970s, a culture of narcissism emerged.<sup>11</sup> For the American Catholic, this popularization of psychology's currents of consciousness during the 1960s and '70s, led to a tendency for believers to focus on the *actualization* of one's *self* more than the *salvation* of one's *soul*. As we shall now consider, it became common place for Catholic authors to navigate these new currents and even cross currents of the self and the soul. Some of them even found a confluence.

### Integration of Psychology and Spirituality

Both in the popular press and among academicians a great deal of writing has been done since the Second Vatican Council years showing how psychology and religion can collaborate. Beginning with the writings of Charles A. Curran (1913-78) and Eugene Kennedy at Loyola University of Chicago, and with the work of Adrian van Kaam and his colleague Susan Muto at Duquesne University, the relevance of psychological concepts and insights for mature and healthy psychological development became increasingly accepted within American Catholic circles.

Even before the Council, Charles A. Curran,<sup>12</sup> by his teaching and writings, contributed in a significant way to the Church's appropriation of counseling techniques and psychological methods. Curran, who studied under Carl Rogers, served as a bridge person between the currents of contemporary psychology and the neo-Thomistic synthesis attempted earlier in the century by Edward Pace and Thomas Verner Moore. For example, his *Counseling in Catholic Life and Education* (1952) is quite different in approach and style from his later work, *Religious Values in Counseling in Catholic Life and Education* (1969). In the latter, Curran attempted quite a different psycho-spiritual integration from the synthesis he had earlier attempted. By the time of his death in 1978, Curran had demonstrated to several generations of graduate students comprised of priests, religious and lay people, how psy-

10. Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977).

11. Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Decadence* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979).

12. Charles A. Curran the psychologist is not to be confused with Charles E. Curran the moral theologian.

chology's insights, methods and strategies can be appropriated not only in the therapist office, but also in the classroom and even in the pulpit.

Eugene Kennedy, a colleague of Curran's at Loyola, has for six decades been one of the most influential Catholic psychologists and writers in the United States. In 1965 Kennedy co-authored with his departmental colleague and fellow Maryknoll priest Martin D'Arcy, *The Genius of the Apostolate*, one of the first books that provided an understanding of the religious vocation from a strictly psychological perspective. From 1968-1972 Kennedy directed an extensive psychological study of the American priesthood on behalf of the American Catholic bishops. Based on that study, Kennedy co-authored with Victor Heckler, *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Psychological Investigations* (1971). The study found that a substantial number of American Catholic clergy lacked emotional maturity and it thereby recommended a dramatic overhaul of Catholic seminaries.

Kennedy went on to write numerous articles and more than forty books, many of which have appropriated the insights of professional psychology for the American Catholic world. He also was a significant influence in the American Catholic Psychological Association as it shifted from being primarily a fellowship of Catholic psychologists to becoming a more ecumenically inclusive organization, known as Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues (PIRI). In 1975 PIRI was accepted as Division 36 of the American Psychological Association and Kennedy was elected its first president. His leadership and his acquaintance with prominent psychologists ranging from the behaviorist B.F. Skinner to the existentialist Rollo May, was instrumental in attracting a host of members, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. Kennedy also helped to create the Division 36, William James Award, an annual honor bestowed to the psychologist who best promoted the dialogue between psychology and religion.

In recent years, Kennedy has both befriended and been critical of Church authorities. He was a close friend of Cardinal Joseph Bernadin, as evidenced in his book, *My Brother Joseph: The Spirit of a Cardinal and the Story of a Friendship* (1997). At the same time, Kennedy has been quite critical of the ways in which some bishops have dealt with the clergy abuse. Through the course of his six decades as a Catholic writer, Eugene Kennedy has helped to make the psychological world credible for skeptical Catholics and the Catholic world more acceptable by incredulous psychologists.

Adrian van Kaam also has figured prominently in the post-Vatican II currents of American Catholic psychology. Van Kaam, received his philosophical and theological training before and during the Second World War, and developed education paradigms for Dutch youth immediately following the war. He then came to the United States for his psychological studies and training. Van Kaam received his doctorate in psychology in 1958 at Western Reserve University in Cleveland (now Case Western University), and did his post-doctoral clinical work with Carl Rogers in Chicago. In 1963, van Kaam's extensive psychological background combined with his philosophical and theological training to enable him to develop a graduate psycho-spiritual program based upon existential phenomenological perspectives of experience that he

called The Institute of Man at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. Given the Council's emphasis upon "experience" the Institute became a major force in the new Catholic quest to incorporate psychology into religious formation. Later named the Institute for Spiritual Formation, the program under van Kaam and Muto's direction flourished for several decades at Duquesne. In 1993, van Kaam and Muto established The Epiphany Association with campuses in Pittsburgh, Indiana and Russia.

Throughout the 1970s psycho-spiritual writings became more popular. Initially, the writings focused upon the psychological and spiritual formation of priests and religious. By the mid 1970s, however, with the increased interest of the laity for spiritual direction and spiritual literature, a new wave of psycho-spiritual literature emerged. The Dutch priest and psychologist, Henri Nouwen (1932-1996), was the most notable writer in this respect. Having received training in pastoral psychology at the Menninger Clinic, Nouwen, through his more than forty books and innumerable articles and presentations, was able to combine sound psychological insights and spiritual wisdom that could be understood easily by his audience.

Although not as prolific, another popular Catholic psycho-spiritual writer, both in the United States and abroad, was the Indian Jesuit psychologist, Fr. Anthony DeMello (1931-1987). Both provocative and profound, DeMello's approach combined the popular wisdom of his native India with the psychological training he had learned in the United States. His psycho-spiritual writings have been especially adapted within retreat settings. While his books during his life were accepted by Church authorities, some writings transcribed at his retreats and published posthumously have been criticized by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF).<sup>13</sup>

Among American Catholic women, Servite sister and psychologist, Joyce Rupp has been the most popular American Catholic psycho-spiritual writer. Having received training in both spirituality and clinical psychology, Rupp's writings have been particularly successful in addressing the topics of bereavement and midlife transitions.

In the past several decades midlife workshops, retreats and literature have proven popular for religious and lay Catholics alike. Often they have incorporated Rogerian, Jungian and even neo-Freudian concepts and themes. For example, the Ignatian training programs coordinated by George Schemel (1930-2000) and Judith Roemer at the Jesuit Spiritual Center in Wernersville, Pennsylvania incorporated Jungian insights about archetypes, symbols and the unconscious. The midlife spiritual programs given by psychologists Sisters Ann Brennan, C.S.J. and Janice Brewi, C.S.J. have been similarly influenced by Jungian concepts.

Among lay American Catholic psycho-spiritual writers, clinical psychologist and university professor, Robert Wicks has been the most prolific. The author of more than

13. In 1998 the CDF issued a formal notification concerning some of DeMello's later and posthumous publications. There was a concern about some of the ways in which his writings were distancing themselves from certain Church doctrines. DeMello's supporters responded by claiming that much of the controversy had to do with the ways in which DeMello's lectures were interpreted by his students and published after his death.

thirty books and myriad of public presentations, Wicks has addressed the vicissitudes of psychological factors as they relate to an individual's formative spiritual life. Likewise, Thomas Moore has been another leading psycho-spiritual author. In his widely read writings Moore combined his twelve years as a religious with his psychotherapeutic training. One of his books, *Care of the Soul* (1992), became a best seller.

Meanwhile, Rev. Benedict Groeschel, as a priest, religious leader and psychologist has used his clinical training to develop sacramental perspectives in his voluminous writings and media presentations. While condoning the need for a blending of healthy psychology and a sound spirituality, Groeschel finds a tendency for some authors to simplify and lose touch with the traditions of Catholic spiritual devotions and practices for the purpose of promoting psychological growth. Groeschel believes that psychology should be in the service of the Church's traditions in theology and not vice versa.

Clinical psychologist Rev. William Barry, has through his Ignatian inspired books and presentations helped to establish spiritual direction as a field. His book, *Spiritual Direction* (1982), co-authored with his Jesuit colleague William Connelly, became the standard text in the fledging field of spiritual direction. Drawing from some of the key principles of psychotherapy, the book provides a means whereby principles pertaining to psychotherapy can inform avenues of spiritual direction. Barry also has served as the editor for the journal *Human Development*, a quarterly that since its founding in 1980 by the psychiatrist Rev. James Gill, S.J., M.D., has provided its audience with current psychological trends related to religious growth and leadership.

In the area of marriage and family, the husband-wife team of James and Evelyn Whitehead has produced several important pastoral psychology books. Evelyn, a developmental and social psychologist, and James, a pastoral theologian and historian of religion, have combined their talents and training to provide such contributions as *Christian Life Patterns: the psychological challenges and religious invitations of adult life* (1979), *Method in Ministry* (1980) and more recently *Christian Adulthood: A Journey of Self-discovery* (2006).

Clinical psychologists Carolyn Gratton and Fran Ferder have also made important contributions to psycho-spiritual literature. Finally, Catholic spiritual writers such as George Aschenbrenner, Maureen Conroy, Janet Ruffing, Richard Rohr and Ronald Rolheiser, while not practicing psychologists, incorporate many psychological insights into their writings.

### Religion and Personality Theorists

The integration of psychology with Catholic thought may be seen in terms of the relationship between reason and faith. Seen in Catholicism's traditional rational psychology such a relationship is expressed by the Thomistic axiom *gratia perfecta natura* (grace perfects nature). Since 1961 psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Rev. William Meissner, S.J., has published a series of articles and numerous books showing the continued relevance of this axiom. For example, his psychoanalytical study of

the life of St. Ignatius Loyola reveals the psychological conditions whereby God's grace influenced and inspired the psychic structure of Ignatius.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, another psychoanalyst, Ann Marie Rizzuto used the psychoanalytic developmental theory of Donald Winnicott, to turn on its head Freud's dictum that religious belief is an illusion. By using Winnicott's position that illusion is a necessary ingredient for a child's journey to maturity, Rizzuto argued that one's image of God emerges out of a healthy sense of illusion.

In recent decades the work and writings respectively of two other Catholic psychiatrists, Paul McHugh and Len Sperry, have been enormously influential. McHugh, as chairman of the department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Johns Hopkins University, from 1975-2001, has been one of the leaders in his profession's placing greater priority upon psychopharmacology and less upon psychoanalysis. His co-authored book with Philip Slavney, *The Perspectives of Psychiatry* (1998), has been one of the best introductions to psychiatric practice in the last twenty years. More recently in his provocative book *The Mind Has Mountains: Reflections on Society and Psychiatry* (2005), McHugh criticizes some of psychiatry's assumptions and trends. It should also be noted that in 2002 McHugh was among a select group appointed by the USCCB to serve on the National Review Board. They were charged with the responsibility to examine the causes and consequences of clergy abuse.

Sperry, the author of more than 300 articles and chapters and forty books, has been a proponent of cognitive-behavioral approaches to psychiatry. A frequent contributor, to the psychospiritual journal, *Human Development*, Sperry has been a major leader in the psychiatric community. One of his specializations has been consultations related to the clergy abuse crises.

### Empirical Psycho-Spiritual Research

In recent years a growing number of articles, books and journals have been published in the area of psychology of religion that have had relevance to Catholic arena. Professional associations such as the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association and the American Association of Pastoral Counselors through their respective publications have disseminated pertinent findings by psychologists of religion and religious counselors and psychologists to their professional audiences. For instance, the research of Joanne Greer, who besides being a psychoanalyst has been an author and editor of numerous articles pertaining to psychology and religion. From 1994-2000 Greer served as the editor of the *Review of the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, a journal that has demonstrated how quantitative measures can be used in the study of religious variables. Her Loyola College colleague, Ralph Piedmont, has made similar contributions in quantitative approaches to

14. W.W. Meissner, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992).

religious variables. Among his contributions has been the development of a psychometric assessment involving a spiritual transcendence scale. A recent president of the American Psychological Association's Division on Psychology and Religion (Division 36), Piedmont has directed an annual intentional conference on psychology and religion and serves as the editor of the APA sponsored journal, *The Journal of Psychology and Spirituality*.

The developmental psychologies of Lawrence Kohlberg, Jane Loevinger, James Fowler and Robert Kegan have also been incorporated into Catholic thought, especially in the area of moral and religious education. For instance, Elizabeth Liebert in *Changing Life Patterns: Adult Development in Spiritual Direction* writes about the ways developmental theories can serve to inform spiritual formation and practices. Another stream of psycho-spiritual research has emerged in the area of positive psychology. Led by the American Psychological Association's leadership of Martin Seligman and funded generously by the Templeton Foundation, such psychological research focuses upon positive factors in the human personality. As a result, psychologists have engaged in extensive studies on quasi-religious variables such as gratitude, hope, optimism and virtue. The writings of Joseph Ciarracchi on virtue and Rev. Charles Shelton, S.J., on gratitude have made important contributions within the Catholic community from this perspective.

### Critical Moral Issues

Since the Council there has been a large body of psychological research that has informed the moral debates surrounding abortion, addiction, marital infidelity, and divorce. In more recent years there has been growing concern surrounding the ethical issues involving the psychological effects of genetic engineering and such neuroscience developments as the psychopharmacological enhancement of attention and memory as well as the neuroscience technologies of psychosurgery, deep-brain stimulation and brain-implants.<sup>15</sup>

The most well known interactions between psychology and American Catholicism have revolved around the crisis of clerical abuse. As a 2004 study by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice shockingly revealed between 1950 through 2002 4,392 priests had been accused by 10,667 individuals.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the costs for the psychological treatment and the legal fees at that time were estimated to be well over \$500 million.<sup>17</sup> One might conclude from the magnitude of these numbers that

15. Thomas Fuchs, "Ethical Issues in Neuroscience," *Current Opinion in Psychiatry* 19, no. 6 (November 2006): 600-7.

16. "USCCB Efforts to combat clergy sexual abuse again minors: A Chronology 1982-2006." Office of Media Relations, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. <http://www.usccb.org/comm/combat-efforts.shtml>.

17. *Ibid.* Since then the legal costs to the Catholic Church in the United States have been higher. For example, in 2007 one settlement in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles alone exceeded \$600 million.

Church authorities have paid a heavy price for not investing more in what psychology had to offer in assessing candidates and in the psychological formation of clergy. But the story seems more complicated than this reason alone, for the field of psychology itself was not fully cognizant of the extent and the long term consequences of sexual abuse.

Since the 1970s the various areas of clinical psychology and psychiatry have evolved in their understanding of post traumatic stress disorder and in the diagnosis and treatment of pedophilia and ephobelia. As a result, the standards for deciding about prevention and treatment have had a coincidental evolution culminating in the Dallas charter of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2002.<sup>18</sup>

Such shifts in standards may be traced to several shifts in cultural consciousness. One shift is described in detail by Judith Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery* (1992). Herman, a psychiatrist, points to how victims were empowered when they were given a clinical name to the terror of abuse with its flashbacks, insomnia, nightmares and startle responses. These behaviors are now diagnosed as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. It was only in 1980 that such a disorder was clinically named in psychiatry's *Diagnostic Statistical Manual* (DSM). Before then psychiatry and psychology did not have a firm understanding of the nature of the phenomena as presented in sexually abused victims and for many decades the phenomena was denied in clinical circles.

Interestingly enough, it was the treatment of the "war neurosis" for veterans of the Vietnam War, together with the emerging civil rights consciousness of women that led to a more in depth understanding of the disorder. Throughout the 1970s the women's movement created a steady stream of articles pertaining to the psychological effects of sexual assault. In response to these articles and to the amounting evidence that sexual molestation was pervasive in American culture, the National Institute of Mental Health created a center for research on rape. Then, with research efforts and monies mobilized by concern for abused women and for Vietnam veterans, the focus began to shift to children who had been abused as well as to adults who had been abused in childhood. By 1980 the American Psychiatric Association in its *Diagnostic Statistical Manual I* gave the trauma suffered, whether due to rape or to war a similar name. With improved clinical treatments and with focused litigation strategies the clinics and the courts began to work in tandem to address the pervasive problems surrounding child abuse. Consequently, by the early 1980s the stage was set for both streams of interests to flow into the river of religious abuse. It seems that both the Church's authorities and the psychologists advising them were not prepared for the legal consequences that soon flowed from this new diagnosis.

In reviewing the history of American Catholic bishops' efforts to respond to the crisis, it is clear that it took several years for the policies to become applied and effective.

18. At their June 2002, meeting in Dallas the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The Charter set in motion ways to instill practices that would ensure the safety of children within the various institutions of the Catholic Church in the U.S.

tive. However, it seems that some of the delay and ineffectiveness was due to the reluctance by some bishops to listen to advice from the clinical world. Such advice was documented by Jason Berry in his book, *Lead Us Not into Temptation: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children* (2000). Berry describes how one strategy was developed in June of 1985 by an interdisciplinary team consisting of Rev. Michael Peterson, a psychiatrist and at the time the president of the St. Luke's Institute (in Maryland), Rev. Thomas Doyle, O.P., a canon lawyer who served on the staff of the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States and Raymond Mouton, a civil lawyer who then involved in the abuse case of Father Gilbert Gauthé in Louisiana. Together they drafted a resource paper entitled, "The Problem of Sexual Molestation by Roman Catholic Clergy: Meeting the Problem in a Comprehensive and Responsible Manner."<sup>19</sup> In the report they recommended a strategic response to the emerging crisis. While not intended as a national plan, the report did make suggestions as to how the Church should be comprehensive in responding to the victims as well as to the accused priests. For example, in speaking of the importance of responding to the needs of the victims and their families, the report states: "Special mental health professionals, trained and competent should be called on...to provide help and support as soon as possible."<sup>20</sup> Also, in response to the previous custom of bishops simply sending a priest accused of sexual abuse to therapy, the report related:

It is inadequate to treat a sex offender in the diocese on a private psychotherapy model. It should be emphasized that inpatient treatment, preferably with peers, is the most preferable mode.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, in addressing the clinical needs of pedophile priests, the report spoke of the necessity for a comprehensive and integrated psychological treatment of the offender. The report included the need for CAT scans of the brain and EEG tests, noting:

We are dealing with compulsive sexual habits, which the priest may temporarily suspend in the face of legal or canonical pressure, but not in all instances. There are many examples wherein sexual abuse took place very soon after the confrontation between the priest and his ordinary (bishop) had taken place. The priest must clearly be seen as one suffering from a psychiatric disorder that is beyond his ability to control.<sup>22</sup>

The report was submitted to all diocesan bishops, but the proposals were left up to the individual dioceses to interpret and use as they saw fit. According to the office of communications of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the report had

19. Jason Berry, *Lead Us Not Into Temptation: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 99.

20. "The Problem of Sexual Molestation by Roman Catholic Clergy: Meeting the Problem in a Comprehensive and Responsible Manner."

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

been issued the same month that an executive session of the Conference had taken place about the topic (then not yet a crisis). The executive committee apparently had recommended that it be left to each diocese to use their own expert personnel and develop their own strategies. This lack of a concerted and comprehensive plan, as seen in the cases that occurred in the Archdiocese of Boston and elsewhere, has in hindsight led to accusations that the Church leaders engaged in covering up or at best suffered systematic naiveté and incompetence.

Certainly in hindsight we may easily conclude that many of the bishops had in 1985 made a gross underestimation of the seriousness and pervasiveness of the problem of clerical sexual abuse and often were not prepared to address the complaints of the victims. It was if they were not yet ready to hear the voices.

On the other hand, some of the clinical advice that the bishops had been receiving up to that time was now ambiguous and inaccurate. No less of an authority than Dr. Fred Berlin, the founder of the Sexual Disorders Clinic at Johns Hopkins has recognized this failing. In response to a question as to whether or not pedophilia can be cured he stated:

There is no cure for pedophilia. There is, however, effective and successful treatment. . . . Years back the Church, very sadly, was misled by mental health professionals. The Church was one of the earliest organizations to recognize that pedophilia existed and to send people for help. Unfortunately, back in the late '40 and '50s, and even the '60s, psychiatrists didn't understand what we do now thought that these people could be cured. The Church, after talking to the authorities of the day and believing that these people were going to be safe, put them back into the community. The fault was not the Church's.<sup>23</sup>

Berlin goes on to further state that mistakes of judgment have been made by the clinical and Church officials, but not due to any ill will. It was as if the clinical and the clerical world did not know how to face the clinical reports and the legal accusations that began to inundate clinic and church offices alike.

Among the first Catholic therapists to speak out publicly concerning the issues surrounding clerical abuse was A.W. Richard Sipe. Sipe, who as a Benedictine priest had helped to coordinate the St. John's Summer Institute in the 1960s and 1970s, has followed the issue for several decades. Based upon his clinical experiences with priests, Sipe published in 1990, *A Secret World: Sexuality and The Search For Celibacy*. He has not been afraid to tackle the ways by which clergy and religious have violated their vows and abused their powerful roles. His persistent efforts, controversial to many and sanative to others, are seen in subsequent works as *Sex, Priests, and Power* (1995) and the more recent and provocative *Sex, Priests, and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2,000-Year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse* (2006), which he co-authored with Thomas Doyle and Patrick Wall. In addition to his writ-

23. "Interview with Frederick S. Berlin, M.D., Ph.D." September 8, 1997. Office of Media Relations, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. <http://www.usccb.org/comm/kit6.shtml>.



ings, Sipe's media profile has led him to be seen by some Church authorities as a gadfly on the issues involved.

The writings and public presentations of other clinicians have been more tempered yet forceful just the same. These clinicians include Angelo Giardino, Rev. Stephen Rosetti, Luisa Safetti, Len Sperry, Thomas Plante, Sister Donna Markham, Paul McHugh, Br. Sean Sammon and Rev. Gerald McGlone. Their work has typified the ways in which the church has evolved in its response to the crisis. But as this brief survey has intended to show, besides the Church the clinics and the courts have also evolved in protecting the innocent and preventing the psychological acting out of clerical perpetrators.

### Conclusion

In this brief historical overview of American Catholicism's post Vatican II interactions with the field of psychology, we have seen how a series of Catholic individuals and institutions have appropriated psychology to form programs, to frame psychological constructs for religious structures and to face critical moral and legal issues. Unlike the often hostile relations between Catholicism and the psychological disciplines prior to the Council, there now exists a great deal of collaborative efforts. Certainly, since the mid-1960's, the various disciplines related to psychology have evolved as has the Catholic Church's use and attitudes towards them. Moreover, as the clerical abuse phenomena seems to suggest, Catholicism in its various structures no longer can afford to discount what professional psychology has to offer. By the same token, psychology as a series of disciplines can learn a lot from the breadth and depth of Catholics traditions. Indeed some of psychology's pertinent questions such as freedom versus determinism or nature versus nurture have been part of Catholicism's long philosophical and theological tradition. Indeed they have been some of Catholicism's perennial issues pertaining to how grace perfects nature, the relation between faith and reason, and the generations surrounding faith and culture and the sacred and the secular in general.

In their respective writings, both Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI have recognized this balance of the human and the divine. For example, in the encyclical, *Fides et Ratio* (1998), Pope John Paul II spoke to the traditional and contemporary significance of this relationship and reminded us that a balanced relationship between faith and reason moves us more closely toward truths about ourselves that are of God. The pope wrote:

Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.<sup>24</sup>

24. Pope John Paul II (1998) *Fides et Ratio* from <http://www.cin.org/jp2/fides.html>.

More recently, in his widely publicized address at the University of Regensburg, Pope Benedict XVI argued that a balanced relationship between faith and reason is vitally necessary when he asserted that faith without reason may lead to violence, while a narrow approach to reason weakens the human spirit. He stated:

We will succeed . . . only if reason and faith come together in a new way, if we overcome the self-imposed limitation of reason to the empirically verifiable, and if we once more disclose its vast horizons.<sup>25</sup>

If we consider the clinical and experimental disciplines of psychology to be manifestations of reason, then the remarks of both popes have relevance to future interactions between Catholicism and psychology. As this essay has attempted to demonstrate, Catholicism since the Second Vatican Council has been immersed in the world of psychology. As we move further beyond the Council and face the psychological issues of the new century, the Church can feel more confident in its relationship with psychology and how it can assist in making sense of God's presence through a deeper understanding of the human psyche.

25. Pope Benedict XVI, "Three stages in the program of de-hellenization," Papal address at the University of Regensburg. *Zenit News Agency*: <http://www.zenit.org/article-16955?l=english> (12 September 2006).