Ministry Amidst Diversity:  
Exploring Hospitality in Ontario Catholic School Chaplaincy 

by 

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Abstract

The growing diversity of school populations in Ontario Catholic high schools, coupled with differences in vision between various partners in the educational system, impacts continuously on the ministry of chaplaincy. Through this qualitative research, Chaplaincy Leaders from the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario articulate for themselves the challenges they face and the important role of hospitality in their ministry.

This thesis is deeply contextual. The research interest arises out of the researcher’s own experience as a Chaplaincy Leader. In accordance with the expectations of the Doctor of Ministry program at Toronto School of Theology, it begins by exposing the researcher’s personal context, followed by an investigation of the historical and contemporary realities of the Catholic school system in relation to wider Ontario culture. A theology of ministry that identifies two main thrusts to chaplaincy –
the Pastoral and the Prophetic – provides the background for listening to the voices and stories of the participants.

The qualitative research design relies primarily on the phenomenological thought of Emmanuel Levinas, emphasizing the face-to-face approach. Through their conversations the participants reveal their understanding of their ministry, their sources of inspiration, the place of hospitality within chaplaincy, and the challenges they face.

The research suggests that now is the time for Catholic schools and the Church to shift the emphasis from teaching Catholicity to living Catholicity. How this can be done more effectively will require conversation and acts of imagination. The imperative of Catholic Social Teaching becomes evident, as does the importance of conversation and relationship across difference. The model and thoughts offered by these Chaplaincy Leaders suggests new directions for all partners in Catholic education.
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On a broader level, the students and staff of St Mary Catholic high school in Brockville continue to shape me as they have since I began my vocation to chaplaincy.
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Chapter 1
Beginnings and Background

“And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” ¹ - Micah 6:8

1 Introduction

Chaplaincy leaders in Ontario Catholic high schools tread a fine line when they try to follow the prophet Micah’s instructions. Called to promote and foster a specific religious denomination – Catholicism - they must also live Christ's teaching to welcome and neither diminish nor turn away any of God's children regardless of religious affiliation, practice, beliefs, or any other marker of difference.² Chaplains are called to embrace and serve all with love and acceptance.³ This is true of course of all Catholics, but chaplains are called to a specific role that places them in the midst of a diverse population every day. Their ministry across difference may offer insight to the broader Church.

¹ Micah 6:8b. All biblical references are NRSV-CE, unless otherwise noted.

² Various perspectives that support this understanding of the role of chaplaincy will be examined in chapter one of this thesis and beyond.

³ I use the terms chaplain and chaplaincy leader interchangeably in this thesis. Chaplaincy leader is the term currently approved by the Bishops, and found on their most recent documents, while ‘chaplain’ is the earlier title, but still the one used most frequently in schools.
This research will inquire into the ministry of a group of lay chaplains within the diverse reality of Ontario Catholic high schools, and specifically their perceptions of an ethos of hospitality in their role. Merriam-Webster defines ‘ethos’ as, “the distinguishing character, sentiment, moral nature, or guiding beliefs of a person, group, or institution.” An ethos is thus not necessarily a theology, but more of an orientation of the spirit that in this case will inform the theological and practical approaches of the chaplains.

Within the framework of the expectations of the DMin program at Toronto School of Theology the thesis will explain how the research question arises from my personal ministry context as a lay chaplain in an Ontario Catholic high school. It will explore the historical and contemporary realities of the broader Ontario Catholic School chaplaincy context, posit a developed and supported theology of ministry, draw out the operative theoretical basis for the research, analyze and interpret data gathered from several participants working in the field according to qualitative research methods, then draw some conclusions and offer an explanation as to their significance. According to this framework, the D.Min thesis essentially falls into two sections - the first exploring the researcher’s particular contextual and theological position, and the second testing the questions and potential conclusions that have arisen against the experience of others in the Action-in-Ministry, in order to seek further directions and learnings.

Chaplains operate collaboratively, yet in some sense they also often operate officially in a “department of one”, to quote one of the participants. At the present time,

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little research has been done into this ministry as it exists in the province of Ontario. Thus, an important goal of this project is to promote a dialogue grounded in qualitative research about the nature of lay high school chaplaincy today. I will therefore to some degree be testing my personal theology of ministry against the experiences of several chaplains within the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, and seeking further questions as much as answers.

The Doctor of Ministry program affirms the fundamentally contextual nature of all theology. According to Clemens Sedmak, “Theology is always done from a certain perspective within a particular context.” The timeliness of this research is rooted in the rapidly changing context of Ontario Catholic schools. The flood of students from a diversity of backgrounds into Catholic high schools after the advent of full funding in 1984 has made the question of how Catholic schools embrace difference critically important. Today, while many supporters of funded Catholic education work hard to foster inclusion and equity, criticism of how this is done still arises from both within and outside the Church. On the one hand, some opponents of full funding argue that

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5 There are currently two books in print that reflect on Ontario high school chaplaincy. Both are useful resources, but neither are research-based. One is an edited collection of articles published in 1991 and edited by Catherine M. Pead. The work is still relevant but it presupposes a largely Catholic clientele as would have been the case in the early 90s. The other is a ‘How-to’ manual by Brad Lewis published in 2008, which focuses primarily on practical tips for chaplains. Catherine M. Pead, *Bridges to Faith: The Why and How of High School Chaplaincy* (Ottawa: Novalis, 1991). And: Brad Lewis, *High School Ministry from A to Z* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2008).


7 Unless otherwise noted, the word Church here will refer specifically to the Roman Catholic Church, as opposed to the universal church.
discrimination is systemic to Catholic schools. How can any denominational school be truly inclusive? At the other end of the spectrum, some Catholic partners argue that Catholic schools are too inclusive, and not nearly Catholic enough. All of this affects perceptions of the role of the chaplain. Are chaplains the enforcers of discrimination and exclusion? Or are they its first opponents? Is it their primary vocation to combat the disconnection between many baptized Catholics and their parish? Or does their role prioritize offering a Christ-centered love across difference regardless of the students’ connections to Church? I will argue for the latter, cognizant of the tension that arises in efforts to enact the role. The research will lead to several suggestions regarding how the chaplain’s role reflects the wider Church and potential lessons about what might be learned for Catholic schools, and Catholicity in general, within a diverse world.

The challenges of diversity in Catholic schools come from many quarters. Beyond the obvious question of religious diversity, many chaplains seek to embed in schools the concept of the preferential option for the poor and marginalized along with other elements of Catholic Social Teaching, but they work within a society that often prioritizes affluence, ability and power. The question of who belongs in Catholic schools – and how they are offered hospitality – can never be separated from the question of who belongs in the world at large. All schools whether public or Catholic, struggle with

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questions of belonging and inclusion, but Catholic chaplains approach the difficulty from a perspective of faith and Catholicity. The Catholic Church provides powerful teachings and examples from individuals that counter the societal emphasis on wealth, power and ability, yet Catholic schools must also respond to the expectations of the Ontario Ministry of Education which are more deeply embedded in the surrounding culture.

How do chaplains provide pastoral care within such a diverse context? How can they navigate the complexity of demands placed upon them by all stakeholders in Catholic education? Within what framework and ethos might they exercise their conscience as situations arise that challenge either the values of society or the Church? The Micah 6:8 quote at the start of this introduction provides a focus, but doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God still remains a challenge for chaplains within a fast-paced, diverse and demanding world. It is my hypothesis that an ethos of Christian hospitality helps chaplains focus and prioritize as they embrace the ‘Other’ – defined broadly here as the stranger, the poor, the marginalized, and the different (including non-Catholics) within Catholic schools.

In short:

This study will investigate how an ethos of hospitality may assist chaplains in Ontario Catholic schools to minister to increasingly diverse school populations, in a way that takes seriously the complex realities of both the Church and contemporary society.
This thesis will show that the participants’ perspectives exhibited many coherencies with my personal theology of ministry, something that is perhaps not surprising given the similarities in contexts. The research will also identify some specific areas of challenge in high school chaplaincy, as experienced by these participants, particularly as they attempt to live an ethos of Christian hospitality within their diverse contexts. Again, this research seeks questions as much as answers. Among other things, it strives to illuminate the loci of tension in high school chaplaincy, and some efforts by these participants to either resolve it or live in it.

In a world where chaplains may feel pulled in a multitude of directions, the fundamental call to Christ-like hospitality provides direction in the exercise of conscience. Hospitality seems straightforward at first. Make someone welcome. Provide space for them, and relationship. Easy. But millennia of experience testify to the challenges of offering hospitality, and the deep meaning it holds for human life and our relationship with God. It mattered that Abraham welcomed the strangers (Gen 18:1-15). It mattered that Zacchaeus hosted Jesus (Luke 19:1-10). It mattered that the widow of Zarephath hosted Elijah (1 Kings 17:8-16). It mattered that Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin took in the homeless poor in Catholic Worker houses. In our own time it matters when we take in refugees and exiles, the sick and the forgotten. But offering a welcome can be anything but easy and straightforward. As I write this, Uganda offers an extreme example: anyone found hosting a gay person may face a prison sentence of seven years. Likewise, the world is reeling from recent images of a dead Syrian infant washed up on a Turkish beach, the child of a family caught in a conflict zone whose refugee application
was turned down by Canada. Not surprisingly perhaps then, we shall see that in Ontario Catholic schools, the welcome mat is frequently a place of conflict and controversy, with chaplains standing squarely in the middle.

2 Personal Ministry Context

"Would you know my name
If I saw you in heaven?
Would it be the same
If I saw you in heaven?"\textsuperscript{10}

Ryan, a grade 12 student, sits strumming his guitar on one of the upholstered seats that run along the walls of the chapel. I recognize ‘Tears in Heaven’ by Eric Clapton. Ryan’s mother has entered another of her ongoing cancer treatments and the music helps him cope with his anger. Kaitlin, another grade 12 student, sits on the carpeted floor, cutting out paper trees for a simulation game we will be doing with all grades later this week to learn about the oppression of Palestinians in the occupied territories. A popular, easygoing person who co-chairs our social justice club, she chats with Aimee, a grade nine student who often drops into the chapel during religion class. She struggles with anxiety and prefers to work in this quieter place.

\textsuperscript{10} Eric Clapton, “Tears in Heaven,” by Eric Clapton and Will Jennings, recorded live August, 1992 on the album \textit{Unplugged}, Warner Brothers, CD.
I am the Chaplaincy Leader at a small publicly funded Catholic high school in Brockville, Ontario. According to the vision statement of my professional organization Catholic School Chaplains of Ontario (CSCO), “School chaplaincy is a pastoral role carried out in an educational setting in a collaborative and cooperative manner in order to promote the spiritual and human development of the members of the Catholic school community.”11 From my perspective, chaplaincy involves two major foci. The first is to engage in a Christian ministry of presence, of being there for conversation, support and prayer. The second is to promote a Gospel-centered vision of the world, and to draw the school community together to work for ongoing social transformation in the footsteps of Christ. The two tasks are inseparable. This will be discussed in greater depth below.

Context impacts heavily on how chaplaincy is carried out in any particular school. Cultures and contexts are in a perpetual process of transformation, and nowhere is that more true than in a high school ministry context. A student in grade 12 will have changed significantly from the person they were in grade 7. Further, an entire school student population will change completely every seven years. Contexts and cultures overlap and mutate with time, and the chaplain must keep awake to change. As Douglas John Hall says, “A theology which knows that it is not timeless will always need to know what time it is hic et nunc.”12

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According to Catherine M. Pead, author of *Bridges to Faith: The Why and How of High School Chaplaincy*, “Unlike a curriculum, the chaplaincy program is an extension of the chaplain’s relationship with the particular school community. Therefore, every school’s chaplaincy program should look different, because the people and their spiritual needs will be different.”¹³ Let me begin then by offering a description of my particular context.

St Mary Catholic High School is one of 10 high schools spread out across the eight mostly rural counties under the jurisdiction of the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO). The next nearest Catholic high school is located in Kemptville, almost 60 kilometers away. Each high school employs one chaplaincy leader or rarely, two part timers. Brockville is the third largest city in the school board, with a population of 22 000. Historically the city was shaped by its location along the St. Lawrence river at the mouth of the Thousand Islands, where the river narrows most dramatically. Brockvillians are predominantly white, English-speaking and Protestant. No single industry dominates the economy, although manufacturing and agriculture are important, as well as tourism in the summer season. The population of school-aged children has been dropping steadily over the last few years, while the population of seniors is well above the national average at 21%.¹⁴ Such a description of the city shares important information, but it is worth remembering that it falls short of describing efforts


at community living such as those demonstrated by summer festivals, a vibrant farmer’s market, community meals, and local arts displays.

Of the approximately 700 students in my school (grades 7-12), I would guess that no more than a third would attend Church with any regularity. Many of our students are baptized Catholic, but we also have students who belong to other religious traditions including Sikh, Muslim, Protestant, and Evangelical, as well as students who are atheist or belong to no particular religious tradition. The student body is primarily white, with the largest minorities consisting of Filipino and aboriginal students. The community is not particularly wealthy, with the majority of parents holding jobs in retail, manufacturing and agriculture. As far as I am concerned every student in my school is a child of God, and a brother and sister in the Spirit. I embrace the diversity of our student body, and I am available to minister to (and learn from) anyone who crosses the threshold of our front door.

I spend at least an hour of my day simply in conversation with students in the halls or in the tiny chapel which also doubles as my office (I have a desk at the back). Sometimes these are scheduled meetings but more often students simply drop in. This is just the starting block. I also teach for one 72 minute period a day, usually a grade 12 religion class on ethics or a grade 11 world religions class, sometimes in French. My original vocation was to teaching, and I still love being in the classroom. My teaching duties keep me grounded in the rhythm of my school. Then there are the larger questions of helping create a just hospitable environment, and working for social transformation. Throughout a typical week I might arrange for morning prayer on the intercom, spend a
lunch hour with the Social Justice Club (the Justice League), another lunch hour (and
sometimes all of March Break) with the Mission Trip team, another lunch hour with the
Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) and the other lunch hours on duty in the grade 9 hallway.
Our Grief Support group will meet weekly in the chapel during class time. The Peer
Restorative Justice Team (a group of trained senior students) will gather regularly in the
chapel as well, and I will assist them whenever they are needed to mediate conflict with
their younger peers. Finally, I will run optional prayer services on Friday mornings
during Advent and Lent for the whole school, weekly Monday morning staff prayer, and
other liturgies as needed throughout the year.

Different seasons bring different activities. I spend many hours planning and
leading events with students and staff, including a massive Advent Canned Food Drive, a
Lenten Project, a Walk Against Poverty, a Solidarity Fast, a Specialist High Skills Major
certificate program in Non-Profit (with a social justice focus), retreats for all grade levels,
monthly Masses, fundraisers, justice awareness events, speakers, and so on. A
cooperative approach turns planning time into active ministry in itself. I visit classes at
the request of teachers to talk with students about particular biblical, theological or
spiritual issues. I run proactive classroom circles to help students express their needs and
their vision for learning. I am there for those struggling with poverty, divorce, grief,
heartbreak, pregnancy, sexuality, bullying, and betrayal. At times my ministry is
mundanely administrative, as I juggle schedules and meetings. At times it is deeply
personal as in the accompaniment of a pregnant teenager or a staff member or student
who is sick or dying. I am among other things, a sounding board, a resource, an
instigator, an organizer, a prayer partner and a spiritual director. In all this I strive as much as possible to be attentive, open, compassionate, and pastoral.

I do not think of myself as ministering to my students and colleagues so much as ministering with them. Together we reveal to each other the light of the divine and the music of heaven, which in my case, today, sounds an awful lot like a quiet Eric Clapton song, soft-strummed and gently picked by a thoughtful teenage boy.

3 Personal Context

Chaplaincy programs are shaped not only by the community, but also by the person of the chaplain. None of us are free of bias. A brief snapshot of my personal history beyond what I have offered in the autobiographical statement in appendix ix helps name some of my own. I will approach this from three angles: a) my personal history itself; b) my experience of the Doctor of Ministry program; and c) my personal theological values (stated briefly).

I experienced something of the reality of immigration when, after my childhood years in a fishing village in Ghana, my parents settled our family in Quebec despite the fact that not one of us spoke any French. At eight years old I entered formal schooling for the first time at a French Catholic school where no one in my class (including the teacher) could speak any English. I was desperately homesick and unhappy at first but soon learned the blessings of my new community and its language. I can hardly imagine how much more difficult this would be for child refugees, poorer immigrants or those
from non-western nations. These experiences embedded in me a deep interest in understanding what it means to belong.

I returned to Africa (Malawi and Zimbabwe) as an adult to work as a high school mathematics teacher under the auspices of the volunteer organization World University Service of Canada. Reflecting on the political situations and histories there, I came to recognize in a more profound way than I ever had previously in Canada, the ways in which I have benefited as a white middle-class educated person from the legacy of colonialism. I seek now to be a better ally to those who have paid the price for the benefits I enjoy so easily by virtue of my social position. This means listening and learning from those who stand on the edges of the mainstream whether due to ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or some other factor. In terms of my ministry, it involves helping students become aware of global and local injustice, so that they may identify the issues that concern them most, and be better prepared to exercise their conscience in moments of testing.

Engaging with the world beyond my school and peer group deepens my faith and enriches my life in unanticipated ways. I see better my own assumptions and gaps in understanding (however uncomfortable that may make me) when I spend time with people whose lives are very different from my own. Within the Brockville community I volunteer at the food bank with people from a wide variety of backgrounds, including those who have served time in prisons or suffer from the challenges of severe mental illness. I have traveled to the School of the Americas Watch in Georgia several times, and to Guatemala, Mexico and Washington D.C. for experiences of solidarity. In 2012 I
traveled to Palestine with the Basilian Peace and Justice Pilgrimage, and met with Jewish, Christian and Muslim peacemakers who work together for a better and more just future for all. There, the words of scripture justify violence for some, while leading to peaceful resistance for others. The tension between different views of scripture lies exposed on the boundaries where the different peoples of the Holy Land live, and serves as a reminder to me of its presence, more subtly, within my own community.

My experiences as a DMin student reinforce the value I place on story and conversation. My Ministry Base Group or MBG, constituted of members of my school and local community, met regularly for evening sessions at my house throughout the course work and comprehensive phase of the Doctor of Ministry Program. Through our conversations the participants gave me insights and direction that I could not otherwise have discovered on my own. The group consisted of three Catholic teachers from my school, a retired elementary school teacher from another Christian denomination, and a Chaplaincy Leader from another school board. I sought members from a variety of backgrounds with diverging experiences. The stories they shared, and the ways in which they challenged or pushed me to go deeper with my insights were invaluable to my thought process. They underscored for me the value of story to foster understanding, as will be apparent in this thesis. As Eugene Peterson states, “At some deep level we sense that the story is the only way adequately to account for ourselves and our world, and also the only way in which words can be used that comes close to doing justice to them.”

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Likewise, the stories and thoughts of my peers within the D. Min. program itself (my Collaborative Learning Group or CLG), even when I may take a different view, have moved my thinking in new directions, revealing to me both what I treasure and what I lack. In response to classroom activities and questions, I have been surprised to discover, comparatively speaking, how much praxis means to me, how frequently I reflect on scripture, and how infrequently I think about issues of salvation (as compared to colleagues from the more evangelical traditions). Furthermore, I realize that very little of my time is spent on sacramental preparation in contrast to my Catholic ministry peers, in particular those who are ordained. I will walk with a student who desires baptism or confirmation, but the bulk of responsibility for preparation falls on the parish priest. My primary orientation is toward sacredness within the wider world, including human relationship.

Reflecting on my context in conversation with the members of my MBG and CLG, I realize that certain theological values dominate my perspective on my community. Briefly stated, I believe in the love and perpetual presence of God, the dignity of all life, the importance of hospitality and compassion, the need to listen to the voiceless and marginalized, the unacceptability of violence, and the equality of all people regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or any other difference. My view embodies a Trinitarian perspective that acknowledges that the vast love of God is reflected in the diversity of people I meet. All people, created as they are in the *Imago Dei* or image of
God, are called to love and be loved.\textsuperscript{16} According to the \textit{Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church}, “The revelation in Christ of the mystery of God as Trinitarian love is at the same time the revelation of the vocation of the human person to love. This revelation sheds light on every aspect of the personal dignity and freedom of men and women, and on the depths of their social nature.”\textsuperscript{17}

School populations are diverse and ever-changing. As such, Chaplaincy leaders often minister at the intersection of cultural and religious difference. These values lie at the heart of Christianity and are expressed most clearly for me in such places as the Beatitudes (Matt 5:1-10), Matthew 25, and in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (that is, the social doctrine of the Church). They fuel my ministry and inspire me to engage with others at the boundaries of our different experiences which, within my current high school context, are plentiful, varied, and deeply enriching.

\section{Introduction to my Personal Theology of Ministry}

My theology of ministry will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 3, however a brief introduction helps to set the stage. As noted already, chaplaincy has two major foci for me. First, there is the effort to be a \textit{faith presence} in the school and to engage in pastoral care with all members of the community. Second, there is the drive to be an instigator of \textit{social transformation}, through encouraging the community to place Gospel

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\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., par. 34, p. 16.
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values at the center of our worldview. The first element might be called the Pastoral Focus and the second the Prophetic Focus. The two intertwine so deeply as to be virtually inseparable.

Luke Monaghan and Caroline Renehan, in a reflection on chaplaincy in Irish Catholic schools, suggest that the chaplain must be a ‘faith presence’, meaning:

The chaplain is one who is animated by a close relationship with Christ. Through the strength of this relationship the chaplain, in turn, is in a position to become a faith presence for others. This means being with others and paying attention to the quality of that being with. The chaplain, as faith presence is open, respecting, sharing, learning and invitatory.\(^{18}\) (Italics in original)

Monaghan and Renehan’s definition captures the heart of chaplaincy.

Relationship becomes the primary vehicle for the ministry, inspired by a relationship with Christ and focused on relationship with the members of the school community. The task of chaplaincy does not then primarily consist of ‘tasks’ even though the chaplain’s day may be filled with them. It consists of building relationships of mutuality where each one welcomes the other. During this process, the chaplain welcomes the other even when that welcome is not yet offered consistently by all members of the community, and thus takes first steps towards social transformation.

This seems simple on the surface, but the multitude of needs within a school, and the fact that the entire ‘congregation’ or school body shows up every day with all those needs, means that the chaplain must constantly make choices about where and how they can best be a ‘faith presence’. But deciding who or what is most pressing can still be a
challenge. Is it the child whose father has just been diagnosed with ALS? The student whose parents announced their divorce yesterday? The student with the habitual ‘cutting’ habit? The family whose home has no water thanks to a broken well and no money to fix it? The principal who wants a prayer for a parent meeting? The school charitable initiative to fundraise for Zambian orphans? The priest who wants help organizing a class mass? The Social Justice club’s efforts to raise awareness around missing and murdered aboriginal women? Or the prayer group that wants formal liturgy? It helps to remember that balance is something to shoot for, but not something to cling to like an idol. Finding balance in the ministry of chaplaincy is often less like balancing two sides of a scale than riding a pendulum, one in which the chaplain attempts to keep the swing from getting too out of control. Some days will be more challenging than others, and this is life as it should be. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) suggests that sometimes whatever plan is in place may need to be abandoned to care for one person or problem over all others - the one who is suffering most, the one who is most alone.

Perhaps this is why the question that frames that parable, ‘Who is my neighbor?’ is so important, and could be helpfully asked on a daily basis by the chaplain. By following that with the question of ‘Which neighbor needs me most?’ a chaplain may find direction in their efforts to organize their day. Both questions indicate an underlying ethos of hospitality, where neighbour welcomes and cares for neighbour.

Thus, I am suggesting that for chaplains, defining what is most important must remain an open-ended question. It cannot be determined entirely once and for all. Certainly, liturgical preparation, social justice endeavors, counseling, group prayer,
teaching and the many tasks I listed earlier are important. But so is a continuous openness to the call of God and the needs of the changing community. A set-in-stone approach cannot meet the ever-changing cultural reality of a school. It helps to remember that it is not all up to us, and that God’s grace operates in the world before us, through us, around us, after us and even without us. As Eugene Peterson says, “But always grace is previous. Grace is primary.”

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Chapter 2
Ontario Catholic School Context

You must understand this, that in the last days distressing times will come. For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid them! (2 Timothy 3:1-5, NRSV)

Society and Christianity often clash in terms of their values, and this is as true today as in the time of St. Timothy whether we are in the ‘last days’ or not. This chapter investigates the context of Catholic schools. It considers what it has meant for Catholic schools to historically be the ‘outsider’ in terms of educational system, and traces the development of the schools and the emergence of lay chaplaincy. The current social, cultural and Church contexts are then explored to discover how different visions impact questions of belonging and difference.

1 The Historical Context

Catholic high school chaplaincy as a lay vocation emerged in Ontario in the mid-1980s, shortly after full funding was extended all the way to Grade 13 for what were then called ‘Separate Schools’. Full funding marked one more step in a history of struggle, negotiation, and compromise. From their humble beginnings with the first Catholic immigrants, Catholic schools in Ontario have always existed as negotiated space between
the dominant cultures of Ontario and the various understandings of what it means to be Catholic. As such, there exists in them a constant movement back and forth between the need to protect or develop a particular religious identity, and the need to converse with, and respond to, the expectations of the wider society. A brief look into the past sets the stage.

Alexander Macdonnell, first bishop of Upper Canada and a member of the legislature, put his past experience negotiating space for Catholicism in Scotland (where it had been outlawed), to good use in negotiating space for Catholic schools in the primarily protestant colony of the 1800s. Due in part to his efforts, in 1841 the United Legislature of Canada East and Canada West passed the Common School Act which included a clause allowing for the operation of Catholic schools at the elementary level, and allotted proportional funding.

These schools emerged at a tense time. “As the colonial attitude in Upper Canada at this time was entrenched with ideals and directions that would promote loyalty to the staunch Protestant British crown, the emergence of Roman Catholic schools heightened sectarian violence, social alienation, and linguistic/religious profiling in many rural and urban communities across the region.” Social strife swirled particularly around (and

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within) Irish and French Catholic communities. In addition, Catholics needed permission from the local common school to even establish a Catholic school, and if that common school hired a Catholic teacher, the local Catholic school would be forced to close.23

In 1844 Egerton Ryerson became Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada. A tireless advocate of free, universal and effective education, Ryerson viewed Roman Catholic schools as inferior to the Protestant multi-denominational Christian public education he propounded. As an alternative to the common system, he did not support their funding.24 Nevertheless, he recognized that Catholics would be subjected to harassment within a single common system.25 The schools survived, but the struggle over control and funding continued.

A pattern of tension between different ecclesial visions and cultural realities has been an ongoing component of the development of Catholic schools in Ontario. Furthermore, the question of the religious identity of schools has never existed separate from questions of language or culture. The Taché Act of 1855 and the Scott Act of 1863, which affirmed the rights of Catholics to some funding for their own schools, were

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passed on the strength of votes from French-Canadian Catholic legislators from Lower Canada as concerned with language as faith.26

By the time the British North America Act (BNA) came to pass in 1867, Catholic schools were deeply entrenched in the new province of Ontario. But the transition of the educational mandate to the new provincial government once again put the Catholic school system at risk. French-Canadian politicians from Quebec could no longer shore up the minority Catholic vote in Ontario. Thomas D’Arcy McGee and Archbishop John Joseph Lynch of Toronto made it their task to ensure a clause was included in the BNA assuring the continued existence of Catholic schools.27 Section 93 of the BNA Act states that, “Nothing in any such [provincial legislative] Law shall prejudicially affect any Right or Privilege with respect to Denominational Schools which any Class of Persons [i.e. separate school supporters] have by Law in the Province at the Union.”28 In other words, Catholic education would henceforth be protected constitutionally.

Section 93 also granted equitable funding to Catholic schools under the budgetary framework of the time. However it did not envision the growth of public corporations within Ontario, or the development of high schools from 1871 onwards. Thus, public schools eventually gained funding through the taxation of businesses and corporations

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27 Ibid.

that was not granted to Catholic schools. Additionally, there was no provision whatsoever for funding Catholic high schools.\textsuperscript{29}

Throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} century Catholics continued to pursue political and court battles to ensure survival of the system.\textsuperscript{30} In 1950, the Hope Commission offered a compromise: full funding for Catholic schools to grade 6, with no funding beyond that level. Catholic commissioners worked with the Bishops to submit a minority report rejecting the plan, calling again for full funding. Various government programs emerged in the 50s and 60s that improved funding, although full funding remained out of reach, and Catholic parents continued to pay tuition fees while Catholic teachers took reduced pay or taught extra classes to cover the shortfall. According to Mark McGowan, “High schools depended on lay teachers accepting lower salary levels, parents operating lotteries and bingos, and students helping to clean and maintain school facilities.”\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29} The period after the 1880s also saw the rise of the Indian residential schools, focused on assimilating aboriginal children. According to the article cited below, three-fifths of these schools were administered by Catholic orders. While these schools were funded federally - thus under a different budgetary framework than other Catholic schools - it would be remiss to talk about the history of Catholic schools without acknowledging the pain and devastation wreaked by this policy on aboriginal communities. They provide a sobering example of how the issue of ‘difference’ should not be approached in Catholic schools. For more information on the schools: J. R. Miller, “Residential Schools,” \textit{The Canadian Encyclopedia}, accessed August 30\textsuperscript{th}, 2015, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools/.

\textsuperscript{30} A few landmark events deserve mention. The first is the legal challenge by the Township of Tiny, Simcoe County (labelled ‘Tiny vs. the King’), which went to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the highest court of appeal of the British Empire. In 1928, the court ruled that Catholics were not entitled to funding for their schools beyond grade 10. In addition, the funding provided for grades 9 and 10 would be at the elementary level, below that received by public schools. In 1930, Toronto businessman Martin J. Quinn founded the Catholic Taxpayers’ Association to fight for funding equity which, despite some early success still failed in their goal of full funding. Nevertheless, they did effectively keep the conversation going.

\textsuperscript{31} McGowan, “The Enduring Gift.”
Finally, in 1971, William Davis’ Conservative government obtained a majority, partly on the promise not to extend full funding to Catholic schools. In fact, Davis planned to tax Catholic high schools. He launched the Blair Commission to assess support for his plan, only to find the Commission confronted everywhere by Catholics adamant that their schools should receive full funding. In 1984, on the basis of the Commission’s findings, Davis completely reversed course and extended funding for Catholic schools right to the end of grade 13.

The resulting expansion of the Catholic system was dramatic. “By the year 2001 there would be 172 English-language and 52 French-language Catholic high schools. This total represented an increase of 104 and 47, respectively, since Davis’ refusal to extend the separate school system in 1971.”

In thirty years, the number of Catholic high schools had more than tripled, indicating huge support for the system despite decreasing Church attendance among Catholics during the same period. Roughly

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32 The reason for the rapid expansion in the system, and maintenance of a steady share of approximately one third of students, does not appear to have been fully explored from a scholarly perspective. Some new students would certainly have been Catholics who, in the days before full funding, could not have afforded the tuition for the senior grades. A 2014 opinion piece in The Globe and Mail argued that, “Many [non-Catholic parents] believe Catholic schools provide better education, structure and discipline than public ones, and in many cases, they’re right”. Konrad Yakabuski, “Ontario’s Catholic Schools are more Contradictory than Ever,” The Globe and Mail (May 8, 2014), accessed Sept. 1st, 2015, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/ontario-catholic-schools-are-more-contradictory-than-ever/article18540730/. Yakabuski argues for an end to funding for Catholic schooling, but the question arises as to whether the schools would maintain the same perceived standard without the religious dimension. While this question is outside the scope of this research, it would certainly be an interesting area of future enquiry. The reasons expressed above were also supported by comments on an online chat group for non-Catholic parents whose children are in Catholic schools. Some were clearly motivated by religious reasons even though they belonged to a different denomination (or in one case were Jewish). The additional draw of geographic proximity also arose (http://www.fertilethoughts.com/forums/general-parenting/712989-anybodys-non-catholic-kids-go-catholic-school.html).


While Ontario Catholics rejoiced over the funding decision in 1984, the Bishops originally held reservations about the new legal requirement that Catholic high schools would henceforth have to accept any Ontario resident (not just Catholics).\footnote{Bishops’ Commission for Education, “Pupil and Teacher Access to New Catholic Secondary Schools: Pastoral Guideline from the Bishops’ Commission for Education to All Provincial Catholic Educational Associations” (Toronto, Ontario: Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1984).} Even more, although they did not want jobs to be lost, they worried about the effect of an influx of non-Catholic teachers displaced from jobs in the shrinking public system into the growing Catholic system. Clearly, religious diversity was perceived primarily as a challenge rather than a blessing. Davis insisted that universal access was non-negotiable and, after reflection, the Bishops issued a statement expressing, at least as far as high schools were concerned, “their conviction that the admission of non-Catholic students was congruent with the ecumenical mission of the Catholic school.”\footnote{Robert T. Dixon, “Completion Affirmed,” in \textit{Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario, 1964-2001}, vol 4 (Toronto, Ontario: Catholic Education Foundation of Ontario), 250.}

As far as teachers were concerned, the Bishops felt that no non-Catholics should lose their job as a result of the move to full funding but that first priority for transfers should be given to Catholics who had been working within the public system. However, in order to ensure the Catholic identity of the schools, they argued that, “Catholic teachers should constitute not less than ninety per cent of academic staff.”\footnote{Bishops Commission for Education, 1984, 6.} Despite this,
Catholic school historian Robert Dixon affirmed in a 2003 article to the Toronto-based Catholic Register that according to many Catholic educators and chaplains, the huge influx of non-Catholics over the years complicated the task of creating a specifically Catholic environment.38

The initial concerns about Catholicity arising from full funding reflect an ongoing tension between a Catholic ethos of hospitality, and the desire to ensure that Catholic schools are recognizably Catholic. As we shall see, these concerns over hospitality versus identity have not diminished with time.

In 1997, the Ontario government significantly changed the funding rules for all schools by implementing Bill 160. From that point forward all schools have been funded on a ‘per pupil’ basis. School boards were amalgamated into larger units, and numbers of trustees were reduced as education became more centralized. The bill was opposed by all teachers’ unions in the province, both public and Catholic, since it reduced both local control and overall funding to schools. Nevertheless, it passed into law and continues to be the source of funding for all schools in the province of Ontario today. Access to Catholic education remained unchanged under the new system.

The economic history outlined above both hides and reveals negotiations and conversations at the local level. Compromises and eventual collaboration have allowed Catholic schools to thrive. For instance, the ability of Catholic schools to survive on limited funding points to the willingness of multiple people in varied and separated

communities to work together for solutions. The influx of Catholic immigrants from many different countries after each of the World Wars changed the character of schools on the ground. The sacrifices of priests, religious, and lay people who poured their sweat and salaries back into their schools in the early years embedded an ethic of hard work and creativity into Catholic schools. The female religious traditions opened schools as an area of female leadership long before most professions were truly welcoming to women. As the number of priests and religious decreased, lay people began to find their way as pastoral and religious leaders in fields such as chaplaincy that had traditionally been reserved for those called to the ordained or consecrated life.³⁹

Today in Ontario there are 31 English Public school boards, 29 English Catholic school boards, 4 French Public school boards and 8 French Catholic school boards. The relatively equal number of boards reflects the administrative breakdown according to geography rather than board population. As mentioned previously, roughly a third of Ontario’s students attend Catholic schools. As the number of students drops province-wide due to changing demographics, the battle to attract these students is heating up.

The existence of fully funded Catholic schools continues to be challenged, but so far without success.⁴⁰ Addressing the effort to abolish funding for Catholic schools,


historian Christopher Moore states, “There are costs to running parallel systems, but the cost - political as well as financial - of abolishing, against the will of those who rely on it, a system that seems to do a good job of educating so many of Ontario's students, would also be immense.”

But Catholics and their supporters cannot simply assume that their school system will continue (or should) either because of Constitutional guarantees or current levels of support from participants who still form a voting minority in the province. The desire to safeguard the system impacts heavily on decision-making and provokes a variety of responses from Catholics. Some would circle the wagons, while others feel the system should mirror more closely the public system. Today, the Catholic system must prove itself not only to Catholics but to the rest of Ontario as well, not just because of funding, but because the full diversity of the province is now represented within a diminishing student population.

The cultural landscape of Ontario continues to be in constant flux and transition, which means that those who hold a stake in Catholic education must both be in constant negotiation with the larger Ontario culture, while also maintaining an ongoing internal conversation and search for what it means to be Catholic in today’s world. There is no single answer to how this is to be done; in fact, the process of conversation, of dialogue and listening across the boundary of multiple differences must be viewed as an endless

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ongoing habit for proponents of Catholic education. If there is any answer at all, it is in the existence of conversation itself.

The long history of Catholic education in Ontario has been marked decisively by efforts to protect, expand or better fund the system. In comparison to the early common schools and later public system, Catholics saw their system as the outsider struggling to survive. But the transition to full funding brought change. Catholic school populations became increasingly multicultural and religiously diverse as Catholic high schools became more permeable to the culture as a whole. While Catholic school boards retained the right to give priority in hiring to ‘practicing’ Catholics\footnote{Meaning that Boards would usually require a pastoral reference from a priest for new employees.}, this too became increasingly difficult to exercise meaningfully with the drop in Church attendance. With arguably fewer school personnel holding a deep attachment to their Church, the question of the Catholic nature of Catholic schools became more pressing.

2 Chaplaincy

As early as 1985, the Bishops of Ontario called for the establishment of full-time chaplains within Catholic secondary schools: "One of the most promising needs is certainly the upgrading of chaplaincy work into a full ministry of pastoral service or care that will take the "what" of religious classes and translate it into the "how" of Christian Catholic living within the whole regime of the school and the life of the faculty and
students." That full time ministry is carried out largely by lay people today. Most school boards hire chaplaincy leaders who hold degrees or certificates in theology or divinity and have prior experience in the pastoral care of young people either through parish ministry or camps. As Catholics who attend Church and reflect on their faith, they may be among a minority within some school staffs. Chaplains nevertheless have a responsibility toward all students and staff.

As a relatively new ministry, chaplaincy in Ontario Catholic schools remains a vulnerable and evolving position. Both the chaplaincy organization Catholic School Chaplains of Ontario (CSCO) and the Bishops and other partners in education have developed a number of guidelines for the performance of the ministry in schools. Typically there is one full time chaplain in each high school or, more rarely, two or more part-time chaplains. For the majority of school boards, chaplaincy is a non-unionized position, however for several school boards, including the large York Catholic District School Board, chaplains are selected from members of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association. Some school boards, including the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, employ both teaching and non-teaching chaplains. This means that there is as wide a variety in qualifications, expectations, pay, benefits, and job security amongst members of CSCO, as there is in the performance of the ministry.

In 2009, the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops established the following four points as essential to Catholic School Chaplaincy:

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that secondary school chaplaincy is exercised for the whole school community, students and staff;
that it seeks an increase in the Christian faith-life of all;
that it is ecclesial in its nature and its goal;
that it is shaped by the educational setting in which it is carried out. 44

What does this mean in the current culture? First, in light of today’s context, diversity and difference must be recognized amongst the ‘whole school community’. Chaplaincy must still be exercised with those who are not Catholic or who question Catholic teaching. Given that this may describe the majority of students in Catholic schools today, the question of how this is done informs the heart of this exploration.

Secondly, the task of increasing Christian faith-life must take into account diversity, and reflect on how we increase the faith-life of someone who is not Catholic and does not want to become Catholic. This is what is meant by chaplaincy “being shaped by the educational setting.” Is there room to increase a person’s faith-life without asking them to abandon all of their religious beliefs? Can we be respectful of another person’s religious identity while still promoting a Catholic faith? Certainly, there is tension here.

Third, the ‘ecclesial nature’ of chaplaincy must be interpreted taking into account the highly diverse context of Catholic schools. For some bishops, this may mean directing the community toward the Church in an effort to fill pews. But for chaplains, an ecclesial approach must also return to the root of ‘ecclesial’, from the Greek for gathering or assembly. Those who enter the door already belong to the ‘ecclesia’. Although the Church shapes context, theology and worship, the chaplain must think of all students and

staff as already belonging to God. The chaplain seeks ways of bringing awareness of the Church and of God’s presence to an assembly of people where each one already belongs. And finally, the shaping of ministry in accord with the educational setting is critically important, and must also recognize the larger societal, economic and political context. Very importantly, how does the vision of the Ministry of Education of Ontario align with or contrast with the faith vision, values and goals of Catholic schools? And how does chaplaincy address this?

3 Society, Culture, and Church

This section will investigate the interplay of the overlapping contexts in which Catholic schools find themselves. It will approach it through three lenses: a) The Ontario Ministry of Education Mission Statement; b) Catholic Social Teaching; and c) Church and Society.

The Ontario Ministry of Education prioritizes the following in its mission statement: “Learners in the province's education system will develop the knowledge, skills and characteristics that will lead them to become personally successful, economically productive and actively engaged citizens.”\(^4\) There are many positive aspects to this statement, however the crucial relational dimension of human life is missing as far as Catholicism is concerned. Collectively such goals could just as easily lead toward affirming a culture of power and consumerism unless tempered by an equal

emphasis on relationship and community, neither of which are explicitly mentioned in the statement. Personal success may lead to a prioritization of individuality over and against community. Economic productivity may lead to consumerism at all costs. And active engagement may lead to a desire for power and prestige, thus leaving others powerless and marginalized, unless shaped by an orientation to service and justice.

In Catholic schools, Catholic Social Teaching (also known as the Social Doctrine of the Church) provides a more community-oriented and transformative vision of society. Beginning in the late 19th century with Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* and continuing to the present day, the Church has sought to promote a form of society based on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.46 Four permanent principles undergird this understanding: the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity.47 “The principles of the social doctrine, in their entirety, constitute that primary articulation of the truth of society by which every conscience is challenged and invited to interact with every other conscience in truth, in responsibility shared fully with all people and also regarding all people.”48 Because the teachings deal with ‘all people’ they are particularly apt for Catholic schools, with their diverse populations. The principles are often fleshed out into 7 or 10 themes, such as the following: 1) The life and dignity of the human person; 2) The call to family, community and participation; 3)

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46 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 39-47. This section provides a brief overview of the history of Catholic Social Teaching.

47 Ibid., 71, par. 160.

48 Ibid., 72, par. 163.
Rights and responsibilities; 4) Preferential option for the poor and vulnerable; 5) The
dignity of work and the rights of workers; 6) Solidarity; 7) Care for God’s creation.49

Within this Catholic vision, each person has dignity and worth, and contributes
meaningfully to a society which supports everyone regardless of difference or
disadvantage. Those who are poorest and most marginalized are given priority of care
through the option for the poor and vulnerable. Pope Francis states, “Solidarity, in its
deepest and most challenging sense, thus becomes a way of making history in a life
setting where conflicts, tensions and oppositions can achieve a diversified and life-giving
unity.”50 This could certainly describe Catholic schools. Society is recognized as part of
the greater reality of God’s creation, and with that comes a sense of responsibility and
care. Pope Francis’ recent encyclical Laudato Si is only the latest in a long line of papal
encyclicals to remind humanity of its responsibilities toward each other and the world.51

It would be simplistic to paint secular society (as represented by the Ministry of
Education statement) as always antithetical to Church. There is much that is good within
our society in its ongoing struggles to uphold human rights and freedoms, and address

49 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching,

50 Francis I, “Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium of the Holy Father Francis to the
Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s
World,” 24th November, 2013, par. 228, accessed January 15th, 2014,
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-
ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.html.

51 Francis I, “Encyclical Letter Laudato Si’ of the Holy Father Francis on Care for our Common
Home,” 24th May, 2015, accessed July 15th, 2015,
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-
laudato-si.pdf.
human and global needs. However, some priorities within society run counter at times to Gospel imperatives and thus Catholic Social Teaching. Michael Downey names two of these areas of collision as follows:

The first is the low esteem for human life increasingly apparent in our culture. This is greatly at odds with the riches of the Christian heritage. If not outright hostile, our culture is certainly “unwelcoming soil” for a Word of Life that safeguards the dignity of each human person created in the image of God, a Word in defense of the wounded and the weak, the last, the littlest and the least. The second element that creates unwelcoming soil is materialistic consumerism. ⁵²

Yet the contrast between Church and society is not as clear cut in practice as some Christians might like. In *The Prophetic Imagination*, Walter Brueggemann suggests that, “The contemporary American church is so largely enculturated to the American ethos of consumerism that it has little power to believe or act.” ⁵³ Whether this is true or not within the Catholic Church in Ontario today, it has certainly been the case in the past, (as the building of monumental and expensive churches and the acquisition of objects and land over centuries attest), and Catholics need be vigilant. It would be easy to acquiesce to the dominant culture in Ontario which pushes schools to ‘produce’ students who are knowledgeable and critical thinkers, but who will primarily fit within (rather than challenge) a society that often prizes consumerism, materialism and hierarchies of power (including those associated with culture, economy and religion). But Catholic Social Teaching specifically calls for a challenge to such a society.

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4 Royal Consciousness

Brueggemann calls the dominant consumerist and hierarchical vision of society ‘Royal Consciousness’ or ‘Imperial Consciousness’, tracing its biblical presence in both the reign of the Egyptian Pharaoh of Moses’ time, and the reign of Solomon.

“Covenanting that takes brothers and sisters seriously had been replaced by consuming, which regards brothers and sisters as products to be used.”\textsuperscript{54} In a society frequently unconcerned by ever-growing numbers of sweatshops, unemployment, homelessness, refugees, and the concentration of wealth within corporate entities at the expense of local trade, it is hard not to sense that Royal Consciousness, or imperial reality, is on the rise.

Pope Francis acknowledges the damage of such a society at the beginning of his exhortation \textit{Evangelii Gaudium} when he states:

\begin{quote}
The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interest and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God’s voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

Royal Consciousness feeds on selfishness, and in turn feeds selfishness. Pope Francis’ statement that one of the dangers is that “there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor” and that this leads to an inability to hear God’s voice or feel the joy of his love is particularly important. In the exhortation he discusses oppression and exclusion at length, including the effects of free market economies that disenfranchise people, and a

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 27.

\textsuperscript{55} Francis I, \textit{E. Gaudium}, par. 2.
violent security-conscious political world that enforces oppression on the poorest and most vulnerable. He calls for a return to ethics, and for Catholics a return to living the joy of the Gospel in the world through reaching out to the most marginalized.\textsuperscript{56} This document has much to offer the high school chaplain.

The Church must be careful however in discussing society. The bishops and others have at times unhelpfully adopted the term ‘post-Christian’ to describe the culture. The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO) stated for instance, in a 1993 letter discussing their vision of Catholic schools:

"There are great challenges to the living out of this vision in the changing circumstances of our times. We live in a post-Christian culture: conflicting understandings of what it means to be human, and of the purpose and ultimate end of life mark our era. None of us is immune to the effects of individualism, materialism, relativism, and secular humanism."

\textsuperscript{57} In a similar way, James T. Mulligan suggests as recently as 2006 that, "The post-Christian culture is now the landscape for the mission of the Western church. It is also the working context for Catholic educators."\textsuperscript{58} While these criticisms of society are relevant, and even echo Brueggemann, Downey and Pope Francis, the language used to describe them risks removing a sense of responsibility toward culture from the shoulders of Catholics, while dulling the realization that in fact no one operates separately from the

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{57} Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO), “Fulfilling the Promise: The Challenge of Leadership.” (1993), accessed August 8\textsuperscript{th}, 2015, \url{http://www.acbo.on.ca/englishweb/publications/fulfilling.htm}.

surrounding culture. The self-alienating term *post-Christian* suggests incorrectly that Christianity holds no responsibility for the temptations of Royal Consciousness on the one hand, and that culture is entirely negative on the other. It also evokes the image of Christianity on one side of a divide and culture outside its borders.

The prefix *post* reflects Northrop Frye’s notion of a ‘pastoral myth’ with its “evocation of an earlier period of history which is made romantic by having a more uninhibited expression of passion or virtue or courage attached to it.”  

If the problems of today arise from the fact that the culture is *post* (i.e. no longer) Christian we are left with the fictitious impression that back in the mists of time Ontarians lived in a uniform Christian culture devoid of complex or conflicting challenges. But the struggle against Royal Consciousness has been as internal to Christianity as it has to culture over the centuries. We need only look to the wealth of Rome, or the Crusades, or the Inquisition for obvious examples. Closer to home, there are the Indian Residential Schools, or the sexual abuse cover-ups. According to Ronald Rolheiser, “The Church, too often, outside of its official doctrines, gives us the same narrative as the world: success, power, winning!”

Perhaps this is what St. Timothy is warning against when he speaks of the ‘outward form of Godliness’ in the introductory quote to this chapter. Therefore we must

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be discerning and conscientious in our emphasis and adherence to certain values within the Church as well. Again, Catholic Social Teaching serves well.

As a minority system within Ontario embedded in a Church that sometimes pictures itself as separate from the surrounding culture, Catholic schools risk developing what Northrop Frye termed a ‘Garrison Mentality’. Frye explains that “A garrison is a closely knit and beleaguered society, and its moral and social values are unquestionable. In a perilous enterprise one does not discuss causes or motives; one is either a fighter or a deserter.” Note that Frye only gives two options – fighter or deserter – for those in the garrison. Taking down garrison walls and reaching out to the wider world is not an option.

The Synod of Bishops began to take steps away from a garrison mentality with its reflections on the New Evangelization in 2012. These focused particularly on re-invigorating Christianity amongst baptized Christians who had drifted from the Church. However, the synod still emphasized primarily the negative aspects of culture in contrast to Church, and made only passing reference to the importance of Catholic Social Teaching. While the Synod did positively emphasize that “The new evangelization is a call to the Church to rediscover her missionary origins,” the pedagogy it promoted

61 Northrop Frye, 351.


63 Ibid., par. 81
prioritized the Creed, the sacraments, the commandments and the Lord’s Prayer – all things that may appear fairly esoteric in comparison to Catholic Social Teaching for those not grounded in Church. Lay people were viewed as an important part of this, but primarily within their secular environment or as catechists and teachers. Lay ministry was not discussed in other forms. Pope Francis’ teachings have shifted the focus to Catholic Social Teaching, and to a recognition of the value of beginning with dialogue.

Today we might use the term ‘Other’ to designate those not welcome in the garrison. And yet, according to the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, “The human person cannot find fulfilment in himself [sic], that is, apart from the fact that he exists “with” others and “for” others.”64 Fundamentally, the notion of garrison contrasts with the important and more vital idea of community. The idea of garrison evokes impenetrable walls, while the idea of community allows for conversation and embrace across difference even as it maintains a cohesive identity. Community allows for more diversity, even prizes it, while the garrison holds it at bay.

Thomas Groome concurs that in Catholic education “there are dangers of elitism, or worse, sectarianism.”65 Groome’s warning is valid if Catholic schools attempt to set themselves above or apart from a culture they deem post-Christian. The Catholic system’s ongoing struggle for existence should serve as a source of empathy towards marginalized peoples, rather than a reason for separation and isolation, or any kind of

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64 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 73 (par. 165).

hierarchical ‘setting apart’. Perpetrating a strong dichotomy between culture and church conceals the truth that the church is actually deeply embedded within the culture. Context matters and the Church can never be divorced from it. This is a good thing. The Church holds certain values dear, and one of them is community where all are welcomed by virtue of their dignity as human beings. “The complete fulfillment of the human person, achieved in Christ through the gift of the Spirit, develops in history and is mediated by personal relationships with other people, relationships that in turn reach perfection thanks to the commitment to improve the world, in justice and peace.”

The Catholic school then must both be prepared to bring notions of human dignity, belonging, community, service, solidarity, relationship and faith into an education system that still meets the expectations of the Ministry of Education. It must recognize the flaws of society and seek to heal them, particularly within itself, without setting itself above or apart. Chaplains fill a role in helping schools to negotiate this tension.

5 Belonging and Difference in the School Community

Marilyn Legge states that, “Similar to the construct of “home” in the history of theology and ethics, community has been a presupposed category, since it resided in the

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area of “what everyone knows.” It is necessary to identify assumptions, sometimes unexamined, about who is presumed to belong in Catholic schools, and who may be understood in some quarters as the Stranger or Other in our midst. We need ask what difference means in Catholic Schools, and what blinders might fog our ability to see or understand the context. What do we take for granted? And who might not feel at home in our schools? These are questions this research will address.

The questions may first be applied to Ontario schools generally, both public and Catholic. Each school community is unique of course, and continuously changing as students enter or graduate. But the dominant Ontario economic and political agenda that legitimizes a hierarchical understanding of the world (Royal Consciousness) affects a sense of belonging for many students. Certainly, other, more relational goals operate in schools as students are taught to cooperate and accept one another. But future economic success within the Royal Consciousness remains one of the fundamental goals of education as demonstrated by the Ministry of Education mission statement quoted earlier. Those who cannot reach that goal easily may feel like outsiders and failures.

In other words, in society there is a pecking order, and this is reflected in schools. Part of the role of education is, as reflected in the Ministry of Education vision statement,

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68 While the focus of this paper is on human relationship, this must be understood within the greater picture of relationships within all of creation. An excellent exploration of this is given by: Ruth Page, “Evolution and the Problems of Providence,” in *Intelligent Faith: Celebrating 150 Years of Darwinian Evolution*, ed. John Quenby and John MacDonald Smith, (Winchester, UK: O Books, 2009), 170-180.
to unapologetically make students successful within that pecking order as it exists. Unfortunately student self-worth may be tied to their ability to achieve such success, whether academic, athletic or social. Those who are less successful may feel less worthy. They may feel ‘different’.

Letty Russell clarifies that, “Difference is not just diversity or variety in general. It refers to concrete elements in our lives that separate, distinguish, or contrast one group or person with another.” In Ontario as a whole identifiers such as race, ethnic background, wealth, ability, religion, gender and sexuality can constitute borders between people, and markers of difference, depending on location and regional culture. This is potentially an issue in all Ontario schools, but in Catholic schools the theology and stories that inform how difference is perceived will come at least in part from Catholic tradition. Thus certain differences may be less easily dealt with within a Catholic school context, while other differences may be more welcomed within the same context. The research will seek to identify what these might be.

Catholics hold tight to a visionary ideal of Gospel love of neighbor but often trip over their own human nature and fearfully refuse to really extend that love to those who seem different or ‘Other’. Jean Vanier, Catholic founder of L’Arche, states:

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70 Marilyn J. Legge, 6. Legge states, “[For example], values and teachings of radical inclusion are found in early Christian ideas of egalitarian discipleship in which women and men, slaves and free, Jew and Greek are to be included, where violence is eschewed and forgiveness is to be the ethic of community. Yet on the other hand, this language which functions in many liberal congregations today is often taken to mean privatized, “just for those who believe and act the same as we do.”
We are all frightened of those who are different, those who challenge our authority, our certitudes, and our value system. We are all so frightened of losing what is important for us, the things that give us life, security, and status in society. We are frightened of change and, I suspect, we are even more frightened of our own hearts.\textsuperscript{71}

The things that ‘give us life, security, and status in society’ help define our identity, and schools have a fundamental role in helping students do just that.

Schools do more than simply impart dry knowledge in a sterile environment. Chandra Mohanty notes importantly that, “the academy and the classroom itself are not mere sites of instruction. They are also political and cultural sites that represent accommodations and contestations over knowledge by differently empowered social constituencies. Thus teachers and students produce, reinforce, recreate, resist, and transform ideas about race, gender, and difference in the classroom.”\textsuperscript{72}

It is essential to remember that persons cannot be reduced to markers of identity, whether singly or in multitude. Human beings are complex, unique, and constituted of multiple identities. In postcolonial theology the term \textit{hybridity} describes the perpetual in-betweenness of human nature.\textsuperscript{73} Stereotyping can sometimes reduce a person to a single characteristic, thus lessening the perceptions of their full humanity and impeding their ability to develop and maintain meaningful relationships. The Church speaks out

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\textsuperscript{71} Jean Vanier, \textit{Becoming Human} (Toronto, Ontario: Anansi Press, 1998), 73.


\end{flushright}
strongly against such reductionism, stating, “The common denominator among these is the attempt to make the image of man unclear by emphasizing only one of his [sic] characteristics at the expense of all others.” Efforts to address bullying and promote inclusion must be careful not to succumb to reductive temptation.

What should the approach be to difference in Catholic schools? What is called for on the part of those who hold some portion of power – Catholic staff, administrators, bishops, parents, students, and especially chaplains – when confronted with difference? The answer trips off the lips of course, straight from the Gospel: love your neighbor; love your enemy. The Church affirms this. The bishops affirm this. The schools affirm this. In fact, everyone affirms this but still fears get in the way. Here then, is where an ethos of hospitality may help.

6 A Sample Controversy

History tells us that negotiation and compromise have shaped Catholic education, but a story from our time shows us better what that means today. The recent controversy over Gay-Straight alliances in Catholic schools serves as one example of how questions of belonging, difference and Catholic identity are negotiated today.

In June 2012, the Government of Ontario passed Bill 13, known as The Accepting Schools Act 2012. The bill amended the Education Act, instructing school boards to develop clear policies to prevent bullying and promote acceptance across diversity. This included among other things, providing professional development to staff, using surveys

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to test school climates, and implementing strategies to deal with incidences of bullying should they arise. It also required that all schools allow students to engage in “activities or organizations that promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name gay-straight alliance or another name.”

The impetus behind the particular focus on the treatment of people due to sexual orientation and gender identity arose partly from a rash of suicides during the previous year by people of sexual minorities, including a fifteen year old Ottawa boy by the name of Jamie Hubley. At the same time, a 2011 statistical survey of Canadian schools by Egale showed definitively that “most LGBTQ students and students with LGBTQ parents do not feel safe at school.”

The actual statistics were 64% and 61% respectively, or in other words almost 2/3 of students who identified themselves within those categories. Interestingly, the survey also found that a majority of straight students (58%) were equally disturbed by homophobic comments in their schools.

In the wake of Hubley’s death and the Egale study, educators and politicians sought new ways to support sexual minority youth.

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76 Catherine Taylor et al, *Every Class in Every School: Egale’s Final Report on Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in Canadian schools.* (Toronto: Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2011), 27. LGBTQ is an accepted acronym for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual Two-Spirited Queer or Questioning, and will be used in this thesis to refer to anyone who considers themselves to be a member of a sexual minority.

77 Ibid., 17.

78 Ibid., 26.
What was to be done? The Egale study had found that, “Students from schools with GSAs are much more likely to agree that their school communities are supportive of LGBTQ people, are much more likely to be open with some or all of their peers about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and are more likely to see their school climate as becoming less homophobic.” The Accepting Schools Act 2012 intended to ensure that such GSAs could be formed should students want them.

The approaching legislation set off a storm of controversy within the Catholic school community. On the one hand the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association and the Catholic Principals Council of Ontario backed the bill. On the other, the Ontario Catholic Trustees Association and the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario decried the loss of religious freedom to determine what happens in Catholic schools. In anticipation of the impending legislation, the Trustees released in January 2012 a document laboriously named Respecting Difference: A Resource for Catholic Schools in the Province of Ontario Regarding the Establishment and Running of Activities or Organizations Promoting Equity and Respect for All Students (hereafter referred to as Respecting Difference).

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79 Ibid., 19.

80 GSA is an acronym for Gay-Straight Alliance. These may be defined as “student-led organizations which exist to provide support to sexual minority students, to educate others about sexual orientation, and to counter the homophobia, marginalization, and bullying to which many queer and questioning youth are still subjected in schools.” Paul Clarke and Bruce MacDougall, “The Case for Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) in Canada’s Public Schools: An Educational Perspective,” Education Law Journal 21 (2) (2012): 155, accessed December 5th 2013, http://search.proquest.com/docview/1018090330?accountid=14771.

81 Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association. Respecting Difference: A Resource for Catholic Schools in the Province of Ontario Regarding the Establishment and Running of Activities or
While affirming in general the Church’s teachings on the promotion and protection of human dignity, the carefully worded document nevertheless seemed more concerned with sexual morality than combating discrimination. “This Resource is based upon the need to recognize that it is possible to respect, affirm and support the dignity of another person while at the same time disagreeing with their viewpoint on sexual morality.”82 The trustees missed the fact that the key issue for students is persecution due to sexual and gender identity rather than ‘sexual morality’.

In this sense, Respecting Difference fell in line with older documents issued by Canadian Bishops. The 2004 Pastoral Guidelines to Assist Students of Same Sex Orientation states, “A high school which may be seen by reasonable people generally to be giving tacit consent to homosexual sexual activity would be guilty of grave scandal.”83 The 2011 Pastoral Ministry to Young People with Same-Sex Attraction likewise warned that educators should help students “avoid involvement in a “gay culture” opposed to the Church’s teaching, with its often aggressive and immoral lifestyle.”84 Here a stereotypical and unsupported view of non-heterosexual people appears to surface, dangerously undermining the goal of ending bullying based on sexual orientation.

82 Respecting Difference, 5.
All of these documents left an ambiguous message with Catholic educators. On the one hand, bullying of sexual minority youth was unacceptable. On the other, doing anything to promote the dignity or rights of LGBTQ students might be perceived at the very least as ‘tacit consent’ of sexual immorality and therefore could result in reprimands or disciplinary action. Despite the Church’s teaching that “sexual orientation is discovered, not freely chosen”\textsuperscript{85} (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2357-58), and that we are called to affirm the dignity of all, the focus remained primarily on sexual immorality, not bullying or inclusion.

In addition, \textit{Respecting Difference} forbade staff from initiating the formation of clubs to address discrimination and bullying specifically against LGBTQ youth. Instead, students would have to be the initiators of any such clubs and would have to approach the principal and put their request in writing. This runs contrary to customary practice for clubs or teams in high schools. Naming of the clubs, should any students bridge the hurdles set out, was controversial too with the Bishops opposing any use of the word gay (the document explicitly recommended the use of the title ‘Respecting Difference’ for the clubs). The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops stated that, “‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’ are often cultural definitions for people and movements that have accepted homosexual acts and behaviours as morally good.”\textsuperscript{86} To define someone as different from how they


see themselves risks denying their identity. The Bishops’ directives appeared to have the aim of keeping gays, lesbians and other people from sexual minorities hidden from view, if not entirely excluded.

As Bill 13 approached passage into law, the Bishops of Ontario became more strident in their opposition to the formation of GSAs in Catholic schools. They continued to denounce the use of the word ‘Gay’ insisting on the tongue-twisting ‘persons of same sex orientation’. They opposed the formation of any club that had bullying due to sexual identity as its sole focus. Only generalized anti-bullying clubs should be formed in their opinion. They insisted that fundamental religious freedoms were being assaulted. Nevertheless the legislation passed, and students, with staff at their side, jumped through every hoop. GSAs arrived at several Catholic schools in Ontario in the fall of 2012 including, not without struggle, my own.

7 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explore the context of this research from a variety of perspectives, including the historical background and current context of high school chaplaincy in Ontario. It has considered both the wider reality of Catholic schools, and the way in which chaplaincy always holds a local flavour even while it is embedded in a broader system. The complicated journey of Catholic education in Ontario continues

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with the challenges it faces today as exemplified by the furor over Gay-Straight Alliances. Different partners such as the Bishops, school board officials, school employees, parents, students and taxpayers continue to negotiate over the way Catholic schools function much as they have throughout the last nearly 200 years.
Chapter 3
Ministry Amidst Diversity and Difference

The teenager sits before me, her pain overwhelming, of loss, of fear. Her father is terminally ill. I have nothing to offer, nothing but compassion, presence, maybe God. Inside I kneel before the burning bush. A soft flame ignites gently, spreads through us, unstoppable, irresistible, and comforting to both of us. We pray.

It's like that some days, this sense of God, of the divine – organic and real, like water, fire, and wind.

And then there are the other days.

Most interestingly, the days when God feels most present are not necessarily the easiest. The tearing of the veil of heaven can happen so unexpectedly, confronted by the pain of another, the reality that there is nothing to do but reach out for God with the one who suffers, and just be.

On the mountain, God burned for us, exposed, vulnerable, unconsumed. God always burns for us, and in us, if we allow it. And sends us out like Moses to care for the poor, free the slaves, confront the Pharaoh and simply be there for each other.

It’s difficult, this business of being with God. Not because God makes it so. We do. We crowd our days with things, goals, aspirations and fears. But what is most needful sometimes is just to let go. Be there. Be still. Be.
In the weeks and months ahead, the teenager’s father will enter into his passion, that journey toward death that Jesus endured, that all of us must endure.

Even as we live, we die. Even as we die, we live. The father will have to let go of his life and his child. And his child will have to let go of him.

But in that letting go, in that enforced passivity, in that passion of love and of being there that this family will journey through, God will be present, burning for all of them through the moment of death and ever after. And I hope, in some small way, that God will help me be present for them too.  

What does it mean to be a school chaplain? What theology animates this vocation and gives it direction? This chapter will explore more deeply my theology of chaplaincy first introduced in chapter one. It will then draw out theological and other theoretical resources that may have bearing on the question under investigation. As a reminder, that question is as follows:

This study will investigate how an ethos of hospitality may assist chaplains in Ontario Catholic schools to minister to increasingly diverse school populations, in a way that takes seriously the complex realities of both the Church and contemporary society.

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After introducing my theology of chaplaincy, I will explore more deeply four areas of theology that contribute to understanding the ministry of chaplaincy within a diverse context. These are scripture, postcolonial theology, a theology of the cross, and theological understandings of hospitality.

1  A Theology of Chaplaincy

A useful metaphor for high school chaplaincy could be a circle with Christ at the center. A pendulum, after all, circumscribes a circle, and for the chaplain Christ is indeed the anchor. A Trinitarian view allows me to see that God must be at the same time the anchor for the pendulum, animating the movement of it, and present with all those who ride it, watch it, or think about it. More practically, by sitting in a circle we see each other face-to-face, as equals. Even when only two people are present, there is always a third – the presence of God. We form our own mirror trinities with the infinite God around us, within us, holding us. Our circles are not closed, but expand, transform, and interlock with others. The chaplain may initiate a circle and invite others in, but within its framework each person offers hospitality to another. I am animated in my ministry to offer proactive circles, restorative justice circles and grief support circles through this imagery.

1.1  The Pastoral and the Prophetic

In chapter one I identified two primary orientations for chaplaincy which I named as the pastoral and the prophetic. The pastoral focus of chaplaincy is based on being
there, to echo Monaghan and Renehan’s earlier statement (chap.1). For a high school chaplain this involves a welcoming engagement with another, an effort to facilitate relationships between others, and a search for God’s presence in every situation. Within a circle, pastoral care is offered when each person is called to minister to others. This is leadership without hierarchy. This is community at its best, with everyone belonging, beyond garrison walls and limits. I can only be a ‘faith presence’ when I recognize the ‘faith presence’ of others. They can only see me when I truly strive to see them. And in seeing each other, in saying ‘I am here’, we see the Imago Dei, and we see God. “Since something of the glory of God shines on the face of every person, the dignity of every person before God is the basis of the dignity of man [sic] before other men [sic].”

Taking this open-ended approach, to the question of what one thing occupies most of my chaplaincy time, I would have to answer ‘conversation’. These conversations take many forms, and may involve prayer, laughter, tears, and even silence. But through conversation we work together as a community to support each other and reach out to God. For this reason, I believe the ‘Synthetic Model’ of contextual theology, as explained by Stephen Bevans (2010), best fits my ministry model. The synthetic model emphasizes an openness to dialogue, with truth emerging in a complex interaction of present context, scripture, tradition and other contexts or thought forms. Praxis matters

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89 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 63, par. 144.

profoundly as do conversation and context, and the search for truth should be approached from many different angles. According to Bevans:

The practitioners of the synthetic model would say that it is only when women and men are in dialogue that we have true human growth. Each participant in a context has something to give to the other, and each context has something from which it needs to be exorcised. [...] In terms of theology, it will be recognized that it is not enough to extol one’s own experience as the only place where God can speak. One can also hear God speaking in other contexts and – perhaps in a particular way – in the contexts in which the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures were written. 91

Dialogue occurs not only between two individuals in the present, but also across time and space. The Tradition of the Catholic Church provides a rich history of resources emerging in different ways from different places. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines Tradition in the context of the transmission of the faith as follows: “This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, ‘the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes’.” 92

Tradition thus encompasses practices, wisdom, beliefs, assumptions, texts, ritual, praxis and even the internal search for truth itself. As theologian Richard P. McBrien says, “The Church’s Tradition is its lived and living faith.” 93 A multitude of documents and texts emerge from the Church in every generation demonstrating the need for reason

91 Ibid. 91.

92 Catechism of the Catholic Church, canon 78, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s1c2a2.htm.

and continued dialogue between culture and tradition. Pope Francis’ recent writings capture the imagination in his efforts to bring the Church to the world. Already several documents of the Association of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO) and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) have been mentioned in the exploration of context for this research. These documents from local conferences arise from dialogue between the broader view provided by the Vatican and the culture in which the associations of bishops find themselves.\(^\text{94}\) Yet Catholic Tradition does not demand blind adherence but rather an internal wrestling, an ongoing conversation between the world and faith as experienced and understood. Each individual Catholic is called to engage in internal dialogue and discernment over the teachings of the Church. According to the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*, “Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man (sic). There he (sic) is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths.”\(^\text{95}\)

\(^{94}\) Some of the important Vatican documents that explore the mission of Catholic schools and that would provide the background for both individuals and national bishops’ conferences include the following:


Bevans notes the particular importance of scripture as a means of reaching for God. The synthetic model does not accept a literal or fundamentalist interpretation of scripture however, because of the importance of dialogue and context even here. To quote Bevans again:

God’s revelation, therefore, is understood to be something that is historically circumscribed within the particular contexts in which the scriptures came to be written, and so has a particularly contextually conditioned message. But it is also understood at the same time to be operative in one’s own context, calling men and women to perfect that context through cultural transformation and social change.  

The praxis element of the synthetic model becomes most evident in the second focus of chaplaincy, the prophetic, which deals explicitly with ‘cultural transformation and social change’. A chaplain cannot be an effective faith presence without also seeking to build the Kingdom, as Christ modelled it. As Pope Francis states, “An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it.”

The idea or value that runs beneath the metaphor of circle is that humans exist primarily to be in relationships of mutuality with each other and God, yet it runs counter to much of what society and thus modern education teaches students. The Ministry of Education stresses ‘personal’ success, not communal success even though the two may not be antithetical. Christ on the other hand constantly drew people back into community through healing the sick, forgiving the sinful, and simply being present with the outcast.

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96 Ibid.

97 Francis I, *E. Gaudium*, par. 183.
Even within the solitude of prayer a person is always accompanied by God. Thus community and belonging become fundamental values to work toward within Catholic schools.

Monaghan and Renehan’s definition of ‘faith presence’ reveals a deeper dimension when explored in the context of the complex diversity of our times. To ‘be there’ with a student who feels marginalized may mean to confront that marginalization with them. To ‘be there’ with the world means to see and address the interconnected issues of our time. Sometimes the passive must become active. Charity is never-ending and never enough without justice. Ronald Rolheiser notes how fundamental this is to ministry, stating, “‘Nobody evangelizes effectively without taking seriously the non-negotiable scriptural imperative that our faith is judged by the quality of justice in the land, and that is itself to be judged by how the most vulnerable groups (“widows, orphans, and strangers”) are faring.’”98 This then is where social transformation enters the picture.

### 1.2 Criticizing and Energizing

Walter Brueggemann states that a ‘prophet’, or by extension those who seek social transformation according to the model set by Christ, must adopt two approaches to reach the community. The first is to *criticize* the imperial reality or Royal Consciousness,

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and the second is to *energize* the community. Marilyn Legge identifies two similar approaches, naming them *denouncement* and *announcement*. She states:

> Adequate theological practice, therefore, involves a complex engagement in the messiness of struggles for justice and community in the multiple forums we inhabit or connect with. Then “denouncement” emerges as lamentation, careful analysis of the sources of suffering, and opposition to structures and practices deemed sinful. “Announcement” envisions grace, naming sources of sustenance and hope, especially for those most deprived.⁹⁹

What does it mean to criticize/denounce and energize/announce within a Catholic school community? In order to *criticize* effectively, the chaplain must cultivate within the community an ability to grieve the current situation, and to feel empathy with those who suffer.¹⁰⁰ Thus the many social justice initiatives within the school begin with a critique of reality as it exists, in order to open the imagination to how it could or should be in the kingdom as Christ describes it. Here, through telling the story of a situation of injustice, the chaplain, together with school partners – both students and staff – begins by both educating and informing the community of injustice. This may include anything from the loss of water rights, to indigenous issues, to the plight of immigrants, to the victimization of war, and beyond. Criticism arises out of compassion, and aims to strengthen relationships weakened by power imbalances or injustice. The biblical example of lament illustrates the prophet’s attempts to *reach out* to a numb

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community. According to Michael Downey, “Lament is not endless moaning, but springs from the hard recognition of deep loss that gives way to hope.”

Reaching out involves both quiet accompaniment (being there), and vocal denunciation of systemic injustice. The Church asserts that the social doctrine, “entails a duty to denounce, when sin is present: the sin of injustice and violence that in different ways moves through society and is embodied in it.” This process of criticizing and denouncing out of a sense of grief and lament is necessary to open the door to hope for a new reality. Otherwise the feeling that nothing will change or can change could lead to a self-protective acceptance of the status quo – a garrison. Without the willingness to name what is wrong, the school lacks the capacity to truly welcome into its midst those affected by discrimination, abandonment, displacement, poverty or other social ills. Their story will remain unheard, and their presence diminished.

This aspect, criticizing, may be facilitated in many ways. If the injustice involves a situation in the school itself, then there must be dialogue and deep listening for all those involved. The dignity of all those affected must be upheld. If the injustice is global or national, it may involve bringing in speakers to share their experiences, poverty exposure trips, simulation games, documentaries and other activities. Criticism may also be


103 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 36, par. 81.
achieved through the choice of books, films and music used for curricular purposes. Films like *The Matrix*\(^{104}\) for example (used in our Grade 12 Religion classes), may open discussion on such things as corporate power, violence, numbness, the effects of increasing technology, and the transcendent power of love. The movie *Amazing Grace*\(^{105}\) demonstrates the personal empowerment faith supplies to effect social change. Margaret Atwood’s now classic novel *The Handmaid’s Tale*\(^{106}\) provides an opening for discussion on a wide range of social justice issues. And music like the Fray’s *Be Still*\(^{107}\) draws the listener back to God’s still anchor at the center of the complexities of life. The chaplain then needs to keep aware of current culture, and may provide suggestions to colleagues about useful tools for learning, or bring activities directly to the students through retreats, coffee houses, class visits or simply casual conversation. In all of this the task of criticizing is furthered by connecting issues of today to the bible. Ruth’s life as an immigrant, the Hebrew people’s slavery, the Exile and other stories resonate with the experiences of people today, and are often deeply embedded within contemporary films and stories. By doing this, the connection of justice to faith is deepened on the one hand, and the lessons of the past offer inspiration for today.

\(^{104}\) *The Matrix*, directed by Andy Wachowski and Lana Wachowski (Warner Bros, 1999).


The second aspect, energizing (or announcement), is just as important and in fact must always be married to the criticizing aspect. To criticize without hope or vision of a better future is pointless and despairing. Several theologians including Ronald Rolheiser, Walter Brueggemann and Mary Jo Leddy emphasize the need for imagination here. Rolheiser calls for the inflaming of the ‘romantic imagination’ of the Church.\textsuperscript{108} Brueggemann emphasizes the need for what he calls Prophetic Imagination.\textsuperscript{109} And referring specifically to Catholic schools, Leddy notes that, “action for transformation ultimately relies on the transformation of our imaginations rather than on ethical urgings.”\textsuperscript{110} But how to do that in an age of distracted if not lost sheep?

Narrative may hold the key both to identity and imagination. Much of what has been mentioned above energizes even as a critique is provided. Again, scripture offers a focus, and I would suggest that chaplains should have a profound knowledge of it and connection to it. Here the minister reaches into the memories of the past, remembering the truth that change has come and can come again. Stories energize and catalyze. More than just memories of the past, they provide imaginative direction for the future. Different endings are possible. Different perspectives matter. The stories we choose to explore offer guidance, but also say something about who we are.


\textsuperscript{109} Walter Brueggemann, \textit{The Prophetic Imagination}, 40.

The Ontario Catholic high school is not a community made up entirely of Catholics. That is the reality today. But it is an educational community committed in one way or another to foundational Christian narratives that interact with ethical views on the world. Narratives matter. Stories matter. Tom King affirmed this for Canadians when he stated in his Massey lecture, “The truth about stories is that that’s all we are.”

While King exposes the harm stories have done to aboriginal peoples, he also reveals the strengths and insights people draw from their stories. The same is true within religious communities.

Any school, whether Catholic or not, could critique consumerist society and embrace difference. The Catholic school approach must arise from the particular foundational stories of the Christian past – biblical, historical and theological. From there, it imagines and works toward a Gospel vision of the future, one which places God at the center of the community, and one in which the ethics of Jesus Christ function as normative. When chaplaincy leaders engage in Brueggemann’s tasks of criticizing and energizing, they must draw on the memories of the faith community that reach back not only across the history of Catholic education, Canada, and Christianity as a whole, but all the way back to the time of biblical witness. The stories of scripture, of the Gospels and ultimately the cross, become the distinctive fuel in Catholic schools for working toward an alternative reality counter to the imperial model. Critique and vision arise out

of these stories as they dialogue with the present. As Paul VI stated, "the whole history of humanity’s salvation is one long, varied dialogue, which marvelously begins with God and which God prolongs with human beings in so many different ways."

For many chaplains, social justice groups and school wide events provide the structure to both criticize and energize the community. School assemblies, brought alive through music, sound and speech, tap into our culture’s opportunities for communication. Concrete activities that allow students to take ownership of an issue are vitally important. These might include letter writing campaigns, solidarity walks, banners, fasts, classroom presentations, and the like. Sometimes it is just a matter of a simple table in the hall, staffed by concerned students who wish to make an issue known and work for change. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram have their place in spreading information as well. The tools come from our time, but the message is ancient, biblical, eternal.

My experience suggests that true hospitality to all members of the Catholic school community requires listening to alternative interpretations and versions of foundational stories in a common search for truth. It is the act of wrestling with each other’s stories, respectfully and with openness that must remain. Conversation and reflection remain key for chaplains in search of interpretations that respond imaginatively to contemporary needs. What we may not have, is silence.

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112 This is not to diminish or disallow the stories of other religious traditions in all their richness, only to say that it is within the Christian tradition that we begin our search for understanding.

2 Scripture: Narrative in Action

Exploring scripture deepens a Christian community’s understanding of their own identity. Scripture operates like a conversation, with the stories engaging each other in an ongoing discussion about God and humanity. The reader constitutes one part of this incredible conversation, one that follows the history of humanity for almost five thousand years. “The stories we tell about ourselves – as individuals and as communities—help to provide us with a sense of orientation: they tell us not only who but also where we are, in both a literal and metaphorical sense.”

While an in-depth look at all applicable scripture passages is well beyond the scope of this work, two particular points arising from scripture are essential to my theology of ministry. The first is a particular perception of Christ’s kenosis at the center of the chaplain’s ministry, and the second is an understanding of the ethics of Christ.

2.1 Kenosis

The ethics of Jesus stand as the primary lens for seeking wisdom and hospitality in the world, and the kenotic self-emptying on the cross described by Paul in Philippians 2:5-8 lies exposed as a foundational representation of that ethics:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,

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being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Such a passage seems a long way from the mission statement of the Ministry of Education. And ‘death on a cross’ may appear completely disconnected from the modern problems of difference, hierarchy and exclusion. But Brueggemann disagrees, stating:

It is the crucifixion of Jesus that is the decisive criticism of the royal consciousness. The crucifixion of Jesus is not to be understood simply in good liberal fashion as the sacrifice of a noble man, nor should we too quickly assign a cultic, priestly theory of atonement to the event…. The criticism consists not in standing over against but in standing with; the ultimate criticism is not one of triumphant indignation but one of the passion and compassion that completely and irresistibly undermine the world of competence and competition.115

An attitude of ‘standing with’ echoes Monaghan and Renehan’s description of school chaplaincy as ‘being with’ others. On the cross, Christ’s hybrid identity is fully actualized – both king and convict, both divine and human – embodying difference fully, while drawing all into relationship with God. Christ offers the ultimate example of solidarity and accompaniment.

This kenotic image of the cross suggests that Chaplaincy leaders in Catholic schools should consider how they may help draw their communities into solidarity with those at the margins. For Christ, solidarity with a sinful humanity meant giving even life away. For chaplains it may mean giving away fears of difference, for the compassionate, loving center of Christ.

Given the widespread diversity within Catholic schools, chaplains must acknowledge that for some non-Christians, the cross may symbolize oppression and exclusion. Understanding the cross as signifying sacrifice for the other and welcome may remain an animating image for chaplains, but they cannot assume that it means the same to all members of the school community. Reclaiming the cross as a symbol of hospitality and steadfastness could become part of the storytelling and modeling that the chaplain may engage in. But recognizing Christianity’s complicity in oppression remains important too. Fortunately, God as Trinity provides multiple images of the divine; the chaplain may offer these to students in ways they find relatable as they pursue their own life journey.

Miroslav Volf posits a theology of embrace, emerging from an understanding of Christ’s self-giving on the cross, to describe a process of approaching the other. His thoughts emerge from his experience as a Croatian affected by the Croatian-Serbian conflict, and is deeply grounded in Christian theology. He focuses primarily on the social agent rather than social arrangements. Although Volf recognizes that “Social arrangements condition social agents’ and social agents fashion social arrangements,” he is nevertheless critical of postmodernity’s attempts to shift moral responsibility from the individual to society as a whole. For chaplains however, both are important. Both social transformation and personal relationship matter, as already noted.


117 Sherene Razack offers a contrasting perspective. She demonstrates that the subject position of any individual will heavily influence their ability to exercise rights. She argues that the predominant Canadian narrative that describes our society as free of racism and sexism hinders the ability of classrooms
The cross signifies divine self-donation for Volf, and becomes the model for Christians to follow, particularly in their approach to difference. Solidarity is a key theme which, “must be fully affirmed, for it underlines rightly the partiality of divine compassion toward the ‘harassed and helpless’ (Matthew 9:36).”\(^{118}\) Self-donation must be distinguished from submission, so often demanded from women in particular. The former maintains the identity and dignity of the giver, and allows for the gift of relationship to be developed between equals.

Volf identifies abandonment as the ultimate pain of the cross.\(^{119}\) Solidarity and relationship counter abandonment and thus in schools they become themes for reflection and discussion. Belonging stands against abandonment, and for the one who feels abandoned or excluded, hospitality becomes the force that draws them in. Volf connects this inextricably to an indispensable “struggle against deception, injustice and violence.”\(^{120}\) He asserts that, “the will to give ourselves to others and “welcome” them, to readjust our identities to make space for them, is prior to any judgment about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity.”\(^{121}\)

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\(^{118}\) Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, under “Introduction.”

\(^{119}\) Ibid.

\(^{120}\) Ibid.

\(^{121}\) Ibid.
Making space for others is a defining act of hospitality I would suggest. Making space is both an attitude and an action; it is both relational and organizational. And it is not easy.

2.2 Gospel Ethics

The following survey of several key Gospel passages lays out an understanding of the ethics of Christ that may be helpful to chaplains. The four areas to be considered include: The Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), Matthew 25, Luke 4, and John 4.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) provides one of the clearest outlines of the ethics of Christ, particularly from the perspective of the Synthetic model of theology. It begins by identifying who shall be the focus of ministry with the Beatitudes.¹²² These alone compel us to think about what it means to be blessed or poor or meek or a peacemaker, and much else. “The Church’s love for the poor is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, by the poverty of Jesus and by his attention to the poor. This love concerns material poverty and also the numerous forms of cultural and religious

¹²² The Beatitudes as found in Matthew 5:1-7:
When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
3 ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 ‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
5 ‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
6 ‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
7 ‘Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
8 ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
9 ‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
10 ‘Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11 ‘Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely’ on my account. ¹²³Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
poverty.”

The Beatitudes describe those marginalized by the Royal Consciousness, and therefore those who are central (or should be) to a Christian community. They reflect on both relationship and community. Immediately after proclaiming the Beatitudes, in Matt 5:13-16, Jesus describes the attitude of the minister (or any Christian) as salt of the earth and light of the world. Let us be salt of the earth, grounded in our communities. Let us be light to the world, reaching out to others. From here, Jesus explains the correct attitude to scripture – not as letter of the law – but as animating spirit of the human person and the community. It is more than action that matters; it is a complete change of spirit. Therefore, it is not enough to simply avoid murder or violence; reconciliation with others and relationship must be fostered regardless of difference (Matt 5:21-26). Other ethical injunctions include honesty (Matt 5:33-37), non-violence (Matt 5:38-42), love of enemies (Matt 5:43-48), humility (Matt 6:1-5, 16-18), prayer (Matt 6:6-13), forgiveness (Matt 6:14-15), non-greed (Matt 6:19-34), non-judgment (Matt 7:1-6), persistence (Matt 7:7-20), the Golden Rule (Matt7:12), and finally the truth that actions speak louder than words (Matt 7:21-28). This last point is particularly important for chaplains. It is not enough to simply lead prayers and organize retreats. Chaplaincy is an active presence generating social transformation with a school community, and connecting this transformation to the presence and call of Christ. Fortunately, these passages form the heart of the New Testament sections studied in each of the religion courses offered in Catholic high schools under the curriculum established by the bishops with the approval of the Ministry of Education.

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123 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 80, par. 184.
In his weekly general audience of August 6th, 2014 Pope Francis pairs the Beatitudes with Matthew 25, stating first that “The Beatitudes are the path that God indicates as an answer to the desire of happiness inherent in man, and perfects the Commandments of the Old Covenant.” He then describes Matthew 25 as, “one of the fundamental criteria to verify our Christian life, against which Jesus invites us to measure ourselves every day. I read the Beatitudes and I think how my Christian life should be, and then I do my examination of conscience with this Chapter 25 of Matthew.” Interestingly Francis ties the exercise of conscience, of decision-making, to the idea of offering hospitality to the most marginal within the Royal Consciousness.

Pope Francis provides a powerful example of discernment and reflection on the application of scripture to daily life. Both the Beatitudes and Matthew 25 are outward looking, in the sense that they call us to see beyond ourselves, beyond our own borders, to those who stand at the margins and may need us most. These passages help us identify where hospitality may be lacking, and where relationship can make the greatest difference. Together they point to those who may feel little sense of belonging in a

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125 Matthew 25: 37-40: Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

society dominated by the Royal Consciousness, and the appropriate attitude of the
Christian toward them. The gift of time that lies at the heart of hospitality must be
offered first to those who have the least resources to compensate for it.

Like the Beatitudes, the parable of the Sheep and Goats in Matthew 25 reminds us
that we reach out to God through reaching out to those who are most often excluded and
marginalized. Those who do not reach out are later rejected in the parable as ‘goats’.
And yet they have not broken a single one of the Ten Commandments. The ultimate sin
according to this passage is one of neglect, of not offering hospitality where it is needed.
As already noted, Miroslav Volf names this as abandonment. Comparing it to the
indifference of the Priest and Levite in the Good Samaritan, Volf states, “abandonment
flows from disdain for those whom we feel justified in excluding from our concern on
account of their immoral behavior.”

His idea of ‘immoral behavior’, suggests those
who are excluded are in fact blamed for their position (inasmuch as they are given any
thought at all). Indeed, that fits well within a society based on the Royal Consciousness
that often blames the poor for being poor and the gay for being gay, and within a religion
like Catholicism which historically has sometimes blamed and condemned those whose
beliefs differ from the magisterium. On the one hand, the Gospels and many Catholic
teachings urge chaplains to embrace all. On the other, certain elements of society and
perceptions of Catholic teachings could urge them to protect a status quo that legitimizes
neglect within both the Church and the culture. The Gospels must take precedence.

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127 Volf, Exclusion and Embrace, under ‘The Anatomy and Dynamics of Exclusion’ in Chap.2.
128 Ibid, under ‘Contrived Innocence’ in Chap.2.
In terms of diversity in Catholic schools, one of the root questions that arises from these readings comes from Matthew 25:35b, when the king says, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” In order to understand difference, we must ask who is the stranger amongst us? Who might not feel at home? What borders exist between us? And how might we cross them? As Christine Pohl says, “The possibility of welcoming Christ as our guest strengthens our kindness and fortitude in responding to strangers.”  

Turning to the other Gospels briefly, Luke and Mark concur well with this portrayal of Jesus’ teachings. Luke focuses heavily on Jesus’ embrace of the excluded and marginalized. For example, he conveniently has Jesus record a ‘thesis statement’, in his opening speech at the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30). Whether the Isaiah 61 passage he reads was simply the reading of the day, or whether Jesus selected it himself, this is the reading Luke chooses to record because it focuses the reader on Jesus’ call to the world. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18,19). Jesus launches into a sermon reminding the congregation that in scripture the poor and the sick have always had priority with God, even when they are not Israelite. He evokes the example of hospitality provided by the widow of Sidon to Elijah, and the healing of Naaman the Syrian leper (where Elisha refused payment) (Luke 4:26-27). He has now extended the lesson from

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care for those that we see as ‘one of our own’ to those we see as ‘other’. The
congregation is scandalized and he is chased away, but the message endures to this day.
Indeed, justice and hospitality lie at the core of Jesus’ message throughout the Gospel of
Luke. Chaplains may find it helpful to remember this call of hospitality as they struggle
to meet the demands of the different partners in Catholic education.

John’s Gospel uses a different tone than the Synoptics, but aligns well with them in its portrayal of Christ’s justice and hospitality. The story of the Samaritan Woman at
the Well (John 4) begins with Jesus asking for hospitality, just as he did with Zacchaeus
in the Gospel of Luke (19:1-10). Jesus is direct in his request to the woman for water.
And she is surprised, because she knows herself to be marginal to his world from every
perspective – gender, religious practice, and moral behavior. Yet he draws her to him,
accepting her gift of water, and offering his own living water in response. Again, a
relationship forms here as part of the hospitality given and shared, and that relationship in
turn restores the woman to her place within society.

Thousands of years later we still must ask in our current context, who are the
poor? Who are the captives and the blind? Who are the oppressed? Who are the ‘other’?
Are we treating them as we should? And are we ‘proclaiming the acceptable year of the
Lord’? Are we forming relationships and accepting both the reality and the hospitality of
others? Is our hospitality reflective of Christ’s standard? Or are we chasing away
anyone who suggests that we do better?
3 Postcolonial Theology: Wisdom, Borders and the Cross

Postcolonial theology offers insights into ministry across difference. It challenges traditional theologies that have primarily been formulated by European men, by bringing into the conversation voices of people from the global south, indigenous peoples, blacks, women and others who have been historically excluded. There are lessons here for chaplains.

Postcolonial theologians prioritize wisdom over knowledge since knowledge is often a product of colonial power. Indeed, I would propose that wisdom, not knowledge, be the primary educational goal of Catholic schools.

Geraldine Céspedes explains that wisdom is “oriented more to understanding the mysteries of life and the suffering of human beings. Wisdom, therefore, draws on life experiences and attempts to extract from the practical norms of conduct for helping human beings to live in justice and harmony among themselves, as well as with the cosmos and with God.”130 Wisdom arises in the negotiation of understanding and space between those who see and experience the world differently. Knowledge may lead to success and even power, but wisdom leads to relationship and responsibility. Knowledge must therefore serve wisdom. Wisdom is not opposed to knowledge; it focuses it in a particular way. It calls us to draw the different disciplines within our

schools into greater conversation so we may move beyond the self-satisfying interests that serve multinational corporations and governments at the expense of humanity and world. Wisdom lives at the border.

The concept of margin or border is critical for chaplaincy leaders, as is the search for wisdom. While classroom teachers must often prioritize knowledge to meet the demands of the Ministry of Education, chaplains might ponder how they may prioritize wisdom to meet the commands of God. In fact, all those who would promote Catholic education should arguably place themselves in the spaces that the Royal Consciousness declares marginal, least royal, most despised. They must hearken to the Beatitudes (Matt 5:1-11) and turn to the cross, that place where Christ demonstrates a love so deep for those reviled and forgotten, that he suffers torture and death rather than abandon them.\textsuperscript{131}

Céspedes and others note that certain sources of wisdom have been excluded in the past, including the wisdom of those outside the realm of power, of oral traditions, of the body, experience, and women.\textsuperscript{132} Mayra Rivera explores these themes in connection to Sophia, arguing that “Sophia stands in and as the difference, the interval, between God and creation.”\textsuperscript{133} Sophia is hybridity itself, the border between human and divine.

Wisdom thrives whenever one person reaches out to another, and whenever relationship

\textsuperscript{131} The relative poverty of Catholic schools in Ontario up until 1984 meant that this may have been an easier task in the past. Wealth hides difference under a uniform consumer identity. It proclaims that margins and borders represent all that is to be feared and as such, should be avoided. It throws up walls against the wisdom found in diversity and difference.

\textsuperscript{132} Geraldine Céspedes, 36-37.

is formed across the borders of threatening differences. This is where chaplains must locate themselves. Rivera connects this to Jesus, the border crosser, “who transgresses the accepted boundaries of class, gender, religious purity, and, above all, the human-divine divide.”\textsuperscript{134}

Kwok Pui-Lan comes to a similar conclusion, describing ‘Jesus/Christ’ as a hybridized concept, “a “contact zone” or “borderland” between the human and the divine, the one and the many, the historical and the cosmological, the Jewish and the Hellenistic, the prophetic and the sacramental, …”\textsuperscript{135} Again, if Catholic school chaplains are to place Christ at the center, then negotiating borders between difference becomes a fundamental task. Thus we sit in our circles, to return to the earlier metaphor, each person’s identity sacred, but reaching out to each other. And the only way across the circle is through the center.

Homi K. Bhabha states that, “The boundary becomes the place from which something begins its presencing….”\textsuperscript{136} Importantly, a boundary is both a meeting place and a dividing line. The idea is not to erase differences between people. In an authentic encounter relationships form that change each person, but without absorbing one identity into another. Thus the goal in Catholic schools is not to push Muslim or Sikh students to convert to Catholicism, even though they may be ministered to by a Catholic chaplain,

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 198.


\textsuperscript{136} Homi K. Bhabha, “Introduction,” chap. in \textit{The Location of Culture} (Oxford: Routledge, 1994), 5.
and will be offered something of Catholic faith. Rather it is to witness to who we are, to engage people from different religions in relationships of responsibility and hospitality, and leave an open invitation on the table. Similarly, LGBTQ students should not be asked to hide or suppress their identity. Neither must religious or sexual identities be allowed to mask the complex and hybrid nature of any person in the community. The role of the Chaplain is to love as closely as possible to the way in which Jesus loved, trusting that love will move people in the direction they need to go, and that God is already here.

4 Hospitality

During the years that I taught in Africa, I was both an outsider and an insider. I was an outsider as someone who did not know the culture and language, and did not have a place within the web of relationships that form both a personal history and a community. I was an insider, a person with power, as someone with a degree, work, and fluency in the language of business – English. I never stopped being both, even with the welcome I was given and the friendships that I formed. But what allowed me to thrive, to feel secure and happy, was the hospitality offered to me by the people of the community where I lived. Their generosity inspired me in turn to reciprocate and, despite failures and social gaffes, ground myself in relationships of care and mutual respect even across our differences.
According to Jacques Derrida, the ‘Foreigner’ is, “the one who, putting the first question, puts me in question.” Derrida is referencing Plato’s *The Sophist* here, and reminds us that it is the one who is perceived as different who calls into question our own identity and our own ways of operating. During my years in Africa (eight in all), my identity was continuously judged, even as I judged others. I was at times host (to my students) and at times guest (to the country and my students), and often both. The foreigner (and I use the term loosely here to indicate the one who seems somehow different) provokes a response. Derrida notes that the Latin for ‘foreigner’, *hostis*, is simultaneously the root word for hospitality and hostility, host and hostage. When we encounter someone we perceive as different, we make a choice in our reaction to them. We may react out of fear, turn them away, even do violence to them in some way. Or we may embrace them. They too have a choice, revealing the reciprocal nature of hospitality despite the relationships of power that may underlie an encounter. The fundamental question arises: How will the one who is perceived (or perceives themselves) as not quite belonging, be welcomed into Catholic schools by Chaplains?

If Catholic schools are to welcome the other, then I propose that hospitality is bound to solidarity – that is the relationship of responsibility that recognizes that we all truly live together and depend on each other. Both hospitality and solidarity work together to foster relationship in contrast to the imperial consciousness. But the concept

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138 Ibid., 45.
of hospitality must be approached carefully. It is often understood as a dichotomous relationship between host and guest. “According to this understanding, the stranger/guest is the one who is welcomed into the space of the host and who receives from the largesse of the host.” Such a definition certainly acknowledges a real potential power dynamic, but masks the complexity of hospitality, and the double-sided nature of relationship. Furthermore, it ignores the communal nature of relationships embedded as they are within cultures, societies and institutions.

Christ demonstrates a hospitality that inverts the expected social norms. In this view, hospitality cannot be reduced to charity. Over and over again, Jesus accepts the hospitality of strangers and in doing so offers them the hospitality of his presence (as with the Samaritan Woman). As Derrida says, “The guest becomes the host’s host.” Jesus eats with the outcasts. He visits with tax collectors. And he prompts us to follow suit through his words. In his parable of the Good Samaritan, the injured man receives care only from the outcast Samaritan, the one who would normally neither be given nor be expected to give hospitality (Luke 10:25-37). In The Limits of Hospitality, Jessica Wrobleski explores this briefly, stating “This fluidity or indeterminacy in the distinction between host and guest is nowhere more clearly seen than in the life of Jesus, who welcomed people into the kingdom of God even as he broke bread in the homes of

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others.”¹⁴¹ Fundamentally then, the hospitality of Christ may be defined as more than simply giving to others, but rather as the acceptance of others and the offering of the self in relationship with them. It requires a willingness to try to see others as Christ sees them, and an equally important willingness to hear their story. In particular Christ’s hospitality focuses on restoring right relationship to those who are most marginalized. This requires above all the gift of time.

Christian hospitality drifted at times from the model of Christ in the centuries after the resurrection. Christine Pohl, in Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition traces the evolution of the understanding of hospitality throughout Christian history.¹⁴² Hospitality was personal both in Israelite tradition and within the early church, emphasizing again the importance of relationship. Pohl states, “Welcome, compassion, and equal treatment were all part of a proper Christian response to people in need. Personal hospitality broke down some of the social barriers that were so powerful in the culture.”¹⁴³ While hospitality was offered on a personal level, the ethos was communal and profoundly embedded within early Christianity.

Throughout the Middle Ages (500-1500CE), hospitality became more specialized and institutionalized within monasteries, hospitals, and within the grander households as part of the social networking of the wealthy classes.¹⁴⁴ Although the idea of hospitality

¹⁴¹ Jessica Wrobleski, The Limits of Hospitality, 75.


¹⁴³ Pohl, Making Room, 46.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 48.
continued to matter to Christianity, the manner in which it was offered became more dependent on the status of the one seeking it within institutions. Thus Pohl states that within monasteries and the houses of Bishops,

When all were welcomed, those of lower status were received at a different table, fed different and coarser food, and housed in different lodgings. Distinctions in bread, table linens, and seating arrangements were intended to reflect status differences. Except for hospitality to household servants and their dependents, most provision for the poor was done at the gate, not within the house.\textsuperscript{145}

This is a far cry from the New Testament era practice described in the Acts of the Apostles, where, “they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:45). History demonstrates larger trends, masking to some degree the generous hospitality of individuals and groups in every era. Yet, the historical trajectory indicates how difficult it can be to resist the Royal Consciousness and offer the kind of hospitality modeled and called for by Christ and the early disciples. That struggle continues in Catholic schools today.

Pohl remarks that, “The periods in church history when hospitality has been most vibrantly practiced have been times when the hosts were themselves marginal to their larger society.”\textsuperscript{146} Certainly this appears to be true of Catholic Worker Houses in the current era. Effective houses of hospitality, whether l’Arche or Catholic Worker houses or others, are frequently staffed by people who are close enough to the margins to be able to hear, see and empathize with those who are at risk in society. On a positive note, perhaps then lay chaplains – marginal as they are to the ordained structure of the church

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 51

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 106.
and increasingly marginal to society in their embrace of Christian teaching – will find it easier to grow in their practice of hospitality in the present era.

While Jesus demonstrates hospitality outside the conventions of space, schools must reflect on their use of space. Jacques Derrida notes that an antinomy arises here. Once we offer our home to the Other so that it is their home, it is paradoxically no longer our home to offer.

In other words, there would be an antinomy, an insoluble antinomy, a non-dialectizably antinomy between, on the one hand, *The* law of unlimited hospitality (to give the new arrival all of one’s home and oneself, to give him or her one’s own, our own, without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfilment of even the smallest condition), and on the other hand, the laws (in the plural), those rights and duties that are always conditioned and conditional, as they are defined by the Greco-Roman tradition and even the Judeo-Christian one, by all of law and all philosophy of law up to Kant and Hegel in particular, across the family, civil society, and the State.147

Derrida’s description of *the* law of hospitality runs perilously close to the idea of submission, rejected in the last chapter. The practical decisions that must be made around use of space tell community members whose beliefs and values have priority. How can a balance be maintained in Catholic schools that allows them to be welcoming to all while maintaining a particularly Catholic identity?

The question of space is deeply tied to the question of identity. To lose one’s space to another, even through an act of hospitality, may feel like losing one’s identity. According to Pohl, “Important tensions arise as we seek to sustain a particular identity and welcome strangers. A welcoming place is rich with stories, rituals and a history. It is

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147 Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 77.
valued, and it nurtures life. It is never simply a physical space, but a place alive with commitments and relationships."\(^{148}\) This is certainly true in Catholic schools. At the present time, a fear of loss of identity affects decision-makers at all levels of Catholic education, arguably at both a personal and communal level. Will Catholic schools still be Catholic without a majority of Catholic students? Will Catholic schools still be Catholic if we continue to hire staff who hold religious or moral views different from the Catholic magisterium? Will the Bishops still see themselves as shepherds of the Church if they concede decisions on moral issues to the Ministry of Education? Will the Chaplains still understand themselves as Chaplains if they feel they have primarily become protectors of Catholic identity? Most importantly for this research is the question of how hospitality shifts or changes depending on identity. Is the hospitality offered by chaplains the same for all members of the school community? Are there acceptable reasons why it would not be offered in the same way to all? How is this impacted by school identity?

Just as there are boundaries to space, there are also boundaries to one’s identity. Wroblieski states that, “An object – or a community, or a person, or a space – is identifiable by what it is in part because it can be differentiated from what it is\(^{not}\).”\(^{149}\) However, boundaries should be flexible and constantly shifting in a healthy environment, where there is constant interaction with the surrounding culture. Dialogue across difference creates relationship not because differences are eradicated but because they are accepted, understood and even celebrated.

\(^{148}\) Pohl, 135-6.

\(^{149}\) Wroblieski, 74.
Theological and philosophical reflections can hide the complicated grittiness of hospitality when practiced in the real world. Ministers in various contexts search for ways to live hospitality in ever-changing circumstances. For the Chaplaincy leader, this involves drawing the community into conversation about issues and activism, while ensuring that the school itself, and the chaplain, offer hospitality and operate justly. Together, reflection and experience affirm the need for ongoing conversation and negotiation so that hospitality and solidarity are offered, while identity is preserved (in its continually developing state). Christ’s self-donation on the cross proclaims a profound love for humanity, but Christ does not become possessed by humanity. Rather, He forms the center of our circle, and enters into deeper relationship with all of us.

5 Conclusion

This chapter explored my personal theology of ministry, one that has two primary foci, Pastoral and Prophetic. Both intertwine in their application within the life of the minister. Never separated from its context, I suggest that the chaplain’s ministry promote the search for wisdom over knowledge in schools, and the effort to create a hospitable community shaped by Christ at the center of a circle to which all belong. Borders are recognized between individuals with their unique and complex identities, but relationships are built across them as the chaplain models the importance of reaching out.

across difference to encounter another. This ministry is built on Gospel stories that show Christ’s love for all, regardless of social or religious position, and strengthened by principles of Catholic Social Teaching that arise from the same stories. Finally a tradition of Christian hospitality focused on the margins of society and emphasizing relationship may guide the chaplain as they seek to reveal Christ’s presence in the community.
Chapter 4
Research Method and Design

“The Justice rendered to the Other, my neighbor, gives an unsurpassable proximity to God. It is as intimate as the prayer and the liturgy which, without justice, are nothing”¹⁵¹ – Emmanuel Levinas, 1975

This chapter lays out the methodology (philosophical orientation) and method (research strategies that fulfill the methodology) employed in this research. Max van Manen states that methodology, “refers to the philosophic framework, the fundamental assumptions and characteristics of a human science perspective.”¹⁵² In this chapter we will therefore revisit the research problem, break down the approach to it, expose the methodology, consider the research strategies, explain the process of analysis and validation, and finally address questions of ethics, risks and limitations to this study.

1 Statement of Research Problem

Before discussing the why and how of the research methodology used in this investigation, it is helpful to remind ourselves of the question under consideration:


This study will investigate how an ethos of hospitality may assist chaplains in Ontario Catholic schools to minister to increasingly diverse school populations, in a way that takes seriously the complex realities of both the Church and contemporary society.

I am intentionally bringing the theology of ministry laid out in previous chapters into dialogue with other chaplains’ experiences through this research. My experience of chaplaincy has occurred to some degree in isolation, as the first and only lay Chaplaincy Leader in my school and my community. This investigation seeks to uncover the experiences and stories of several other chaplains, in an effort to learn more about the ministry itself, and the particular role of hospitality within it. As stated already, the research is as interested in further questions as in possible answers.

The research question may be described as a ‘meaning question’. According to Van Manen,

Meaning questions can be better or more deeply understood, so that, on the basis of this understanding I may be able to act more thoughtfully and more tactfully in certain situations. But in some sense meaning questions can never be closed down, they will always remain the subject matter of the conversational relations of lived life, and they will be appropriated, in a personal way, by anyone who hopes to benefit from such insight.  

In other words, this research aims to foster a dialogue to deepen understanding of a complex lay ministry.

The research will take into consideration the following points:

1) how these chaplains understand the concept of hospitality itself;

\[\text{Ibid., 23.}\]
2) what inspires these chaplains to engage in ministry, particularly as related to hospitality, including stories from scripture and events from their own lives;
3) where these chaplains see hospitality at work in their ministry;
4) what challenges these chaplains encounter in embracing an ethos of hospitality.

2 Philosophical Foundations of Research Methodology

A multi-methods adaptation of what Tim Sensing calls Action Research was used to conduct this qualitative research.\textsuperscript{154} As Sensing states, a multi-methods approach “allows various perspectives to engage in a critical dialogue that leads to several sets of rich data, resulting in the possibility for deeper understandings.”\textsuperscript{155} Qualitative research invites the researcher to look deeply into the experiences of a small group of individuals, seeking greater wisdom for the human journey.

My goal is to seek wisdom within the experiences of the lay chaplains of the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario. Given my position as a chaplain within this school board, this research can only be consciously subjective, while striving to name as much as possible my own biases. Max van Manen notes that in qualitative


\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 54
research objectivity and subjectivity are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but need to be re-conceived.\textsuperscript{156}

Thus, “objectivity” means that the researcher is oriented to the object, that which stands in front of him or her. Objectivity means the researcher remains true to the object. The researcher becomes in a sense a guardian and a defender of the true nature of the object. [...] “Subjectivity” means that one needs to be as perceptive, insightful, and discerning as one can be in order to show or disclose the object in its full richness and in its greatest depth. Subjectivity means that we are strong in our orientation to the object of study in a unique and personal way – while avoiding the danger or becoming arbitrary, self-indulgent, or of getting captivated and carried away by our unreflected preconceptions.\textsuperscript{157}

This project is philosophically oriented toward phenomenology. Phenomenology is primarily retrospective in approach, yet it points toward application.\textsuperscript{158} The multi-methods approach allows for the inspiration of one philosophy, even as the specific tools are adapted for the situation and concepts under study. In fact, phenomenologists recognize the need for tools that fit the situation. According to van Manen again,

\begin{quote}
It has been said that the method of phenomenology and hermeneutics is that there is no method (Gadamer, 1975; Rorty, 1979). And yet phenomenology wants to claim it can have it both ways. While it is true that the method of phenomenology is that there is not method, yet there is tradition, a body of knowledge and insights, a history of lives of thinkers and authors, which, taken as an example, constitutes both a source and methodological ground for present human science research practices. Thus the broad field of phenomenological scholarship can be considered as a set of guides and recommendations for a principled form of inquiry that neither simply rejects or ignores tradition, nor slavishly follows or kneels in front of it.\textsuperscript{159}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{157} Ibid. Italics in the original.

\textsuperscript{158} Van Manen, 1990, 10.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 30.
The particular inspiration for this research is the twentieth century philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, who prioritizes human relation and teaches that the only way to reach out to a never-quite-accessible God is through responding to the ethical command of the Other.\footnote{Emmanuel Levinas, “A Religion for Adults,” in \textit{Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism} (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 17.} Levinas’ work is informed not only by the philosophies of his contemporaries and forebears in Western and Eastern philosophical traditions, but also by the ancient texts of Hebrew Scripture, where he focuses first and above all else on the most basic prerequisite to hospitality: “Thou shalt not kill”.

According to Levinas, “L’éthique est la philosophie première.”\footnote{Emmanuel Levinas, \textit{Ethique et Infini: Dialogues avec Philippe Nemo} (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard et Radio France, 1982) 7.} In other words, for Levinas, the pre-eminent aspect of philosophy is ethics, which he defines “by attention and respect for the other as other, by doing justice to the other, by \textit{unconditional responsibility} for the other in his or her otherness, which he also calls ‘goodness.’”\footnote{Roger Burggraeve, \textit{The Wisdom of Love in the Service of Love: Emmanuel Levinas on Justice, Peace, and Human Rights}. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2002), 28.} (Italics added for emphasis). Levinas’ concept of the Other echoes the biblical emphasis on the “Stranger, the widow, and the orphan.”\footnote{Emmanuel Levinas, \textit{Totality and Infinity: An Essay in Exteriority}, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1961/1969), 78.} It resonates too, with Christ’s embrace of the poor, the captive, and the oppressed in Luke 4. In other words, Levinas’ philosophy is one that deals primarily with the issue of human difference as understood in this research.
‘Unconditional responsibility’ points to a Christ-like ideal, one that humans may strive for even as they fail over and over again. In the exercise of hospitality, Derrida, and others have already pointed out that limits arise despite the strongest of orientations toward the Other. Nevertheless, Christian faith demands that we continue to reach for the ideal despite the inevitability of limitations, just as we continue to reach for life despite the inevitability of eventual death. The ultimate self-donation of Christ on the cross – the culmination of a life lived for others, particularly outsiders – may stand as the ultimate model for Christian ministers regardless of how often, in the frailness of our humanity, we may fail to follow through. Levinas offers a philosophy that takes account of humanity’s efforts to reach for the divine through caring for the Other.¹⁶⁴

Some aspects of Levinas’ philosophy and terminology deserve a closer look before proceeding. The explanations below provide no more than a basic introduction to concepts that reflect the immensity of his thought. While this paper remains focused on the research question rather than philosophy, some explanation of Levinas’ perspectives may help us on our way. Three areas will be examined: i) Infinity and the Face; ii) Language and Totality: The Saying and the Said; and iii) Identity.

Levinas uses the term Infinite or Infinity (l’Infini) as the ultimate descriptor of the divine in many of his philosophical works. Yet it also refers to the infinite uniqueness of each individual, each touched by a trace of the divine. The Infinite is testified to by our responsibility to the Other, echoed in the hinneni, the words used by the prophets

¹⁶⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, Difficult Freedom, 18.
repeatedly in their encounters with God: ‘Here I am’. Levinas states, “Quand, en
présence d’autrui, je dis “Me voici!”’, ce “Me voici!” est le lieu par où l’Infini entre dans
le langage, mais sans se donner à voir. . . je dirai que le sujet qui dit “Me voici!”
témoigne de l’Infini.”¹⁶⁵ (Emphasis his) “Me voici!” translated as “Here I am” echoes
the words of the biblical prophets, including Moses before the burning bush (Ex 3:4).

According to Levinas, the face of the Other calls me to take responsibility for
them. “To see a face is already to hear ‘You shall not kill’, and to hear ‘You shall not
kill’ is to hear ‘Social justice’. And everything I can hear [entendre] coming from God or
going to God, Who is invisible, must have come to me via the one, unique voice.”¹⁶⁶

Levinas then connects the desire to offer hospitality, to take responsibility for the
one who stands before us as excluded or outcast, to an understanding of the divine. It is
in the face-to-face that the demand for hospitality is made, and either accepted or refused.

This gaze that supplicates and demands, that can supplicate only because it
demands, deprived of everything because entitled to everything, and which
one recognizes in giving (as one “puts the things in question in giving”) – this
gaze is precisely the epiphany of the face as face. The nakedness of the face
is destituteness. To recognize the Other is to give. But it is to give to the
master, to the lord, to him whom one approaches as “You” in a dimension of
height.¹⁶⁷

As a philosophy, Levinas deals with the responsibility of one person (the self) to another,
or ‘Other’ (autrui). His philosophy does however have limitations that deserve

¹⁶⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethique et Infini*, 102-3. Translation: When, before the other, I say “Here
I am!” this “Here I am!” is the place where the Infinite enters into language, without showing itself. . . I can
say that the subject that says “Here I am!” witnesses to the Infinite.


¹⁶⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 75.
acknowledgement. He does not put forth case studies, or wrestle with the questions chaplains sometimes face, of which of multiple demands should be met first, (although he does address in a theoretical sense the need for justice in the presence of the ‘third party’). 168 According to John Drabinski, “Levinas seems to have had very little interest in world affairs.” 169 Nor does he consider the reciprocity of relationships, focusing only on how the ‘I’ must respond to the ‘Other’. Nevertheless, he exposes something foundational and biblical, something that sits as a backdrop to the vocation of chaplaincy. In the complexity of human society, where all demands cannot be met, where responsibility for one often conflicts with responsibility for another, the call to responsibility to the Other must be answered. 170

Language is an important category of exploration for Levinas, and impacts heavily on his phenomenology. Conversation is not value-neutral, as Chandra Mohanty as already stated. According to Linda Finlay, “Levinas argues that humans uncritically absorb totalizing narratives from society in a complacent, self-absorbed, inauthentic, idolatrous slumber.” 171 (Emphasis in original). These narratives feed into the Royal consciousness, not just through the stories themselves, but through language in itself. But


170 Emmanuel Levinas, Otherwise than Being, 157.

there is hope. Totality and Infinity both exist in the human world, as the title to Levinas’

Levinas speaks of the way in which anything that is said is shaped by what has
been said in the past, and this is embedded in the very structure of language and words.\(^\text{172}\)

Thus, another aspect of Levinasian philosophy that influences this research is an
understanding of what he calls the ‘saying’ and the ‘said’. These are more than
statements about language in the present and past. According to Gilbert Garza and
Brittany Landrum, who seek a methodology applicable to Levinasian ethics, “before
language is about something (the said) it is first spoken to someone (the saying).”\(^\text{173}\)

Levinas sought to separate his philosophy from the focus on ‘being’ of his
predecessors and contemporaries (particularly Heidegger). He argued against the
‘totalization’ wrought by a philosophical world view that sought the essence of things -
the idea that things are one way and not another – and thus allowed for the exclusion of
those defined as different, particularly as manifested in his life with the Shoah. He
understood then that in phenomenology, the description of a phenomenon is a


\(^{173}\) Gilbert Garza and Brittany Landrum, “Ethics and the Primacy of the Other: A Levinasian
Foundation for Phenomenological Research,” *The Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* 10, 2 (October
wn&rft.title=Indo+-+Pacific+Journal+of+Phenomenology&rft.aulast=Garza&rft.aufirst=Gilbert&rft.date=2010-10-
thematization that could unfortunately lead to totalization. The description is dependent on a language full of totalized concepts (the *said*), and once a phenomenon is described, it too becomes thematized, and lends itself to totalization.\textsuperscript{174} Yet this is the only way to converse, and conversation matters. According to Garza and Landrum, “Thematization, is the way in which any *thing* appears as a phenomenon. Experientially, thematization is unavoidable.”\textsuperscript{175}

In order to speak of anything we must have thematization, and this research will investigate common themes in chaplains’ experiences and perspectives on hospitality. To ease this, a reliance on hearing the stories of the chaplains tempers the thematization because it continues to allow for interpretation and discussion. Stories have discernable meanings beyond lists of themes. Multiple choice categories on quantitative surveys cannot capture understanding the way stories can. The influence of Levinas’ philosophy supports the valuing of stories as they emerge in conversation. The research will inevitably draw out the *saying* and it will become the *said*, but it does not presume to be the end of a conversation on these topics. Its conclusions may be used again for the *saying*. The *saying* matters. Language must be used as a way to reach the other.

According to Andrew Shepherd, “For Levinas, the pre-ontological condition of infinite responsibility, the welcome of the Other, the *saying*, cannot be named clearly, defined, or communicated in language, and yet, the *saying* however must be made “incarnate” and

\textsuperscript{174} Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 5-9.

\textsuperscript{175} Gilbert Garza and Brittany Landrum, 4.
manifest in language, and thus become the *said.*\(^{176}\) The *saying* refers to communication offered to another, thus reminding us that language does not exist in a void but presupposes a listener, an Other. A paradox arises then, suggesting that the search for the ‘essence’ or an issue or topic – the typical goal of phenomenological research – is impossible even while it is necessary. Thus this research does not seek a final construct of an ethos of hospitality for high school chaplains, but rather operates more like the observation of a wave moving through the water than a rock on the beach. Something is seen, heard, and appreciated. Understanding grows from perceptions. But even as common themes arise and significant statements are made, the movement of understanding must never be lost from sight.

For Levinas, identity is shaped through taking responsibility for the Other. Levinas argues, “This identity is brought out by responsibility and is at the service of the other.”\(^{177}\) Levinas however also asserts that each individual, even the self, remains unique and completely independent of the Other. In taking responsibility for the other one does not lose one’s identity or uniqueness. Responsibility to the Other, even the kenotic self-giving of Christ on the cross exhibited by the willingness to die for the Other, also does not require that we become in any sense like the Other or less than the Other. Levinas’ work arguably does take on a tone of subservience to the Other particularly when sections are read independently of the greater body of his philosophy. If viewed


\(^{177}\) Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 69
from this perspective, his philosophy could be harmful for women or any marginalized people if it were understood to mean that they serve the dominant class without complaint. But Levinas, in his description of attitudes toward ‘the stranger, the widow, and the orphan’, appears to focus his words primarily on those who have power, or more specifically on his own Self. He does not say what the ‘Other’ should do. He does not say what the one who is excluded should do, and indeed women have often fallen in the category of excluded throughout history. It is the fact that Levinas’ work remains largely theoretical, that allows for a creative response by the researcher. Furthermore the paradox of finding one’s identity through taking responsibility for the Other echoes the antinomy identified by Derrida. Where is the limit to hospitality or responsibility? At what point do we find or lose our self, our identity, or our purpose? I suggest these are questions that confront chaplains in their ministry regularly.

3 Methodological Assumptions

Several fundamental principles or assumptions arise from this for the shaping of this research. First, that the call to hospitality is foundational to Judeo-Christian understanding, and therefore deserves close investigation. As demonstrated in earlier chapters, the language of the Christian canon, Catholic teaching, and now the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas all point to this. Second, that in engaging in research as in other aspects of life, the face-to-face approach should be given pride of place where possible.

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178 There are critiques to be made and conversations to be held around Levinas’ use of the term ‘feminine’, but these are beyond the scope of this research.
Third, that in the two-fold movement of retaining separate identities and yet forming relationship, hearing the stories of others offers a source of wisdom for understanding each other and the topics under investigation. Here, we have the reaching across borders emphasized by postcolonial theology. The border remains, but we draw ourselves into proximity nonetheless.

Levinas himself provides no treatise or instruction on how to approach phenomenological research from his philosophical standpoint. The statement mentioned above that there often appears to be no method for phenomenology is nowhere more true than with Levinas. Gilbert Garza and Brittany Landrum (2010) suggest however several key features they consider foundational to phenomenological research engaged in from a Levinasian perspective. They may be summarized as follows:

1) The priority of the face-to-face approach between researcher and participants.
2) The priority of the spoken word over the written, even though the written has validity as well.
3) Mindfulness of the participant’s alterity (or unique nature).
4) Recognition that in a sense the participant is a “co-researcher”

Garza and Landrum note further that “Levinas’s attention to the pre-ontological and pre-theoretical ethical realm raises the question whether the very notion of Levinasian “phenomenological” research is something of an oxymoron.” However, Levinas recognizes that the inadequacy of language never implies that dialogue should be

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179 Gilbert Garza and Brittany Landrum, 4-6.
180 Ibid., 5.
avoided. In fact, the ‘saying’ is foundational to ethical relationship and thus to the understanding of phenomena in the world. This research is phenomenological in its quest to discover how chaplains understand, use and are impacted by the phenomena of hospitality in their diverse school contexts despite the challenges of diversity and society. It also borrows from case study methodology in its pursuit of stories, or cases, arising from each chaplain’s experience. Yet it does not presume to present the results as a single case study, thus potentially subsuming the voices and experiences of some chaplains beneath those of others. It seeks commonalities, possible new directions, and areas of further conversation and inquiry. As already stated, the importance of not disassociating the self from the other means that this research does not pretend or desire to be clinically objective, except in the sense that it will remain oriented toward the ‘object’ or question under investigation.

As discussed in Chapter 1, this study recognizes that chaplaincy will look different within each unique school community, even as each chaplain engages in a similar commitment to minister to students within the framework of Ontario Catholic education. A broad assumption is that findings from this particular corner of Ontario will be relevant in some way to the rest of Ontario. This assumption is sustained philosophically by the Levinasian perspective that dialogue and conversation is to be promoted, and theologically by the example of Christ who engaged in conversation with both the powerful and the marginalized. All voices matter. The voices of the chaplains of Eastern Ontario offer their insights through this research to chaplains with similar vocations within different schools across the province. The conversation becomes
enriched with each voice, with all the differences and similarities of each person’s perspectives. Given the shared vocation, religious affiliation and history of chaplaincy, the language offers sufficient similarities to understand the regional and local variations of the practice of chaplaincy.

4 Research Strategies

4.1 Participants

The Action-in-Ministry component of this research engaged a group of lay chaplains in reflection and conversation over issues arising from diversity in schools, on what is meant by ‘hospitality’, and on the place of an ethos of hospitality in ministering within their diverse contexts.

All lay chaplains in the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario were invited to be a part of this study. Including myself, there are seven such chaplains in the school board, and all of the other six agreed to participate in the research. There are two Catholic high schools in the city of Cornwall, but otherwise the schools are spread over 7 counties and each school is about 40 to 60 kilometers from the next nearest Catholic high school (there are eight conventional high schools in the board, as well as two small alternative high schools – one of the conventional high schools and the two alternative high schools do not employ lay chaplains). Because of the geographic distance between each school community, chaplains have very little interaction with each other, meeting generally no more than once or twice a year. Nevertheless a sense of collegiality exists,
in part from time spent together at the annual CSCO conference, and chaplains will occasionally contact each other for advice or suggestions. For purposes of this research, this meant that chaplains could be expected to comfortably engage with each other while at the same time offering unique insights based on their individual school communities and practices.

The six participants included one in her early twenties with one year of high school chaplaincy under her belt, four whose chaplaincy experience ranged from five to twelve years, and one who has been working in high school chaplaincy for over twenty years and who retired after the research phase at the end of December 2014. In addition, three of the participants were married men (one had been in the seminary for a short while), one was an engaged single woman (who married her fiancé a month after the focus group/case study – this was the youngest participant), one was a married woman, and one was a nun (this was the soon-to-be retiree). Thus a multitude of perspectives based on age, gender and experience were brought to the research.

Participation was initially solicited informally via email prior to the submission of the thesis proposal. After the thesis proposal passed the University of Toronto Ethics Review, this was followed by a formal email invitation to participate, describing the steps of the research process and including a copy of the Information and Consent Form to review. This form was read aloud together at the beginning of the Focus Group session (described below), and participants were asked to sign and select a pseudonym if they desired one. A copy of the Information and Consent Form is found under Appendix i.
4.2 Data Collection

I functioned in two primary capacities during the data collection phase. The first was to introduce a variety of perspectives on diversity and hospitality (in the initial focus group setting), and provide reflective activities on them. The second was to gather responses and stories from chaplains about how hospitality helps them to engage in ministry across diversity, and where they find challenges and inspiration for such work. I refrained from adding my own views during any of the discussions, and maintained a role of interested questioner.

The data collection phase included: i) a preliminary questionnaire, ii) a full day retreat/workshop that consisted of a) a focus group, and b) a case study, iii) a follow up questionnaire, and iv) individual follow up interviews. More specifically:

4.2.1 A preliminary questionnaire (Appendix iii) was sent to all participants in advance asking for information about their school context. The purpose of this questionnaire was to help chaplains reflect on their personal working context, and also give me information that would help me understand their answers to later questions in context. This questionnaire was returned to me via (scanned) email or brought to the initial focus group.

4.2.2 A full day retreat/workshop was held on September 22nd 2014 in a private room at the CDSBEO school board office in Kemptville. This consisted of two parts: A focus group and a case study investigation. I received consent from the Executive Council of the Catholic District School Board to conduct this
workshop during school time (appendix ii), and I provided a homemade lunch to participants as a gesture of hospitality in keeping with the topic under consideration.

a. **Focus Group:** Perceptions of what it means to be a chaplain were investigated here, as well as understandings of the concept of hospitality. Specifically, participants began by exploring the challenge of difference and diversity in our Catholic school contexts, through a discussion of the preliminary questionnaire, and quotes on difference and diversity from Jean Vanier and Letty Russell (for an outline of the day, see Appendix iv). While phenomenology typically seeks to avoid the influence of outside views, Levinasian phenomenology prioritizes conversation, and its ongoing nature. Thus introducing Christian perspectives for the participants to react to and discuss deepened the conversation. After a break, I introduced the concept of hospitality in a similar way. Here, I showed two short video clips from Jean Vanier on hospitality, and introduced a definition of hospitality from Letty Russell. Participants gathered in a circle and after each clip, reading or commentary, they were invited to respond to a set of questions as listed in Appendix iii. We also discussed the challenges of offering hospitality within our contexts.
b. **Case Study:**

After lunch, the participants participated in the analysis of a group case study (Appendix v). The case study dealt with the question of a Muslim student who wishes to pray in the chapel, and a chaplain’s response given instructions from a Superintendent that Muslim students should not be allowed to pray in school chapels.

4.2.3 At the end of the day together, I shared the **Follow-up Questionnaire** (Appendix vi) with participants, and asked them to write down for me any further questions they felt arose from the day’s experience as regards the applicability of an ethos of hospitality. The intent was to incorporate these questions into a final version of the questionnaire, however there were no changes. The completed questionnaires were gathered when I met with each participant who participated in the individual interview, and emailed to me by the one participant who did not have a follow up interview (due to her wedding). The questionnaire focused on the following topics: stories from scripture or the chaplain’s life that inspired them when they thought of hospitality, practices of hospitality within various aspects of their work (retreats, liturgy, space), challenges to hospitality in their work, and future directions. Most of the chaplains used point form on the questionnaire and then expanded their answers during the individual interview.

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181 The procedure for analysis of a case study was adapted from Sensing. *Qualitative Research*, 148-9.
4.2.4 An **individual interview** was held with all but one of the participants (thus five interviews were held, exceeding the expected goal laid out in my approved thesis proposal (appendix vii) of interviewing three or four). The primary goal of the interview was to explore more deeply the answers to the questionnaire. Several areas in particular were given a greater focus. First, the question of how each chaplain understood the concept of hospitality was explored. Secondly, each chaplain was asked to explain in more depth the impact of two kinds of stories requested in the questionnaire: first, stories of hospitality from the chaplain’s own ministry context, and second, stories that inspire chaplains to engage in what they perceive as hospitality in order to minister across difference and diversity. These could be stories from their personal life, from scripture, from church or society, from books or movies, or from somewhere else. The chaplains were asked to ascertain the role of hospitality in these stories, if they found a role at all, and make connections across various stories. Third the researcher also asked for one or more examples from the chaplain’s own life where they or the school community had been challenged because of the diversity of their school population. It asked them to comment on whether or not, looking back, an ethos of hospitality was present either consciously or not, and if it was not present, whether they felt it would have assisted them. And finally, the chaplains were asked to explain how they felt hospitality was present, if at all, in various common tasks of chaplaincy (such as running prayer services or masses, organizing the chapel, running retreats, etc.).
The interviews put researcher and participant into a face-to-face situation, opening the way for deeper conversation and insight than could be provided by the questionnaire. As Levinas states, “The relation with the Other, or Conversation, is a non-allergic relation; but inasmuch as it is welcomed this conversation is a teaching [enseignement].” 182 These interviews were intentionally open-ended, and were audio-taped. All interviews were completed by mid-November 2014.

4.3 Validation Strategies

The selection of research tools sought to triangulate data by approaching it from different directions. In discussing triangulation, Tim Sensing states, “For qualitative research, three angles of vision are considered the saturation point to support the criteria of trustworthiness.” 183 Sensing recommends that data be triangulated using three distinct perspectives: the Outsider, the Insider, and the Researcher. 184 The Outsider perspective was provided in this research during the focus group and case study when chaplains commented on each other’s perceptions. In their distinct situations, they operate as ‘expert’ outsiders to each other. The Insider perspective was provided by the chaplains themselves, in isolation from the Outsider perspective, in the completion of the initial questionnaire, the follow up questionnaire and the follow up interview. The

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182 Emmanuel Levinas, Totality and Infinity: An Essay in Exteriority, 51.

183 Tim Sensing, 76.

184 Ibid., 75.
Researcher perspective was provided by myself in the analysis of the perspectives of participants, both in light of my own experience which shall be clearly indicated, and in light of the material shared in the previous chapters of this work.

The research tools themselves also focused with different intensities on different aspects of the chaplains’ experiences (or the lifeworld of the chaplain, to use phenomenological language)\(^\text{185}\), as indicated by the key words where, what, how, why and who. Although there was an overlap of information from different tools, the emphasis varied for each phase of the data collection. The initial questionnaire focused on the where of each chaplain’s context. It allowed each chaplain to review the reality of their own context before entering into discussion with others. Aside from providing the researcher with important contextual information, it gave each chaplain the time to think about their own situation in advance of the focus group.

The focus group investigated primarily what the chaplains thought about diversity and hospitality both from a personal and a professional perspective. It encouraged them to compare their perceptions of these concepts against each other’s, as well as those provided by Jean Vanier and Letty Russell.

The case study investigated how the chaplains might deal with a situation that challenged hospitality because of diversity within the schools. Here their convictions were put to a theoretical test as they dealt with a complex situation and shared their

\(^{185}\) Van Manen describes ‘lifeworld’ as “the lived world as experienced in everyday situations and relations”, 1990, 101.
insights. Potential praxis was drawn into the investigation through the case study exploration.

Finally, the follow up questionnaire and individual interview asked primarily why the chaplains minister the way they do within their school context. It looked for the places of inspiration in the chaplain’s life and at the same time extended the inquiry into the other areas already mentioned (where, what and how).

The key word who underlies all of the research tools equally, as much on the side of the chaplains offering their insights from their unique perspectives, as on the side of the communities they serve, not to mention on the side of the researcher. As noted earlier, theology is always contextual, and I might suggest, relational. Where quantitative research may deal with numbers and multiple choice responses, qualitative research presupposes a relationship that seeks to shatter any false sense of pure objectivity and thus totalization. This does not mean that the researcher may diminish the unique nature of the participant by presuming to know them. Gilbert Garza and Brittany Landrum, in their investigation of applications of Levinasian phenomenology for research purposes, note:

“Levinas’s emphasis upon the alterity of the Other and the ultimate unknowability of the Other entails that the Other always rests outside the researcher’s ability to totalize the interlocutor and reduce him or her to the same. […] Phenomena are thus seen as arising out of the discourse between the researcher and the participant as interlocutor. The results of such research are thus the insertion of the dialogue between researcher and interlocutor into the phenomenal realm as themes.”186

186 Gilbert Garza and Brittany Landrum, 6.
Nevertheless, the unique experiences of each participant mean that who engages in dialogue with the researcher must never be forgotten. “The face of the Other at each moment destroys and overflows the plastic image it leaves me [...]” As already mentioned thematization is unavoidable, as Levinas recognizes, if we wish to engage in conversation at all. However, keeping in mind the risk of totalization – the risk of trying to understand the other only in terms of the needs of the self and thus reducing them to something less than their fullness – helps ground this research in the knowledge that it does not offer the final word on hospitality or any of the concepts under discussion. It offers conversation, notes themes arising as a result, and looks toward applications in the past, present and future.

5 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedure

My evaluation of the data was consciously but carefully subjective. I have a deep interest in the issues here. I thirst for new perspectives, ideas, stories and considerations on the questions of how we minister across diversity in Catholic schools and whether an ethos of hospitality can assist us, but I cannot pretend that I do not enter this with some bias. In evaluating the responses of other chaplains, it became my goal whenever appropriate to seek out and name my bias, while being judicious about judgment on their perspectives. The previous chapters of this thesis have sought to lay out some of those biases. As Tim Sensing states, in reflecting on narrative research, “Researchers rooted in

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a positivist perspective maintain the myth of objectivity; however value-neutral research in unrealizable, self-deceptive, and value laden.”

The interviews, focus group and case study were transcribed and coded in an effort to look for recurrent themes. The process of transcribing gave me the time to hear again the words and thoughts of each participants. This gave me a holistic overview of the participants’ perspectives before beginning to highlight significant statements or code the transcription. In addition, each participant was given a copy of their interview transcription to review and clarify if they wished before proceeding with further analysis (there were no changes made).

After the transcription work, I read and listened again, this time highlighting significant statements and recoding. This process was aided by reference to the texts and materials noted in the earlier chapters of this thesis. The statements were gathered into multiple categories (many belonged to more than one) and the search for themes and insights continued through a reflective process.

Twenty themes arising out of conversations (in workshop and interviews), were identified by both congruence and dissonance of perspectives, and by a lengthy process of rereading and rewriting. Diagrams were also drafted and re-drafted associating related material. As van Manen states, “Making something of a text or of a lived experience by interpreting its meaning is more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure – grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound

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188 Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 160.
process but a free act of “seeing” meaning."\textsuperscript{189} It requires deep thought, and careful attention to the words and intentions of participants.

Myers states, “Validity in this on-going process is pursued by watching similar insight or testimony emerge through the use of several research tools.”\textsuperscript{190} Similar perspectives point to potentially wider spread values, understandings, and practices. Yet differing perspectives are not without importance. Different perspectives – whether between the participants themselves or between them and members of their community – point to areas for further investigation and development.

Challenges to hospitality in Catholic schools were then explored specifically (Chapter 6). A consideration of the themes placed in conversation with those challenges – and with the theological and theoretical frameworks explored earlier – gave rise to insights into what may be learned for three areas: the Catholic school, the Catholic Church, and the chaplains themselves (Chapter 7).

All of this was written and rewritten many times. Van Manen underscores the importance of writing as a way of coming to a deeper understanding: “Writing teaches us what we know, and in what way we know what we know.”\textsuperscript{191} Thus the act of writing and rewriting this thesis was much more than a simple act of reporting results, but rather an intrinsic part of the reflective element of the research itself.

\textsuperscript{189} Van Manen, Researching Lived Experience, 79.


\textsuperscript{191} Van Manen, Researching Lived Experience, 127.
6 Ethics of Research

As already noted, all participants were sent a ‘Participant Information and Consent Form’ in advance of our first gathering in order to ensure they knew the expectations of their participation. This gave them the opportunity to read it over, and ask questions or withdraw if they so desired. All remained. In addition, the form offered them the chance to select a pseudonym. We read the form together at the start of the Focus Group, to ensure that everything was clearly understood and any questions answered. All participants signed the form without hesitation.

7 Risks and Limitations

There were few identifiable risks to participants in this study. While any conversation changes our perceptions on the world, I would suggest that chaplains actively reflect and converse on practice already. Nevertheless, the fact that many of the participants take some issue privately with one or more Catholic teachings or rulings from the school board led most to choose a pseudonym so that they could feel comfortable speaking freely on any topic. The exploratory work engaged in by participants provided an intervention that left them in charge of their own conclusions. All of the chaplains responded positively to the assessment of the process, indicating that it was helpful for them. The ways in which their participation may transform their practice of ministry remains at all times in their own hands. Given the political climate at this time, where the existence of Catholic schools is frequently questioned, it bears
mentioning in terms of limitations that this study did not discuss the validity of public funding for Catholic schools in Ontario. Chaplains are not primarily policy-makers (although they certainly have opinions); they must minister within the reality in which they find themselves. Similarly, questions of the historical evolution of Catholic schools, and Catholic school identity, were addressed only as they are relevant to the stories that affect chaplains and the ministry they offer.
Chapter 5
Ministry, Diversity and Hospitality

“The Stranger has not lodged in the street; I have opened my doors to the traveler.”

- (Jb 31:32)

This chapter focuses on the participants’ words and thoughts as regards to chaplaincy, diversity, and hospitality. In an effort to limit any reduction of their position, I have minimized my interaction with their comments (while clearly indicating where I am making commentary), recognizing nevertheless that as the person who is ‘telling the story’ I will inevitably have shaped the narrative no matter how I might seek to avoid it. Communication arises from body language as much as from words, so I have also included some description of the conversations where helpful. This chapter serves in some ways as a prologue to the following one. Here I investigate how the chaplains understand their vocation and the role of hospitality, including what they seek to do and why; in the next one, we will look more deeply at the challenges they face and the ways in which they approach them. Thus the Case Study, which asks them to resolve a particular dilemma, will surface in the next chapter.
1 Chaplaincy

In this section, the ministry of chaplaincy is explored from two perspectives. First, participants speak to their theology of ministry, and second, they reveal what that means in practice, in the day-to-day actions they take within their respective schools.

The research findings delved deeply into the nature of high school chaplaincy itself. It became apparent very quickly in the focus group that there could be no talk of the place of hospitality in high school chaplaincy without first exploring the overarching vision of the role itself. The focus group began with questions about diversity within the school context, however in their responses, the participants immediately turned the discussion instead to the nature of their role as a whole, while integrating perspectives on diversity into their contributions. Like Jesus at the synagogue in Luke 4, it was clearly important to them to articulate a thesis statement about their vocation before proceeding.

The following exchange, which occurred less than five minutes into the focus group, demonstrates the point, as well as something of the flavour of the group:

Me: So, having looked through that [the Chaplaincy Context Questionnaire], what does diversity mean to you? I asked questions about diversity. What would that mean to you?

Lena: I would think that it speaks to an all-encompassing, all-encompassing ministry, where we are challenged or blessed to… to engage people, particularly students but also staff, in the, in the ethos that they presently live in. And, and work from that ethos to, to create a greater awareness for them in terms of our faith understanding and faith perspective, but also for us as well to, to understand the, uh, the ethos that they’re, that they’re creating their experience from (FG45-51).
Lena addresses the issue of diversity, but primarily through how it impacts her role as chaplain. She speaks of an all-encompassing ministry, and what she feels drawn to do—“to create a greater awareness for them in terms of our faith understanding and faith perspective.” After affirming her contribution, I re-iterated the question of diversity, only to have the discussion move back to the role of chaplaincy once again. Gordie is explicit:

I think in our role, too, like it’s diverse in a way that you’re, a lot of people say like, what do you actually do? We just do, like, everything […] The role like, the job that we have is so diverse in the sense that you know we’re like there for students, we’re there for staff, we’re there for family members, we’re there for their personal needs, their academic needs, their… you know, just… We’re almost like a spider, you know, and like a lot of tentacles, just touching all kinds of facets throughout the day. Which is amazing. (FG 69-76)

At this point, three of the other participants chimed in to acknowledge and affirm (amidst laughter) how difficult it was to quantify the time spent on various aspects of chaplaincy, as had been asked in the Chaplaincy Context Questionnaire (FG78-86).

I then turned to Jack who had been silent to this point and asked if he wanted to add anything to the question about diversity. He too addressed it through the role of chaplaincy:

The only thing, I remember when I first started in chaplaincy and I was talking to a priest chaplain about you know, what the job was about, or what the role was about, or ministry or whatever, or however you want to define it, and I remember, you know, him asking me what are my thoughts, what do you think you’re supposed to be doing and this kind of thing. And we had this conversation and ultimately it came out to, and he guided me this way and I thank him for it, but um, it was, he said, really it’s about recognizing Christ in others and helping others to recognize Christ in one another. And that’s the diversity, right? How we see Christ in all different people, and staff, the students, and that within our community and that. So how Christ presents himself through all these different individuals that make up – and their gifts, and their talents and all that. And if you can facilitate that in some way I guess in chaplaincy then, that was kind of where we came to, then you’re probably fulfilling the role, whatever that may be, as hard as it is to define. (FG88-99)
Jack’s explanation of the role of chaplain as “recognizing Christ in others and helping others to recognize Christ in one another” resonated with the other participants. There were nods and mutters of assent around the table as he finished speaking. His statement revealed an attitude toward diversity and toward chaplaincy that acknowledged the divine presence in all people, however different they might be. As he spoke there was almost a sense of relief that at least a partial theology of the role itself had been articulated to the satisfaction of the participants.

References to the participants’ theologies of ministry surfaced throughout the rest of the day. Several significant statements made by participants are listed below with certain key passages in bold:

**Lena:** And I think that we as chaplaincy leaders, one of the benefits we have is that we trust in this, in this sacred God, Mystery, that we, um, that we know challenges us to change and grow and, and become more aware of the world around us.  (FG400-402)

**David:** I believe one of the great roles of the ‘God person’ [chaplain], is to uh, is to reveal to someone that their identity is not this [one] thing. Whether it’s their sexual orientation or uh, gender identity quote unquote, um, their shape, size, colour. But their identity is something much greater than that. [Mutters of agreement] (FG464-467)

**Ann:** We can draw them into God’s love through whatever, you know, whether it’s your social justice, whether it’s through ministry of pastoral caring, whether it’s whatever. But through nonjudgmental means. (FG655-657).

**David:** It just hit me that um, I, my goal for a long time, especially when I was studying to be a priest was (pause) the quote unquote evangelization, which is a good thing, but my understanding of that was, they need, the people need to get back into the Church. They need to be part of this group. And now I find as a chaplain, I find it changing in the sense that I feel like I’m supposed to be more of a minister of this great love that I somehow find myself in rather than needing to count that this person is part of the group now. [Mutters of assent, yeah]. (FG676-682).
**Gordie:** I think most of our job is, like the saying we preach the gospel always and it’s not necessary to use words. You know, that’s what we do you know, I think through our actions. And our doors are always open and students know that. But for us to also have the… the **courage** I guess to, and sometimes it’s easy for us to sit here and say my door’s open, I’ll wait for them to come than to actually **step across and reach out to somebody** who may not you know come… because of that little barrier, scared or nervous, or…” (FG839-844).

Some possible conclusions: Gordie’s earlier comment about being there for everyone further affirms the chaplaincy orientation toward a ministry of presence. His emphasis on the open door coupled with the courage to reach out brought nods from the other chaplains. Further, according to Gordie, the work is active – a witnessing to the Gospel. David’s perception of himself as a ‘minister of this great love’ is still as ecclesial as the Bishops would wish, for the Church points in the same direction. Although he does not use the term, he recognizes the hybrid nature of the individual. Ann in her comment about “whether it’s your social justice, whether it’s through ministry of pastoral caring” affirms the double focus of chaplaincy as prophetic and pastoral.

Several key words arose repeatedly, many found italicized in the quotes above.

These included:

- Christ
- God
- love
- non-judgment
- welcome
- openness
- conversation
- hospitality

Together they provide a picture of what chaplaincy means to these practitioners.
The following diagram shows the verbs and phrases used in the focus group and private interviews to describe this orientation of chaplaincy:

Figure 1. The Role of Chaplain (Verbs/Expressions)
Some additional commentary may be helpful here. The key verbs and expressions above illustrate recurring themes of relationship and hospitality. The verbs all point to an unspoken noun, an invisible presence— the Other—who receives or participates in the action. Thus the chaplains engage in listening to others, openness to others, serving others, reaching out to others, and so on. Christ is their example, and Christ models a relationship with those who are most marginalized. Jean Vanier defines hospitality as “opening my heart to others who are different.”\(^{192}\) We do not need openness toward those who do not challenge us—we are already open. We do not need to build bridges toward those who are like us—they are already on our side.

Christ is found today in the same places where he was found in the Gospel, in relationship with others in the world. Therefore the work of chaplaincy as understood by these participants is to some degree revelatory, in the sense that it strives to uncover Christ—or more broadly the Trinitarian God—for the community. The personal effort on the part of the chaplain to ‘see Christ in all different people’ as Jack says, feeds a ministry that seeks to help others in the community do the same. The work of chaplaincy is thus not without an agenda. It is not simply being with for the sake of being with. It begins and ends with the presence of God.

The theologies articulated above lay the groundwork for the specific ministry decisions and practices chaplains engage in within their communities. The diagram on the next page illustrates the activities the participants mentioned as part of their ministry:

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Figure 2. The Role of Chaplain (In Practice)

Not all participants engaged in all of the above activities. As Gordie said, chaplains are a bit like spiders, reaching out in many different directions, with one area sometimes having priority over another. Likewise different schools have different needs,
and each of the chaplains have their own gifts and strengths (not all have the talent to run choir!). In addition, different approaches evolved over the years so, for instance, some schools put on monthly school-wide masses, and other schools offered monthly or bi-weekly grade level or class masses. While direct comparisons are therefore imperfect, those activities that were most widespread included:

- hallway ministry\(^{193}\),
- pastoral care,
- social justice activities,
- organizing masses and liturgies,
- charitable events,
- managing office and chapel space,
- running mission trips, and
- being there for school and personal events.

Participants articulated that their ministry was shaped by an almost primordial sense of hospitality. What that means to them will be explored in greater depth in section three of this chapter, but the following comments illustrate the importance they placed on it:

Ann: [Hospitality] is who we are (FG 953).

Lena: We’re all in these roles because we already have our own ethos of hospitality. We wouldn’t be doing these jobs if we didn’t have that already intrinsically ingrained in us (FG1090-1092).

Lauren: Just a general thought that hospitality, as we are called to do just as Jesus did in his ministry, is basically the root of our ministry. (From Follow-Up Questionnaire).

\(^{193}\) Hallway ministry, sometimes called ‘loitering with intent’, involves the chaplain’s presence in the hallways of the school during student free time (before school, lunch, at breaks), in order to converse and simply be with the students.
Gordie: I suppose there’s a kind of leader who sits in their office all day at their computer, but to be an effective minister of chaplaincy, that’s…, hospitality is key (FG 961-962).

Many of the practices named previously arguably arise out of a profound sense of hospitality. In their practices, chaplains reach out in two directions – on the one hand toward the community and on the other toward God. In contrast to those in teaching positions in the school, chaplains focus more broadly on the whole community, not just a single grade level, class or subject. The variety of activities that shape their engagement with the community allow them to encounter students from a diversity of backgrounds.

Combining the insights from above, a persistent theme arises then with regards to the ministry of chaplaincy as understood by these chaplains. It may be stated as:

**Theme:** Chaplaincy is a ministry that is for the Other. Rooted in hospitality, the chaplain strives to welcome each individual without judgment, and help them experience the presence of Christ and love of God.

2 Exploring Diversity

The participants’ discussion of their role, described above, revealed that a recognition of difference or individuality appears to be an accepted and embedded principle within chaplaincy as practiced by these chaplains. As Jack said, “That’s the diversity right? How we see Christ in all different people.” The work is ever-changing because the community is ever-changing. The ministry of chaplaincy involves a variety of functions geared to meet the needs of a diverse community. As Gordie said above,
“The role like, the job that we have is so diverse in the sense that you know we’re like there for students, we’re there for staff, we’re there for family members, we’re there for their personal needs, their academic needs.” Certain principles provide direction however, and one is the search to see Christ within each unique individual, and the desire to help others recognize that presence as well.

During the focus group and interviews, inquiry was made into the participants’ understanding of the words difference and diversity, in order to better explore how hospitality applies across difference in their situations. They all agreed with Letty Russell’s statement that, “difference is not just diversity or variety in general. It refers to concrete elements in our lives that separate, distinguish, or contrast one group or person with another.”

The participants distinguished between diversity and difference in the following ways:

*David:* What really strikes me, immediately about difference, the difference between difference and diversity, is uh, I said that diversity kind of refers to the parts of a whole? But difference would seem to um, focus on those parts and simply what separates them.

*Jack:* It has a more negative connotation ("yeah" – Ann) than diversity. (Murmurs of assent). I find, when you hear the word difference. Diversity sounds more… I don’t know necessarily how to define the difference but I feel like the, the word difference has more of a negative connection to it than diversity. I don’t know why that is. That’s just what pops into my mind.

*Lauren:* Diversity sounds more inclusive and kind of like David was saying and …. difference is focusing on this part, this part, this one, you know, which kind of sets them apart. (FG104-112)

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Lena disagreed however with David’s view that difference had a more negative connotation than diversity. “I look at the word difference as the individual roles or the individual identity that fits into that wider diversity. […] And our role as chaplaincy leaders is, sometimes to help, you know, our young people find what that role is for the, you know, in terms of discovering themselves on a greater level, on a deeper level” (FG114-124). Echoing St Paul, she drew on the imagery of the different body parts contributing to the whole to support her point (1 Cor 12:12). “The diversity of the body of Christ is all-inclusive um, even though we all function differently” (FG140-141).

Gordie too, suggested that difference “unites people stronger” (FG126), making reference to his school’s house system where grade 12s become ‘guardians’ of grade 7 and 8 students. “You work harder and then all of a sudden you realize that you’re not that different after all, you know? Everybody’s searching for the same thing – love and acceptance” (FG130-132). He later used the image of the children’s sports teams he coaches to illustrate his point. “You can see that every child is different but then again all of a sudden it blends into that unity in the end because they’re a team” (FG168-169).

David agreed, with reservations. “So you’re talking about the differences within already a unity, and rather than simply ‘difference’” (FG136-137). But he warned, “You can often hear people in society speak about differences without remembering they’re part of the same, as well” (FG143-144). Jack suggested that chaplains might not understand the word ‘difference’ in the same way as others in society. “In our role, certainly we might look at it very differently right? So, I think that’s kind of the more common societal definition of difference - it would be maybe kind of more negative.
But then we as chaplaincy leaders maybe look at it a little differently (laughs)” (FG152-155).

Participants were then asked to consider the following quote from Jean Vanier:

We are all frightened of those who are different, those who challenge our authority, our certitudes, and our value system. We are all so frightened of losing what is important for us, the things that give us life, security, and status in society. We are frightened of change and, I suspect, we are even more frightened of our own hearts. 195

Again, there was complete agreement with Vanier’s statement. One participant drew a parallel to their own ministry context stating:

I find that I experience a lot in the staffroom, the, the consistent negative um, comments about, about those who are different. Um, and, and I, so I love Jean Vanier’s final line, “We are frightened of change and I suspect we are even more frightened of our own hearts.” And, and I, you know I really believe that, that we struggle to embrace as a culture, we struggle to embrace that which is different because it shakes us at our foundational core, of our own ego, and that place of comfort that we find within that. And so to go outside of that, I find is an even bigger challenge today because we have become, I believe, a much more self-focused culture, um, within the school system and within all systems, but we are, we have become much more, um, self-centered. And so, to move away from that self-centeredness, ah, is very, uh, it’s very, um, what’s the word I’m looking for? It’s very uncomfortable, at the very, at the very core of our being. (FG390-395).

The participant’s words (and I have left the speaker anonymous intentionally since the comment is critical of their current work environment) are reminiscent of Walter Brueggemann’s position on Royal Consciousness. Social and cultural challenges surfaced throughout the focus group and interviews. They will be considered in greater depth in the next chapter.

Who constitutes the ‘other’ in Catholic schools? Participants were asked several questions about the diversity of their school populations on the Chaplaincy Context Questionnaire. These questions were not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to begin the process of reflection on difference within CDSBEO high schools. They provided the following information:

- To the question of ‘How many students in your school would you guess are baptized Catholic?’ all participants answered either ‘About half’ or ‘Most’.
- To the question of ‘How many students in your school would you guess attend Catholic mass on Sunday (or Saturday evening) at least once a month?’ all respondents answered either ‘Few’ or at most ‘A quarter to a third’.
- Likewise, the participants uniformly answered ‘Few’ or at most ‘A quarter to a third’ to every question about religious diversity, visible minorities, or refugees.
- From an ethnocultural perspective, one school had a sizable minority of Sri Lankan immigrants, and all had aboriginal students.
- From an economic perspective, the schools were populated by students from mostly poorer to middle class families according to the participants.

The picture of relative cultural uniformity that arose from the questionnaire makes the issue of addressing diversity perhaps more important rather than less because of the possibility of isolation for those who do not belong even to a sizable minority. Those who are ‘different’ could easily have their needs overlooked.
There were other forms of ‘difference’ that were not addressed in the questionnaire but surfaced during the focus group and interviews. During the focus group participants were asked to identify ‘markers of difference’, that is, things that would set a student apart within the school, and possibly lead them to be marginalized. Through their stories and responses, the following picture of ‘difference’ within the CDSBEO high schools emerged:

Figure 3. Diversity and Difference in CDSBEO High Schools as Perceived by Participants
The diagram above is hardly a complete picture of perceptions of difference within the schools, nor do students belong to one single ‘category’. Rather the diagram demonstrates the particular differences that have caught the attention of the participants over their years of ministry. The ever-changing nature of school populations means the diversity of a school community is never static. Nevertheless, the description of diversity and difference within the school points to a consistent picture of who is not perceived as different.

What does it mean if we try to define this category of ‘not different’? Who represents the dominant population within the schools, and holds perhaps unrecognized privilege? Who automatically belongs? A picture emerges of straight, healthy, white, academically-abled, nominally Catholic students with well-rooted community and school connections. Although each of the participants had different stories to tell from their differing contexts, there was broad agreement on this perspective. All of the participants themselves fit within the dominant narrative of ‘who belongs’ (although of course they are neither students nor ‘nominally’ Catholic!)

3 Hospitality

During the focus group, participants were asked to react to two short video clips (roughly two minutes each) from Jean Vanier, founder of L’Arche community, on the topic of hospitality.\textsuperscript{196} In the first video Vanier speaks about the importance of

\textsuperscript{196} Jean Vanier, “Jean Vanier on Hospitality- for Secondary Students 3b 1\textsuperscript{st} of 2,” video, accessed January 12, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9ZBD0zUFM0. And, Jean Vanier, “Jean Vanier
belonging, arguing it “permits us to open up to those who are weak, and to those who are strong. But let’s be together to build a universe where we are working together, sharing together, and loving together.” His words describe the ideal school environment, where difference does not limit belonging. In the second video, Vanier defines hospitality, as mentioned above, as opening the heart and mind to others.

Reactions were positive, but the participants agreed that while hospitality and remembering we belong to a ‘common humanity’ appeared simple, the practice of hospitality could be challenging. As Lauren said, “We all come from the same world. It’s, you know, if you think about that it’s pretty, yeah of course we do. But we don’t often think that way. Yeah, I think just looking through history or whatever, you see that people, people just don’t think that way” (FG588-590).

David responded that he felt that hospitality was something that one learned. “You know, it’s a learned thing I think to step away from that. It would seem to be because of the obvious, the obviousness of ‘we’re all here together’!” [Laughter, people agreeing] (FG603-606).

Lena did not entirely agree with the idea that hospitality was a learned concept for everyone however, arguing:

Well I think for us as chaplaincy leaders within our own school environment, I think we intrinsically understand, and for the most part can embrace his [Jean Vanier’s] words and also his challenge [to overcome our fears of difference]. I

think the greater challenge that I personally experience is to then impart that same challenge to staff and students (FG626-629).

Rather than disagree directly with Lena’s suggestion that hospitality was intrinsic to a chaplain’s nature, participants responded by spontaneously sharing several stories of times in their lives when they had witnessed or received hospitality, and had learned from it. They actually modeled hospitality and exhibited positive techniques for dialogue by responding from their own experience rather than critiquing Lena’s position (note that she also had made clear that she was speaking from her own experience). For instance, Ann talked about being part of a parish 25 year ago, where intentional hospitality became the focus (FG627-658). When people contacted the parish or arrived at church they were welcomed regardless of whether they were regular attendees or had little to do with the Church. “Every person that speaks to them extends that aspect of hospitality, as a form of evangelization as well” (FG646-647). She suggested that, “Maybe that’s coming full circle, that that’s where our ministry is leading. It’s that kind of hospitality where we kind of draw the kids, and the staff, towards – not in a preachy way – but in a hospitable way” (FG652-654). Her recognition of hospitality as a form of evangelization offers insights for both Church and schools.

David talked about taking his children to a dance class on Friday evenings in the same building that held AA meetings, and his experience of their hospitality.

And, for the longest time before my youngest was dancing he, he and I would help set up the chairs for the AA. We’d talk to the couple of guys that were there early and we’d help set up chairs and stuff. And you know, I got to know a few of them over time and uh, one thing I noticed is everyone comes to AA meetings. There’s this great hospitality that’s there. The, you can see as they enter, like the shaking of hands and the, and there’s some food there. (FG671-677).
This was one of the experiences that lead him to conclude that rather than draw people into the institutional Church, his vocation called him to be a “minister of this great love.” Both Ann and David connected hospitality to a sense of belonging, but demonstrated through their stories that hospitality came first and was not an end in itself. Ann was explicit in calling this ‘evangelization’. As Jack put it, “hospitality is a bit of a means to building a relationship” (FG902). Through hospitality, a sense of belonging might be achieved through the chaplain’s ministry, and this was inspired by the love of Christ. In fact, it was a draw to Christ. ‘Membership’ in the community, that is simply showing up at school every day, could not guarantee a sense of belonging without hospitality. That came through interaction between individuals, whether a warm hello to start a conversation, or the simple act of sharing in a task such as setting up chairs.

Participants were also given a different definition of hospitality to react to, this one by Letty Russell, stating that hospitality is, “the practice of God’s welcome by reaching across difference to participate in God’s actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis.” 198 Reactions were more varied here. Ann said it evoked the image of a bridge builder. Lena liked the phrase ‘reaching across difference’ “because it implies that there’s no one higher and lower” (FG763).

David reacted positively to the association with the word justice, “because it struck me it’s through a relationship that justice and healing occurs. Especially in a world, to a world in crisis, so I, I, it seems to me my experience is that when a person is

in a moment of crisis or decision-making that to reach, that to be part of that is a moment of potential healing.” (FG766-767). Gordie disagreed about the word justice and felt it could be better replaced with words like ‘equity, love and healing’. He felt justice might be too ‘vague’ (FG771-772). He clarified that ‘love is part of being just’ (FG775), which caused Ann to suggest it was reminiscent of the prophet Micah’s words, “act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly” (Micah 6:8). This was met with nods and agreement by the other participants.

Russell’s definition reminded Lauren of the Eucharist. “Everyone who receives the Eucharist makes us one right? Where we’re knitting together Christ’s body through ourselves and our call to take that out of the Church” (FG780-781). Lauren’s focus was on the hospitality offered to the world by those receiving the Eucharist. But later, participants would discuss the difficulty of offering hospitality in the school Mass where some receive the Eucharist and many do not.

Lena struggled with the word crisis, arguing that the world has always been in crisis and it “denotes great negativity” (FG790). Participants then named the many ways that the world today is in crisis including the environment, radical Islamic groups, colonialism, and Christian fundamentalism (FG808-828). David argued that the word crisis was better defined as a ‘moment of decision’ and thus could be understood more broadly than Lena interpreted it. The context defines the moment, but the individual makes the decision through the exercise of conscience.

In order to better understand the participants’ personal perspectives, they were asked again in their private interviews what hospitality meant to them. These interviews
occurred several weeks after the focus group, giving time and separation from the group discussion. Yet many of the responses were remarkably similar:

**Ann:** To me hospitality is being open and welcoming to the other without passing judgment. Um, basically that’s it. Just to have open arms and, uh, see where that goes [laughs] (A3-4)

**Gordie:** Just basically being open to everyone, and creating a welcoming atmosphere. Being non-judgmental, being right up front with the students or anybody else (G3-4).

**Lena:** The word hospitality… All are welcome. In a very succinct phrase, all are welcome. Um, and not only all are welcome but all are celebrated (Lena3-4).

**Jack:** Hospitality… to be welcoming and have a sense of belonging for all who are part of the community. Acceptance I guess. I’m using other words to describe it I guess… And those are the positives. And an absence I guess of limitations or judgments. You know acceptance perhaps of who people are, where they’re at. Understanding we’re all at different places in terms of – if we’re talking about you know chaplaincy and faith journeys you know – understanding that everybody’s at a different place and just to go from there. To be welcoming (J3-9).

**David:** Well the word hospitality means to me, I guess when I think of the question um, I’m immediately lead to re-question. You’re asking me what the word hospitality means: What does it mean to be standing under the mercy of God and, to the extent that it is far more than I can receive or comprehend, like a shower and this mercy is dripping off and, and, hospitality to me I suppose is this experience of this mercy that is beyond us and is dripping on the people around us (D4-8).

**Lauren** (from completed questionnaire): To be hospitable means to be welcome and open – openhearted and open-minded – to tend to the needs of others.

As apparent from the words in bold above, the predominant words that arose to describe hospitality were:

- openness,
- belonging,
- non-judgment, and
• welcome.

These words say nothing about how difficult hospitality may be in practice, simply
describing the notion itself. In his description of hospitality, David makes some
reference to the grace necessary to put hospitality into practice, and thus the real struggle
it involves. He linked the word hospitality to his experience of God, and in his completed
questionnaire added, “Perhaps our offering of hospitality is part of the same motion –
walking around soaking wet from being under God’s shower of mercy, and the drips of
hospitality coming from us are just the excess of what we’ve been soaked with.” The
other participants, in their referrals to scripture and Christ’s model, would also connect
their understanding of hospitality to God.

4 Sources of Inspiration

4.1 Scripture

Inspiration for the participants’ perspectives on hospitality came from various
sources. Several references to scripture arose spontaneously during the focus group, and
participants were also asked explicitly what scripture evidence existed for Jean Vanier’s
claim that hospitality “is at the heart of the message of Jesus. The message of Jesus is
love.”199 Passages mentioned included Micah 6:8, the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10),
the Wedding Feast at Cana (John 2:1-12), the Last Supper (Matt 26:17-30, Luke
22:7-38, Mark 14:12-26, John 13), the Washing of the Feet (John 13:1-17), the

January 12, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9ZBD0zUFM0.

Reflecting on scripture during the Focus Group, Jack noted, “Most of what you read in the gospels is not happening in the synagogue right?” (FG715-716). This caused the following exchange between David and Lena:

David: It’s amazing because ah, I’m just, I’m amazed at how, how off the mark I’ve been, in the sense that, like I read about Jesus and he’s not like getting people to memorize certain things… And it just, I’m amazed at how… we’ve missed that, you know?

Lena: When you say ‘we’ who do you imply?

David: Well what I mean is, what I, what I’ve interpreted, what I’ve received as the message of um, evangelization of the Church. You know, people need to believe these things and do these things and, and, receive these sacraments and, and be part of this group. And, and, I mean how often do we see Jesus reacting to those very same things? And being with the people outside the… That’s where he was most comfortable! [Murmurs of agreement] (FG717-725).

For the chaplains, the focus of their ministry appeared to be outside the Church walls, directed toward a way of living in the world. Yet it was still evangelization. This is perhaps a key point to remember. The chaplains are not just welcoming people, they also remain focused on drawing students to the Christian God and modeling Christ. Worship practices in the school come out of the Catholic tradition (none of the chaplains offered ecumenical or multifaith prayer services according to the preliminary questionnaire).
While all engaged in dialogue with students, they did so from their own Catholic perspective. Yet, not one indicated their goal was to fill pews. Here a potential tension becomes evident between perceptions of Catholic identity and hospitality. This tension will be explored more deeply in later chapters.

In her interview, Ann commented that the story of Mary and Martha shows that there are different ways to be hospitable. “[Martha] does stuff – she’s a busy person; and that’s how she shows her sense of hospitality even though she gets a little upset with Mary. I think Jesus kind of says what you’re doing is good too, but what Mary is doing is another type of hospitality” (A18-20).

Jack noted that Gospel hospitality works both ways, and that the ability to receive hospitality is modeled by Jesus as much as his willingness to offer it (FG738-740). He added that receiving hospitality is “not something we’re necessarily too great at right?” (FG739). His point is important because hospitality in his view is a part of building relationship, or leads to it, but relationship implies the ability to give in both directions.

All participants acknowledged that the ability to receive hospitality was important. An examination of the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), where Jesus commands him to come down from the tree so that he may eat at Zacchaeus’ house, provided several insights into this area during the interviews. Speaking of the way Jesus addresses Zacchaeus, David argued in his interview that, “you might see something of a demand, but it’s a calling forth of a gift which might be another aspect of hospitality that may be sometimes overlooked. And so I think about in the school and our interactions
with students and such, um, that we’re also called to call forth this gift in people around us as well” (D22-25).

In a similar vein, Ann noted that the story of Zacchaeus shows how Jesus “doesn’t pass judgment on him for what he does, he just says I want to come to your house. And by doing that he invites Zacchaeus to be hospitable to him. So it’s kind of a two way thing with Jesus.” (A15-16). Jesus does not merely exemplify non-judgment, but beyond that offers an invitation to relationship. Like David, Ann saw a lesson for chaplains in this:

Even though Zacchaeus was not liked by others, Jesus reached out to him and allowed him to be hospitable in return through his example. And I guess, I think through chaplaincy it would be kind of the same thing. I think through hospitality to students and staff, it would invite them also to be hospitable to others. That it’s not just me and them, it’s me, them, and others. (A25-29).

Both Ann and David recognize that hospitality is not something a chaplain can offer alone. Students and staff enter into relationship with each other in a healthy school community, not just with the chaplain. For chaplains, the effort at building relationship might look more like a domino effect. It is something they may begin, and begin again, over and over as needed so others will engage in it as well, and so strengthen community and relationships. And hospitality must be something they are ready to receive if indeed it is something they truly prize.

In their interviews, Lena and Gordie both (separately) spoke of ‘modeling’ the Zacchaeus story in their communities, recalling the aforementioned theme of modelling Christ. Gordie said, “If Jesus is our model we should be the first one modeling it too.” (G27-28). Lena drew in the question of diversity by stating, “If we can’t model that story
within our school environments, if we can’t welcome Zacchaeuses into the chapel because they’re not holy or pure enough it will be an empty chapel” (L23-25).

In her answers to the follow-up questionnaire, Lauren focused on the idea that Jesus goes to Zacchaeus’ home, a place where he would be comfortable. “I think in order to be hospitable, one requires a certain level of comfort. As chaplains, we need to be comfortable in our position.” This may relate to Gordie’s earlier comment about needing courage to step out from the office and be welcoming. Chaplains draw strength and a sense of comfort from acting as Jesus did.

Lena also saw connections with the story of the Woman at the Well (John 4) because the woman, like Zacchaeus, must have felt unworthy, and yet still Jesus asks her to give him water. For her, this story underscored the value of all people before God. “If we want to be truly hospitable people we have to recognize that we are, that everyone comes from an equal space. God is the God of us all” (Le17-19).

Interestingly, David also made a connection to the story of the Woman at the Well during his interview. He says:

Jesus didn’t allow the political issues of the day define his mission. And so this woman who would be seen as unclean was totally accepted by him. […] But he didn’t allow himself to be defined by these issues, and he was able to separate himself from that and see what was truly at stake. And uh, and so, something of hospitality sees the truth of what is at stake in any given moment and… has the freedom to minister to that. (D25-31)

David hints here at the fact that hospitality practiced in the manner of Jesus – that ability to choose a direction at a ‘moment of decision’ (crisis) – may at times bring a chaplain into conflict with Church or social norms. This challenge will be examined in closer detail in the next chapter. Ultimately Jesus’ willingness to deal with ‘the truth of what is
at stake’ and disregard the ‘political issues of the day’, would lead to the cross for him, but to healing for those he met. This story, like the story of Zacchaeus, ends up with the woman re-centered in relationship with the members of her community. The ‘healing’ that David mentioned during the Focus Group as an aspect of hospitality, is also evidenced in both stories, and perhaps connected to this is a sense of justice, that all in the community have the right to respect and belonging.

4.2 Other Sources of Inspiration

Scripture provides only one source of inspiration to engage in practices of hospitality. The passages mentioned above resonated with participants’ life experiences, and like all stories helped them interpret their world. These life experiences, in dialogue with scripture and other resources, informed the participants’ perceptions of their ministry in general and hospitality in particular. The participants’ responses shared so far have already demonstrated the centrality of experience in shaping their understanding of and approach to hospitality. A closer look is warranted.

For example, Gordie has a son with Down Syndrome, and his personal experience with non-normativity made him sensitive to a lack of welcome he remembered at times in a former school toward students with exceptionalities (and attentive to it in his current one) (FG337-345). At the same time, the enveloping welcome he experienced from his in-laws during trips ‘out east’ gave him a positive vision of what hospitality should look like (G32-37).
Personal experience played a big role for all of the participants in shaping both their ability to recognize marginalization and their attempts to address it through an ethos of hospitality. Lena spoke of the way her perception of the world was shaped by her mother who used to welcome homeless people into her home (FG910-942). Ann spoke of a married couple in her church when she was a university student who would consistently invite her over after Saturday evening mass for a meal and to spend time with their large family (A37-49). David spoke eloquently of the generosity of both the poor and the rich that he encountered on mission trips years ago (D55-67). Jack spoke of the welcome he received from his extended family (J40-43), and Lauren spoke of the example of hospitality she received from a high school chaplain when she visited a school to promote a conference she was planning while in university (Follow-up Questionnaire). They all then approached life with what might be called an experience of hospitality and an expectation of it, at least from the adults around them, and it clearly troubled them when they found it lacking.

The participants were not just inspired by early life experiences, but continued to learn about hospitality through their present realities, including the school, often in dialogue with scripture. They consistently demonstrated an ongoing process of reflection that fed into their ministry. Jack for instance, made the connection between the hospitality present in the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand and an experience he had on retreat:

You know we were in a place like this, [Nature Retreat Centre], right? And I had taken all the pencils home to sharpen. And I forgot to bring them back. So we started the day and I had no pencils. I’m thinking great, how do we… not that we do a ton of writing but… So I gathered some from in the office of the place, and I
just asked and all of a sudden kids started to pull out a pen or a pencil, somebody had a pencil sharpener, and before you know it we had like, leftovers, you know? It was very similar, then we talked about that scripture passage even though that wasn’t usually part of that retreat day, but we kind of got into that and um, how that modelling helps… And also Jesus, because John the Baptist had just been killed, and he’s just you know, he’s tired, he’s worn out but he still has this multitude of people needing him. And that’s like, we feel like that, just the constant need, and there’s no break from it and that need, that need to reach into the wild to be generous, to be hospitable. Because it’s tough sometimes. (J62-73).

Jack’s story recalls the metaphor of the circle, where all are offering hospitality to each other, because none can do it alone.

Each participant drew on different writers or thinkers for inspiration. These included Parker Palmer, Joyce Rupp, Dorothy Day, Thomas Groome, Mitch Albom, Fr. Gregory Boyle, William Paul Young, Blessed Basil Moreau, Jean Vanier, and Ronald Rolheiser. Gordie mentioned one movie, ‘Pay it Forward’. Interestingly, not one of the participants mentioned Church documents as a source of inspiration. All of the authors they mentioned write reflectively on personal experience, and write with a narrative style, even in their non-fiction. Not only this, but with the exception of Blessed Basil Moreau (who was the founder of the nun’s order), all the sources of inspiration were contemporary. None of the participants mentioned saints either, although the hospitality and ministry offered through many of these would be exemplary.200 As with their

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The lack of mention of both documents and saints should not lead to the conclusion that the chaplains are unfamiliar or unconcerned with them. However, the first sources of inspiration, those that sprang most immediately to mind, were those written in narrative style for a contemporary context.
personal life experiences, what attracted the chaplains most was faith put into practice within the framework of their contemporary cultural reality. The experiences of others, described and interpreted, fed them along with their own.

5 Hospitable Practices

Two broad strategies or concerns emerged as approaches to practicing hospitality in schools. The first involved arranging the physical spaces over which the chaplains had responsibility (chapel, office) to be as welcoming as possible. The second involved interacting with students and staff in order to open the door to conversation. Within that second strategy, two other ‘sub-strategies’ were important. These included forming structures or programs that furthered belonging, and repairing and building relationships.

5.1 Space

Since language is only one part of human communication, the time and thought chaplains put into making the physical space welcoming matters. David says, “My experience is that when someone feels welcome, comfortable, then they’re more likely to talk, and you’re more likely to just be able to have a conversation with them and learn about them.” (FG888-890).

On a practical level, Ann lists ensuring the door is open and that food is available as two basic strategies. “I try to leave my door open when I’m not with someone and so people will come in. I keep candy on my desk so… I have a few younger boys that come by. And we’ll chat [laughs]. It’s kind of an ongoing thing. They’ll come for candy and
we’ll chat for a few minutes [laughs]” (A150-152). As with the stories of Zacchaeus, Mary and Martha, or the Woman at the Well, food and drink provide a key to hospitality.

I visited all of the schools except David’s, and each of the chaplains had furnished their offices with comfortable chairs or couches, and warm colourful welcoming décor. (Lena, like myself, did not have a separate office but made sure her ‘office space’ at the back of the chapel was likewise welcoming). All of the chaplains kept the chapel in their school open and accessible to the community all of the time while they were present. Students were allowed to gather there to pray, socialize or play music at lunch or during spares, in a quiet manner if the chapel was not being used for any formal purpose (such as mass, liturgies, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, confession, pastoral care, restorative justice circles, grief support, etc.). This was another way for chaplains to simply be with students. For example Lena describes a recent experience like this: “I was sitting with a young man yesterday who was singing this song ‘Brothers’ and it’s such a beautiful song. I just sat there and basked in this glorious song and this most amazing tenor voice.” (L152-154). It is hard to discern here who is the host and who is the guest.

The chapels were also used as a quiet place for students who were feeling unwell or simply needed a chance to be alone. Jack talked about students who were upset just needing a place to be with a friend: “I don’t need to be there and hovering over, whatever, it’s there. You can use it. You’re welcome to use it.” (J134-135). Here, Jack recognizes that the goal is not to foster relationship with himself, but to foster authentic relationship between any and all members of the community. The location, in the chapel, speaks to Christ’s presence in these relationships.
For David, the struggle to create a welcoming space seemed deeply connected to the effort to be a welcoming presence. As he puts it, “I find myself in my office trying to make it a totally welcoming place, accepting whoever for whatever reason and wherever they’re at, but I’m challenged by this story of Zacchaeus to call forth that same spirit in the other as well.” (D40-42). The creation of a comfortable space then is important, but not quite enough. Even with a welcoming atmosphere, not all students will enter the chapel or the chaplain’s office without an invitation. Thus the presence of the chaplain in the hallways, classrooms and at school events makes a difference. Hallway ministry allows chaplains to connect informally with students who might otherwise never approach them. In a sense it allows them to receive hospitality from students. Attempts at dialogue in turn may build relationship and increase a sense of belonging for all. Just as the open chapel door and welcoming atmosphere invites people in, dialogue more explicitly does the same. Lauren describes it thus: “Dialogue’s relationship to hospitality is the use of words to exemplify openness. Sometimes people have misunderstandings and misconceptions of others or other ideas. An open dialogue can clear these things up. Dialogue is also a great way to show you care for someone in need – listen and offer a caring response.” (LFQ 11).

Ann puts this principle into practice by lingering in the halls and cafeteria when she knows students will be there (as did all the other participants). She tells the story of one young student who is frequently on his own at lunch:

We have one boy, he’s in grade 10 this year and it’s so sad. He will literally walk the halls at lunch and break in circles. Like, downstairs he just walks in circles. He’s, I think he’s Sri Lankan, but he doesn’t even communicate with his own community. […] Every time I see him I’ll say hi, and see if I can get him to look
me in the eye. And he’ll just kind of say hi and then keeps walking. But I thought, some day I’m going to break through that armor. […] I made an invitation to the Youth Group but he didn’t, he didn’t bite (A127-133).

Note that Ann does not simply say hello. She begins there, and the greeting and effort at eye contact is important, but also extends invitations to draw the youth into relationship with others.

5.2 Programs

Sometimes the chaplain helps create a structure or program where students may dialogue with each other and offer hospitality to each other. Grief Support Groups, Gay-Straight Alliances and Social Justice Groups are a few examples of such structures. For example, Gordie runs a social justice club called S.H.O.U.T (Students Helping Others To Unite Together) which he describes in these terms:

I feel it’s a very welcoming atmosphere, there’s no agenda per se, and once you get to know it’s open, I have a lot of younger ones from grades seven to 9, more younger ones than senior students. But the seniors I have, they kind of walk with the younger ones. So it’s always very welcoming, there’s no… It’s a safe environment to share their ideas (G65-69).

Two of the schools had had short-lived Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs). Ann noted that her school had one started by students but “At that time it was discouraged from starting a group as such” (A197). The superintendent insisted that the club could only deal with diversity in general, and little guidance was given to Ann about what she could do.

I was scrambling to know what to do with them and it kind of fizzled out after a couple of meetings, which I think is what they [board officials] hoped would happen. And it did. [Laughs] I mean it didn’t serve the needs of the kids. They were looking for something, specifically a Gay Straight Alliance. They didn’t
want something that dealt with other diversity issues so… And that was sort of the end of that.

One other participant also chaired a GSA for awhile before it too disbanded. These challenges will be considered more in the next chapters, however, what is evident here is that despite the challenges and obstacles both chaplains were willing to offer what they perceived as necessary hospitality to the limits of their abilities.

Some elements of chaplaincy programming evolve out of more personal practices of hospitality. This would be the case with the interviews that Ann holds with all grade nines, and which evolved out of less structured encounters like the hallway encounters she described above. Her interviews are purposeful: “You get to know what their gifts are and you channel them. Have you thought of being part of the choir? Have you thought of being part of this and that?” (FG850-852). Here we see an example of the explicit ‘calling forth of a gift’ which David identified earlier as a fundamental teaching of the Zacchaeus story. Like Gordie, Ann is facilitating relationship and a sense of belonging within the community and trusting that Christ will be revealed in those relationships. The fact that it is the chaplain who holds these interviews already says something about faith.

In another example, Lena began early in her chaplaincy career to make it a practice to meet with every student who had been suspended after they returned to school. “It wasn’t about discipline. It wasn’t about anything other than welcome. And that grew from welcome to reflection, about themselves, about their experience, about what they might have learned for themselves, about how to make it better” (L168-171). This eventually developed into a Restorative Practice program which seeks to reduce
disciplinary action overall by having trained senior students offer mediation to younger students involved in conflicts. The potential for hospitality practiced in such situations is such that Lena is considering changing the name from Restorative Practice to Hospitable Practice (L165). Lena, like myself, also runs Classroom Circles, where students gather in a circle and, after engaging in easy icebreaker questions, are offered the opportunity to share their thoughts on various issues. Lena uses them specifically for planning masses, while I use them mostly to facilitate the operation of a classroom.

Hospitality sometimes must be practiced on a more personal level to repair or prevent harm in relationships. Lena shared the story of a student who was furious with her for confiscating her cell phone during a class where they were planning a liturgy.

The story is best told in Lena’s own words:

I kept the phone [meaning when she was leaving – gesture]. Then about five minutes later this poor young girl comes screaming down the hallway which is her pattern and her coping mechanism. Swearing, saying ‘Miss R I want my F- ing phone!’ Very loudly in the hallways. So right away we have to put ourselves in a different position. And, and it was the first time in a very, very, very long time where I’d found myself in that position. And I was just really, really calm and I just said I understand what you need, I’m hearing you, and I would really welcome the opportunity to have a conversation with you in the chapel. Will you come with me? And she became very defiant, ‘And I’m not going there, give me my phone, you can’t steal it from me, blah, blah’. And it just, her escalation just wasn’t going anywhere. But I just kept saying the same thing: ‘I understand your frustration, I understand what you need, I understand what you want, let’s just go in the chapel’. Anyway, it didn’t get resolved right away and she stayed really angry at me. We did finally meet before the end of the day and I did give her back her phone, but it was a much different meeting. She had calmed and we had a conversation. But she stayed mad at me because of course I had affected her in such a negative way. And that’s okay. So we had a liturgy, we have our Remembrance Day liturgy coming up and I always have grade 12 – because this is a grade 12 student – I always have grade 12s act as our readers. And I always pick different readers from the grade 12 contingency group. And I decided I was going to ask her, to read. And I wasn’t quite sure, because I know in the hallways – I always stand in the hallways, hey hello, good morning! How are you! And I
address them by name – and every time she would walk by me her head would turn. Like I’m not looking at Mrs. L, I’m punishing her right? So I wasn’t quite sure how she would respond when I asked her but I thought I have to be hospitable here. And I asked her and she just looked at me and said, yeah sure Ms. L. I’d like to do that. (L91-113).

Lena’s encounter with the student demonstrates another important aspect of hospitality for chaplaincy leaders. When running specifically Catholic events, the question arises of how to include as diverse a cross-section of the school as possible? All chaplains indicated that everyone is welcome on retreat, regardless of religious or other differences. This was true for engagement in clubs, and prayer activities as well. Ann indicated she is intentional about this: “I’ve tried to include students from different social groups to participate in the ministries. Not always easy” (A69-70). She talked about inviting students with multiple exceptionalities to bring up the gifts in mass, and of a Muslim student who is deeply engaged with the spiritual aspects of the school. “She’s going on the mission trip; it’ll be the first student who’s… She’s grade 11 but she’s very, very spiritual and very interested in doing public speaking things and last night she was one of the students who helped me with the prayer at the Charity Bowl” (A75-78).

Lauren, like others, used chaplaincy events and liturgies as a means to foster hospitality and belonging. “At our chapel masses, students have the opportunity to ask questions – hospitality through the comfort of understanding.” (FQL7a). Jack ensured that as much as possible religious activities were student-led, and that a variety of different ways to worship were offered in a variety of different styles in order to appeal to as many students as possible (J77-82).
David, like the others, focused on non-judgment and being willing to invite anyone and everyone to participate in different activities.

And so social justice activities and so on, we’re calling and we’re inviting and we’re leaving space for the response. And I think the hospitality I suppose is never losing hope and never, never, making judgment beforehand that this person’s not going to go so I’m not going to invite them. To always have an open invitation to everyone, and not only an open invitation but a specific invitation, because the only way that I’ve found that people really do participate is by being personally invited, which I think speaks to the way we encounter God in the end which is really that personal encounter. (D94-100).

Participants, then, use conversation intentionally and through various strategies to build relationship, and reveal the love of God reflected in community. There is an element of courage and trust apparent here – courage to engage students and staff who may reject that engagement, and trust that by beginning a conversation, relationship will grow, and Christ will be present to all parties, strengthening the community.

Sometimes what is not said can be as enlightening as what is said, and a brief comment may be helpful here. The participants’ reflections on scripture and their personal experience suggested to me that hospitality is understood by them as an element of, and perhaps a pathway to create, something greater – a relationship with others in the community and with God. Jack states it bluntly, “It’s a way of being and a vehicle to build relationships” (FG966). Yet much of the academic work done on hospitality appears to arise out of investigations of situations where the guest or ‘Other’ has a physical need to which the ‘host’ feels they must respond. By meeting that physical need (food, shelter, clothing, medical care), host and guest enter into some form of relationship, one that is complicated by the fact that the host has much and the guest has little. Jessica Wroblewski’s work looks deeply into the question of how to offer hospitality
to people who are homeless and hungry, who have concrete needs for survival that must be met, and yet still protect the physical and personal boundaries of the host. Similarly Christina Pohl’s research looks at the history of the kind of hospitality that Wrobleski explores, and how such hospitality operates today in the best of practices. She too recognizes both the need for hospitality, and the wretched struggle hosts may face over where to place limits. Chaplains face similar struggles, and this will be investigated in the next chapter, however their context means that they are rarely dealing with the question of offering hospitality to meet survival needs. This does happen, as in the case of pregnant teenagers, or families thrown into destitution, but the evidence from the participants suggests that issues of hospitality arise primarily over how to minister to members of the community who do not fit the definition of ‘not different’ as described earlier.

In schools then, relationship and belonging can be prioritized because physical needs are (usually) already met. In some ways the focus on relationship first is reminiscent of Jesus’ approach to Zacchaeus or the Woman at the Well. The much higher rate of suicide attempts amongst marginalized lesbian, gay and bisexual youth compared to heterosexual youth (twice as high according to one study) alone affirm the deep human

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need to belong and the struggle to achieve that sense of belonging. The focus then in Catholic schools is not on how many people may be welcomed, nor even on who will be welcomed (this is set by law), but very much on how that welcome will be offered regardless of the multiple identities of each member of the community.

6 Twenty Themes

In this chapter, a number of themes pertaining to the ministry of chaplaincy and the place of hospitality within that ministry have emerged. Presenting the chaplains’ commentary as a list of twenty themes is without question a subjective reduction of their thought, even as the description above was as well. This list, set as it is within the contexts and experiences of these particular chaplains, should be viewed then as a simple starting point to deeper discussion. It does not pretend to be true for all chaplains, but it does ask that other schools and chaplains consider whether or not the themes within it mean anything within their context. If so, in what way? If not, in what way? It becomes, as I write it, the inevitable ‘said’, but it points, equally inevitably, to the rich ‘saying’ of the participants themselves.

Theme 1: Chaplaincy is about being there for people, engaging them and being there in all their different realities.

Theme 2: Chaplaincy seeks God and strives to reveal God within the diversity of the community for the community.

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Theme 3: The chaplain is a person who trusts God and seeks the presence of Christ in compassionate relationships within the community.

Theme 4: Chaplaincy is a ministry that is for the Other. Rooted in hospitality, the chaplain strives to welcome each individual without judgment, and help them experience the presence of Christ and love of God.

Theme 5: Chaplaincy involves varied tasks, and offers ongoing hospitality, shaped by the infinite uniqueness of the individuals in the chaplain’s community and inspired by the model of Christ.

Theme 6: Chaplains must remain aware that difference is not always seen as a positive, and that it is often feared and may divide communities, while continuing to strive to recognize and appreciate it within their own lives and ministries. Furthermore, chaplaincy programs may be more difficult to deliver where colleagues or supervisors are less welcoming of difference.

Theme 7: In their act of being with the members of their community, of opening their hearts and seeking Christ in others, chaplains must work collaboratively towards overcoming fears – their own and others – to transform their schools to places of justice, peace and solidarity.

Theme 8: Hospitality is essential, especially as a way to increase belonging, but the practice of hospitality may be challenging for a society afraid of difference. ‘Difference’ in these schools may be attributed to anyone who does not fit within the following descriptors: straight, healthy, white, academically-abled, nominally Catholic with well-rooted community and school connections.
**Theme 9:** Hospitality is enacted through sharing tasks, and in intentional words of welcome.

**Theme 10:** Hospitality, fueled by love, creates relationships that promote justice and healing.

**Theme 11:** Hospitality is practiced through reaching out at ‘moments of decision’ (crises), creating relationship, strengthening justice, and spreading love.

**Theme 12:** Hospitality for chaplains is part of evangelization. It arises from God, and should be lived with openness, welcome, and non-judgment.

**Theme 13:** Hospitality is offered first and foremost as presence, but other ways of offering hospitality, especially caring for the needs of individuals, are important too.

**Theme 14:** Chaplains both offer hospitality and try to draw forth the gift of hospitality in others. Modeling hospitality is an important part of their ministry.

**Theme 15:** Hospitality is focused on building a greater sense of belonging, and stronger relationships with God and each other in the community.

**Theme 16:** Scripture teaches that the hospitality of Christ involves seeing what is truly at stake, and after discernment of conscience, may require transcending social norms when necessary to promote belonging, justice and relational healing.

**Theme 17:** Chaplains are inspired to engage in hospitality by reflecting on scripture, and particularly the life of Christ, in dialogue primarily with their own experiences and the writings of their contemporaries (such as Jean Vanier, Dorothy Day, Thomas Groome, Mitch Albom, Gregory Boyle and Ronald
Rolheiser). Church documents were perhaps less compelling as a primary source of inspiration.

**Theme 18:** Hospitality in high school chaplaincy is focused more on meeting the relational and spiritual needs of their community than the physical ones.

**Theme 19:** Chaplains engage in hospitable practice by ensuring the spaces over which they have care are welcoming, comfortable and available to members of the community.

**Theme 20:** In their practice of hospitality, Chaplains call forth gifts, develop structures for hospitality to flourish, and reach out and respond to unexpected situations by striving to foster conversation and dialogue.

7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the participants have expressed their views on the purpose of their work, and their understandings of diversity and hospitality within their particular context. Diagrams demonstrated both the unity and variety within their ministries. Interactions between participants, and their shared personal experiences gave rise to twenty themes reflecting on high school chaplaincy and the practice of hospitality within that ministry. These themes become an offering to other chaplains and partners in Catholic education for continued reflection and conversation.
Chapter 6
The Challenge of Hospitality

The gospel very much wants us to think in terms of a neighborhood, in terms of being in solidarity with other people, in sharing our resources, and of living out beyond ourselves. The gospel contradicts the dominant values of our system, which encourages self-protection and self-sufficiency at the loss of the common good.204 -Walter Brueggemann, January, 2015.

The themes elucidated so far support the suggestion that hospitality for these chaplains is a means to foster relationship across difference, build stronger school communities, and ultimately allow the presence of Christ to be revealed to staff and students. All of this is inspired by the life and teachings of Christ. Yet from the start of Jesus’ ministry as exemplified by his speech at the synagogue in Luke 4, it was clear that he would face obstacles and challenges. Chaplains too face challenges from within their community. Some of these challenges arise from the larger socio-economic context, some arise from within the Church, some from within the school, and many relate to all.

Once again, the question before us is:

This study will investigate how an ethos of hospitality may assist chaplains in Ontario Catholic schools to minister to increasingly diverse school populations, in a way that takes seriously the complex realities of both the Church and contemporary society.

The themes identified in the last chapter give a comprehensive view of the chaplains’ perspectives on hospitality within their ministry. But this thematization risks hiding the challenge of putting their theologies into practice in the real world. As noted in the earlier chapters, chaplains walk the border between different agendas. Bishops hold a vision for schools, and so do parents, the ministry of education, school boards, students, and each individual chaplain. How can chaplains actually implement the visionary ideals listed in the last chapter consistently when visions clash and when the power structure hampers the exercise of their conscience? Some ‘moments of decision’, or crises, are riskier than others.

This chapter will examine the tensions that arise from Church, school board and social context and their effect on a chaplain’s ability to offer hospitality and foster belonging. To do this, it will examine participants’ awareness of the multiple expectations placed on them, then investigate their responses to a case study where the chaplain’s ability to offer hospitality was potentially limited by school board authorities, and finally consider in more depth the comments that were made in the private interviews regarding challenges. Possible conclusions may then be proposed about the limits of hospitality in Catholic schools, and the way in which an ethos of hospitality might help direct decision-making in a moment of crisis.

1 Challenges from Society and Family

The local church and school both look significantly different today than they did prior to the passage of full-funding in 1984. Prior to full-funding, lay people would have
been more likely to be church-goers compared to their counterparts today but, aside from those in religious orders, they would have been less likely to hold leadership positions in the field of high school chaplaincy. The bishops called for the establishment of lay chaplaincy specifically in response to the rapidly growing number of Catholic high schools in Ontario at a time when numbers of priests, religious, and church-going lay people were diminishing. Yet it was still originally conceived as a role that would take place within a predominantly Catholic population. The rise in numbers of non-Catholic students in conjunction with the continued trend in Catholic families away from regular attendance at church has lead to progressive and perhaps unexpected changes in the school environment. The ministry of chaplaincy has had to evolve along with the context.

Several significant statements were made by participants about the nature of society today. In fact the participants interrupted each other in the focus group to name changes in recent decades (FG208-215):

Jack: What hasn’t changed, really? I think that would be the better question.

Lena: Yeah…

Jack: Because, it really is ..

Lena: (Interrupting) Everything changes so fast…

Jack: Family structure, roles,…

Ann: I think, just the whole area of obsolescence… in everything has changed…

Jack: Technology, that’s right…

Ann: Everything…
Today, success could easily be defined as purchasing ability according to the participants. Wealth and connections played a large role over who ‘belonged’ in Jack’s community. He told the following story to illustrate:

We had a situation where one student who came from one area where our school draws from, and was from a lower socio-economic class, and not a great family situation, and difficult kid. Their house burned down ok? And to see what the response of the community was to that. And we did respond, but, within two months after that there was another student from a more central community that had a family that was well-respected and connected. And that actually had insurance – that first one had no insurance – this one did and would be able to deal with it anyways. The outpouring, like amazing outpouring of support and fundraisers and dances and all this kind of stuff. And the differences, there’s the… We have a great community and they do rise to the occasion to help others, but when I saw that, it was a little bit of an ugly underbelly kind of thing. There’s an element there, and to be fair this kid is a difficult kid, would challenge people and would be hard to like and love you know? But, we’re called to do that (J216-228)

Jack’s ‘ugly underbelly’ is a reflection of the Royal Consciousness. The wealthy and powerful attract more wealth and power as the poor grow poorer and more outcast with every mishap and tragedy. Jack reached out to various organizations to find funding for the first family. “For the other one I didn’t really do anything because I didn’t need to. Stuff happened all over the place.” (J230-231). Perhaps this is where chaplaincy matters most, working against the grain to support, offer hospitality, and build belonging.

Lena noted that within Catholic families today, “The dynamics of relationships, primarily marital relationships has changed significantly. And the impact of family on their children, primarily parents transferring information to children has changed considerably when it comes to religious education or, um, spirituality or faith instruction” (FG201-203). Catholic families are less likely to be connected to a Parish or attend church with regularity, and less likely to engage in catechesis compared to a few decades
David indicated on his Chaplaincy Context Questionnaire that in his opinion as few as 10% of his student body attended Sunday mass even once a month.

Lena suggested that social media means that students are far more aware of ‘things’ than they might have been a generation ago. Gordie added that the rise of organized sports has meant that families spend weekends at tournaments or games, and not at Church [FG304-305]. In other words, there were new distractions away from traditional Catholic practices because of social media and organized sports.

Ann, who as already mentioned began a program of private interviews with all incoming grade nine students last year, affirmed the drop in Catholic or catechized students in her school as revealed through these interviews.

I’ll tell you it was an eye-opener to see how many non-catechized, non-Catholic, non-Christian students we have in the school, coming from other schools. Wonderful kids but it really gives you a different view of where we need to approach our ministry as chaplaincy leaders because we’re not dealing with the kids of forty years ago who came from a home where the faith was embedded in them when they came to school. (FG228-232)

Ann noted two other related points that arose frequently in the interviews. The first was that students would say that when they attend church, it is with grandparents. The second was that students would say they ‘go to church’at school (FG 289-297). This means then that staff members, and in particular the school chaplain, have today become the ministers with whom many students have the greatest contact. This may be a burden, but it is also a moment of opportunity.

The challenge is more than just the existence of a diversity of religions and a lack of knowledge of Catholicism. The recent court challenge to Catholic religious instruction in Catholic schools demonstrates that one can also no longer assume that parents will
even support their child’s involvement in Catholic activities, prayer or classes at all.\textsuperscript{205}

The sacraments, retreats, masses or prayer services organized by chaplains risk becoming entirely extra-curricular where they were once often mandatory. Where the line is drawn in terms of what can be offered and what can be insisted upon for students in Catholic high schools is slowly shifting.

As a result of this general drop in Church attendance, Jack stated that chaplaincy was now missional in focus. “We all realize here we’re doing missionary work.” (FG 245-246). Jack’s understanding of mission however did not focus so much on pushing students toward Sunday mass, as might have been the case forty years ago, as helping them experience the presence of Christ within the school that they may seek out the Church on their own, whether sooner or later. The participants understood their mission to be, as expressed by Jack, helping their students recognize the presence of Christ in themselves and others. Their mission went deeper than counting the numbers of students in attendance at Sunday mass, or keeping track of vocations. As Gordie expressed it, the participants were in the business of planting seeds [G18]. The student’s decision to attend church or not, or discern a vocation, might only arise later with maturity and a greater understanding of Christ’s call. Nor could a student’s church attendance record become a factor in the hospitality or care they receive from their chaplain.

\textsuperscript{205} Andrew Philips, “Father wins right to have son exempted from all religious programs at Ontario Catholic high school,” \textit{National Post} (April 8\textsuperscript{th}, 2014), accessed March 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 2015, http://news.nationalpost.com/2014/04/08/father-wins-right-to-have-son-exempted-from-all-religious-programs-at-ontario-catholic-high-school/.
Chaplains do not undertake this mission alone, even at the grassroots level. The participants’ relationships to their respective school colleagues proved to be an interesting and complex area of investigation. Most shared positive experiences, but several also noted the struggle of working within a community where spiritual and religious concerns are not always given the priority the chaplains would like. Issues of society were deeply embedded within schools, not just with students but also with staff. Both Gordie and Ann described their disappointment when a retreat for their joint mission trip, planned months in advance, had to be cancelled because their schools belatedly decided to plan a joint football tournament on the same day.

The participants were equally unsettled when they witnessed a lack of hospitality amongst the staff. As already mentioned, Gordie, who has a young son with Down syndrome, spoke of his disappointment when disparaging ‘jokes’ were made in the staffroom at one of his former schools about students with disabilities.

**Gordie:** People wouldn’t buy from the bake sale, because it was their class [for students with multiple exceptionalities] that was making it. And I heard comments, you know from staff not students. And it’s very, very sad. [Gasps and groans from other participants]

**Ann:** Mmm, is it ever.

**Gordie:** Right away I think of, of course having my own son you know, you often wonder, what he’s going to be like when he hits school. You know, are people going to, you know, what are they going to say? What are they going to think? Not that I can control that, but…., just keeps me awake. (FG337-345).

Another participant noted that she had had a similar experience. “So I see, I really notice that in the staffrooms, a very marked increase in negativity about, about the
differences in our school, certainly in terms of mental health as well. Their understanding is just ‘well, they should just get over it’” (FG404-406). There was a collective murmur of agreement after she finished speaking indicating that this was an area of frustration for several participants.

Despite the tension some chaplains sometimes felt with staff members, there was a strong sense of collaboration and respect when other participants spoke of some of their colleagues. Speaking about the difficulties around offering the sacrament of reconciliation within his religiously diverse school, Jack said, “I find staff actually more understanding in a lot of situations because they’re working there and they kind of get most of this stuff. But sometimes people outside the school community don’t have a real great understanding of that element of things” (FG1141-1143). Likewise, Ann talked highly of a Catholic teacher who ministered to a transgender student who had been born female but identified as male. “Now the teacher was awesome and really said to her, you know, supported her and that, in the sense of, she didn’t make a big deal about it, and followed through with it” (FG 431-433). Many activities such as masses, classroom visits, and retreats require collaboration to be successful. Negotiation and compromise are necessary parts of living in a community. In the case of the cancelled retreat, the football tournament organizers invited the mission team to set up a canteen to fundraise for their trip as a way of offering compensation.

Some participants struggled more than others with their colleagues. One even stated that her goal for the year was to “see each staff member as a child of God” (FG 1098), noting that this was not always easy. Disparaging attitudes towards students who
were challenging arose as a primary concern rather than lack of support for religious activities, although this was brought up as well. Many staff are baptized Catholic, but not all hold an attachment to their religion or consider it a priority.

Approaching colleagues with a spirit of hospitality was perhaps more difficult because of the participants’ higher expectations of them as compared to students. One participant noted, “You know, we’re speaking about a group of people who are highly academically trained, and if they got into teachers college, probably did very well in school and did very well at university” (FG407-408).

But chaplains hold a pastoral responsibility toward the rest of the staff, since they lead prayers and retreats and offer pastoral care when needed when their colleagues face trying moments. This can be challenging if tension has arisen over the interruption of class time or sports for faith-based activities such as liturgies, masses, retreats, guest speakers, or charity fundraisers, or conversely if chaplains harbour resentment because other agendas in the school trump theirs. Positive relationships matter because chaplains are called to journey with the rest of the staff in their challenges, and because chaplains cannot minister to students alone. The effort of being with staff requires a conscientious effort at hospitality and relationship.

\[\text{206 I have been called many times in the middle of the night or on weekends to be with staff members who are dealing with terminal illness in the family or death. The disassociation of families from parishes and thus clergy means that within the school community, the lay chaplain may also be the first person staff members think of when they need spiritual support.}\]
3  Hierarchy vs. Community: Bishops and Board Supervisors

The Royal Consciousness encourages the valuing of some persons over others. This is as true within schools and churches as within broader society. Schools, like churches, operate both as communities and as hierarchies. Even Jean Vanier, in his short video on hospitality agrees that “there’s a hierarchy in belonging.”\textsuperscript{207} This is the standard way for institutions to run within society today, whether within a corporation, a church, or a small business. Chaplains have supervisors and colleagues, and also hold a responsibility for, and power over, their students. The diagram below demonstrates the power dynamics and relationships operating in schools based on conversations with participants:

\textsuperscript{207} Jean Vanier, \textit{video 3b2nd 2}. 
Figure 4. Negotiating Relationships: Power Dynamics and Service.

In the Focus Group and the interviews, participants spoke of the distance that they sometimes felt between their understanding of the purpose of their role, and their supervisor’s understanding of the chaplaincy role, particularly within the Church. They noted the pressure they felt for example from some quarters to address the issue of church attendance and vocations. Ann told the story of a former Bishop whose main concern was over how many vocations were found by the chaplain: “I used to dread when he would come to [school] because his first question was how many vocations do you have? And he measured my ministry by the number of vocations we had. [Sympathetic mutters]. Literally. I was so insulted every time he’d come. I was like, sorry that’s not what I’m
here for” (FG 695-698). While chaplains have had to adapt to changes on the ground, ecclesial supervisors may cling to an earlier vision of chaplaincy that no longer fits the reality of schools or even society. Chaplaincy was established with the assumption that most students and staff would actually be Catholic, but this is not always the case, and even those who are baptized may be substantially disconnected from a parish. Chaplains spend much of their time with students from a wide range of backgrounds, and according to the participants their primary focus is on meeting the needs of these students not the immediate needs of the broader Church.

The participants mentioned the bishops in relation to Church-oriented issues, such as vocations, the presence (or not) of the Blessed Sacrament in school chapels, the offering of sacraments, and catechetical teachings. Several expressed frustration like Ann’s about a disconnect in terms of vision (e.g. FG721-724, FG1561-1563, L344-349). While the bishops were concerned about Church-oriented issues such as vocations, church attendance and the delivery of sacraments, the chaplains, as discovered in the last chapter, tended to focus more broadly on helping students experience the presence of God within the school context. They were concerned about belonging and hope, and recognized that many of their students might not yet be ready to value the structures which concerned the Bishops. Sacraments and adoration are offered, and the catechism is explained, but these can only be valued by students who themselves feel valued and open to Christ’s presence.

Lena found hope in Pope Francis’ directives and example. Nevertheless her frustration with the Church hierarchy was clearly visible, and in her interview she was
able to articulate the interconnections between the pressure to maintain a visible Catholic identity within high schools and the difficulties with helping students sense they belong.

In her own words:

But we have these pressures of the bishops and then we have the pressures of our school board that I think are absolutely fearful of losing our Catholic identity, without really knowing what that is. Because when we… if they sat with us on the front line with us for a day, they would know that our schools are very Catholic. We may not have bums in the pews anymore but that’s not a school problem. That’s a church issue. And it needs to be looked at. And it needs to look at why people aren’t coming into the church. But in our schools we’re very Catholic. We are following Christ. And they need to see that. So that pressure from them, that fear they have that we’re not Catholic is creating this incredible um, anxiety and demand for more than what really is needed. And those external pressures from the bishops and the board can be suffocating when all we want to do is get in there with our hands and love like Jesus. (L284-294).

Clearly Lena does not see the schools as ‘post-Christian’, but she recognizes the bishops’ fears over Catholic identity. She also clearly names her concern that the bishops do not see the work of chaplaincy and the true nature of Catholic schools as she perceives it.

The disconnection between her vision and that of the bishops results in pressures that she finds ‘suffocating’. For her, the issues of society were understood to be strongly entangled within issues of the Church. The drop in Church attendance was not just blamed on society, but was also viewed as a problem arising from the Church. And she was clear that it was not the primary focus of chaplaincy within the school.

David articulates the tension between the hospitality and hierarchy even more succinctly: “It’s about sharing your life with them [students]. And I think this really speaks to the heart of what chaplaincy is. There isn’t so much a hierarchy. And there can’t be in true hospitality.” (D72-73).
Participants were alert to a possible clash of visions with other partners in Catholic education as well. Lena told of the relief she felt when she was told at her initial job interview for the position of chaplain that her effectiveness would not be measured by the numbers of students who became churchgoers:

Lena: “I was thinking ‘I wonder if they’re going to start counting how many kids go to church?’ [Mutters of assent from the group] ‘I wonder if that’s how they’re going to determine my effectiveness as a chaplain?’

Jack: We’d all fail! [Laughter]

Lena: But I’m so glad that wasn’t it! Because I don’t think I would have lasted six months in chaplaincy you know? [More laughter] (FG 688-693)

There is a recognition in this of the true social realities, and also the limits of chaplaincy. It is not that conversions or vocations are not of interest to chaplains. They do occur – sometimes even without parent approval.  

But based on the participants’ comments, that aspect of the missionary stance of chaplaincy is more effective and meaningful after the establishment of relationships and hospitality that chaplains offer to their communities.

In her earlier quote, Lena associated ‘pressures from the Bishops’ to ‘pressures from the board’. In the last chapter this became evident in the discussion with Ann around the struggle to establish a GSA. It is only fair to assume that all partners are

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208 In my school for instance we have so far this year had one grade 8 student baptized and confirmed, with parental support. But we also have a grade 12 student who is waiting to turn 18 so she can join the Catholic Church without her parents’ full support. Nevertheless my goal was never direct conversion of either of these students; it was always more in line with Jack’s description of helping these students be aware of the presence of God in their lives. But the students identify Catholicism very strongly with the adults they know who belong to the Church, and this has an impact.

209 I have been the staff rep for our school’s GSA since its start two years ago and have also felt a strong sense of pressure from the Board. I have been required to write reports to the Superintendent - something that I have never been asked to do for any other club. The principal regularly drops in on the
seeking to be faithful to Catholic teaching. Yet their perspectives differ and a certain power imbalance may affect the chaplain’s ability to support students as they would like around contentious issues.

All of the chaplains were very aware of their position on the border between different interests and groups. At one point during the focus group, one participant suggested that the tape recorder be turned off but the other participants convinced him to continue (FG1424). This is why from time to time at the request of participants, their names have been omitted, where their opinion might be viewed as antagonistic toward one party or another within the school or Church community.

4 The Case Study

The afternoon case study activity provided insight into the relationship participants have with their supervisors both within the Church and the school. Based on a true story (my own), the case given to the chaplains was as follows:

A Muslim student at a Catholic high school asked to pray *salat* (the five daily prayer times) in the chapel at the school, and was given permission by the chaplaincy leader and priest chaplain. Months later, at a chaplaincy leader meeting, the superintendent of education announced that, while Muslim students must be found an appropriate place to pray at school, they must not be allowed to pray *salat* in the chapel. The priest chaplain argued the case with the superintendent but her decision was unchanged. The chaplaincy leader kept quiet, but after returning to school decided she could not ask the Muslim student to pray elsewhere, as she felt this would be a breach of hospitality. She informed the GSA to see what we are doing (and specifically I suppose, what I am letting the students talk about and do). He has yet to drop in on the Social Justice Club or Mission Trip team. No guidance has been offered from the Board about how we might empower these clubs to prevent or stop bullying of LGBTQ students, but much concern has been shown over what we might talk about in the club. We have fumbled our way forward and our activities have included such things as creating anti-bullying poster campaigns, making and selling rainbow cupcakes to support the canned food drive, making bracelets calling for respect, and otherwise socializing and sharing concerns in a safe environment.
priest chaplain that she would take full responsibility should it come to light, but chose not to inform the superintendent of her decision for the moment. The student in question is graduating this year, but the chaplaincy leader has not decided yet what to do should Muslim students make this request again.

As outlined in the chapter on methodology, the case was read aloud three times, each time by a different participant. Participants were aware that a priest chaplain in our board would not be in the school more than once a week on average, so the bulk of responsibility for decision-making generally falls on the lay chaplaincy leader. The participants were then given a handout with a series of questions to answer, first alone, and then in discussion [see Appendix v]. The first questions asked them to analyze the situation, breaking it down into characters, issues, timeline and decision-makers. These questions served to orient the thinking of the participants toward the situation so that they did not miss any important information. The next questions asked who might be affected, and investigated theological and theoretical issues that might have bearing on the case (including the understanding of hospitality as described by Jean Vanier and Letty Russell in the morning). Finally, the participants were asked what decision they would make should the situation arise again in the future.

Participants identified the following people as having a stake in the issue: the student, the chaplaincy leader, the priest, the superintendent, the surrounding community members, the school body, the staff, the principal, future Muslim students, the Church hierarchy, the Catholic school system as a whole, and other chaplains. The decision-makers were identified as the superintendent, the Church, the chaplaincy leader and the priest. Participants were curious as to why the principal was not named, and once the analysis and discussion of the case study was complete it was revealed that the principal
had been informed after the decision was made by the chaplain, and was willing to support the chaplain’s decision. It is true that a chaplain’s relationship with their immediate supervisor (including how closely they are supervised) might indeed have bearing on the decision-making process and result. The principal was left out intentionally in order to oblige participants to consider their decision independently.

The basic issues were identified thus:

1) Hospitality versus obedience (FG1189)

2) Appropriate use of sacred space (FG1191)

3) The role of the chaplain (FG1199)

4) Inclusion in the school, and the changing nature of who belongs. (To quote Lena: “I mean we used to not allow pregnant women in the schools, or pregnant students in the schools right?”) (FG1201-1202).

5) Superintendents who can not control everything (FG1306)

6) How the community would respond (FG1207-1209).

7) The nature of prayer and its role in religion. (To quote David: “I just have this picture in my mind of Pope Benedict I think it was and John Paul II who visited the mosques in the Middle East and prayed, and so I think what are we doing? What are we saying about prayer and everything when we don’t allow people to pray in the chapel?”) (FG1213-1215).

Participants were asked to individually draw a diagram of the power relationships between decision-makers. All came up on their own with a vertical diagram with the Church (understood as Church Tradition or magisterium) and Superintendent near the top
and the student at the bottom. Participants then discussed their views. Ann argued that the priest and the chaplain were on par, but all of the others disagreed, placing the priest above the chaplain:

Lena: His voice is more powerful with…

Jack: With the ordination.

Lena: With the ordination, his power is deemed more, or his voice is deemed more powerful than the chaplaincy leader. (FG1274-1277)

Ann suggested that a circle should be drawn around everyone to indicate God’s abiding presence (FG 1254). The others agreed this was appropriate, and a final diagram was agreed upon:

Figure 5. Case Study Power Relations.

The subsequent discussion of the issues highlighted the tension around offering hospitality within a Catholic school setting. Juxtaposing the case study with the views of Vanier and Russell, Lena stated, “It puts the chaplaincy leader in a very volatile position of trying to negotiate between the call of hospitality to the demands of people who don’t necessarily work on the front lines and feel the need for that.” (FG1313-1315).
Participants also discussed whether or not the superintendent would have been following the instructions of the bishops, or acting on her own. This led to a discussion about whether the superintendent’s job was one of hospitality. Lena expressed the view that all decisions should reflect a particular ethos (implying hospitality). “When we work within a spiritual system, which this is, what is the overarching job of all of us? What is the overarching job that should, or the overarching guideline or commandment that identifies us as different? What is that?” (FG1335-1338). The other participants nodded in agreement. In effect, the discussion indicated a recognition that the superintendent might also feel caught between the demands of the Church and the needs of students, and have to make a call in one direction or the other.

The Case Study additionally opened up discussion around the challenges regarding two other issues, namely use of chapel space for non-Catholic prayer, and secondly the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Ann stated, “I have no issues with someone praying in the chapel of another faith or religion. To me that’s part of God. God is all-embracing. But I might have difficulty allowing a Wiccan student to pray in the chapel. And would something like this open the door to that type of situation? And that’s where I think it gets cloudy, because that’s a little different scenario you know?” (FG1351-1355). The other participants began talking at once but she continued, “That’s where the clouding comes, I mean where do you draw the line and how do we know - is it each individual case or is it blanket?” (FG1364-1365). Jack wondered if there was somewhere to turn for a clearer directive. He
reflected that hospitals have multifaith chapels or prayer centres (or quiet rooms) (FG1376-1378), and there might be lessons to be learned from their context.

The question of the availability of space within an institution helped direct Ann’s thoughts. Space is limited, and there are only so many places that may be set aside for prayer within a physical institution dedicated to education. She brought up the question of safety: “Because you don’t want them to be a target either you know? If there are students in the school who would, God forbid, be anti-Muslim because of the world situation, I would want them to be safe, and I can see across the hall to the chapel so I can keep an eye.” (FG1427-1429).

Ann then brought up the question of the Blessed Sacrament, stating, “If we’re looking at hospitality, maybe it’s not the setting to have the Blessed Sacrament. I don’t know and I just raise that.” (FG1388-1390). David had raised the question earlier when discussing the use of chapel space in the presence of the tabernacle, saying, “I find it difficult to have that balance of offering a sacred space and keeping it sacred while at the same time a place where they feel at home. A tough balance I guess.” (FG1053-1055). Several participants noted that the presence of the Blessed Sacrament had been a point of discussion in their schools over the last few years. Three of the schools currently have the Blessed Sacrament in their chapels and four do not. Gordie noted that the last bishop in his diocese had not wanted the Blessed Sacrament in the school chapel, but then after a change of Ordinary the new bishop had asked why it was not kept there (FG1396-1395). While a lack of clarity may reflect an openness to local context as much as a lack of direction, Gordie personally felt it was important that the Blessed Sacrament be present.
“The thing that I struggle with too is by not allowing the Blessed Sacrament you’re taking away a piece of Catholicity, so how far do you water down Catholicity in order to be hospitable to everyone else in the school?” (FG1404-1406).

Gordie’s question reveals a critical point. Does it ‘water down’ the Catholicity of a school to offer hospitality to all? Jack wondered the same thing:

Jack: It goes back to those limitations, because you hear about schools, not in our board but say in Toronto maybe, where there would be a huge Muslim, maybe the majority, and at what point does it cease to be a Catholic school?

Gordie: You can choose to send them to a Catholic school, so I mean when is it to the point where you start pulling away Catholicity to accommodate hospitality to everyone? (FG1407-1411)

Even so, when the participants were asked directly, “What decision would you make regarding future Muslim students praying in the chapel if you were that Chaplaincy Leader?” they responded as follows:

Ann: Hey, if somebody wants to pray, let them. (FG1430)

Jack: That’s right. (FG1431).

Lena: I know for me personally, I would certainly allow that to happen in the chapel and quite honestly because I’ve done this before – not in the school chapel but at the university – I’d probably pray with them. I’d want to learn what that is, what attracts…” (FG1434-1436). […] I might get fired but I would probably do that… (FG1447)

David: Yeah well I was just thinking about that [being fired]. You know I mean you have to consider what are you going to do and when the superintendent questions you or whatever, I mean you have to think about those things I guess and, and again the question of the principal, maybe they’re unaware of it? Maybe you just made a private arrangement with the student, but I think those are things to think about so you’re not caught off-guard.” (FG1448 – 1452).

Gordie: I would say yes. (FG1454)

Lauren: I would say yes. (FG1457)
To summarize then, five of six participants said they would make the decision to allow the Muslim student to pray in the chapel, against the instructions of the superintendent, while one participant remained non-committal and indicated questions for further discernment.

The Case Study exposes the complicated nature of chaplaincy in high schools, and the tensions between the expectations, needs or even demands of various partners in the community. Within a hierarchical system, some of those needs carry extra weight, but in a vocation predicated on the example of Christ, the chaplain can never stray far from the clichéd but still relevant question of ‘what would Jesus do?’ Lena states it clearly:

Just that it puts us in a very precarious position, when we’re dealing with issues of hospitality because, although we innately know who Jesus was and what Jesus would do, and we strive to follow that message because it is our call and his command, it is sometimes you know a struggle to negotiate that. And we’re put in positions of servanthood where, where we are there to serve the students on the front lines, and I’m sure we all do a wonderful job at that, but then we have a whole other entity that we are responsible to…. And I’m sure Jesus had these issues you know? Time and time again. So did Dorothy Day, so did all of the great people who sacrificed you know? (FG1480-1487)

The other participants agreed, and Gordie brought up the question again of who to turn to for guidance. Ann and Gordie both felt that it was important to trust, as Ann said, that “the superintendents do have that close connection with the bishops.” (FG1515). But Lena expressed reservations about trusting what she called the ‘voices of authority’. Speaking of a personal experience with a palliative care nurse who provided better advice on her mother’s prognosis and pastoral care than her doctor, she added, “And so when we question the voice of authority – and surely those two people who are making that
decision are in synch with each other – I’m not…” (FG1550-1552). Participants agreed that the voices of authority could get muddled, as in Gordie’s case of the bishops with two different opinions about the Blessed Sacrament, or in comparing Pope Benedict to Pope Francis on certain issues (FG1561-1565).

Finally David brought up the risks involved in making decisions against the instructions of authorities:

The difficulty I have I guess is, I have three kids and a wife, and one on the way and I’m the only income in my family so I also have that in the back of my mind you know, where I see I, you know, I hear the scripture verse you know and, unless you hate this and that and follow me, and, and I hear that as a call to faithfulness to that hospitality in a way right? And so I think there’s this great tension between radically really being a, uh, a radical messenger, minister of love, mercy, grace and hospitality where at the same time remembering I’m also bringing home food for the family and I’m also you know, there’s people who… So my job as a job is valuable too. So, there’s a tension there. (FG1568-1575)

This was acknowledged as a concern by all participants.

The case study then revealed various tensions that may be summarized as follows:

1) Tension between authorities and chaplain over practices

2) Tension around the hospitable use of space, particularly in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament

3) Tensions between questions of hospitality and questions of Catholic identity

4) Internal tensions over the pull to follow one’s informed conscience and the potential cost of disobeying a superior.

The Case Study revealed that the participants were familiar with the kind of struggle it exposed. They mentioned the difficulty of finding ‘balance’ (their word) several times throughout the course of the focus group (FG1012, 1045, 1053-1055). In
their interviews they were able to discuss at greater length the tensions and borders they found in their work.

5 The Glass Ball

The concept of being non-judgmental was critically important to all participants, as evidenced in the themes identified in chapter 5. Nevertheless, several participants were aware that some students tended to view them as judgmental specifically because of their association with Catholicism. Gordie for instance told the story of a female student who used to help him lead the choir. She stopped coming to choir inexplicably, and he found out later that it was because she was pregnant and assumed that he would reject her because of Catholic teachings on chastity (G173-175). He said, “Some think, ‘well you’re the religion guy’, you know? Or girl [laughs]. And, for some students they’re worried. They don’t want to talk about things because they’re going to be judged” (G163-165). Likewise, when asked about pastoral ministry to LGBTQ students, Ann expressed the thought that they avoided her “because of I think, the fact you’re the ‘God person’, you know, you’re going to judge” (FG442-443). In other words, the primary perception of Catholicism and specifically the chaplain for some students at least, was not one of welcome; it was one of judgment. Gordie expressed the thought that spending time with students helped counteract this (G84-93).

The difficulties chaplains face over perceptions of the Church were broader than just questions of prioritizing Church teachings or dealing with imposed Church agendas. Jack brought up the impact of sex abuse scandals during the focus group (FG 252) as
another way in which the image of the Church has been harmed in recent decades. Lena corroborated in her interview, “It’s even harder to create environments of hospitality when our young people are aware of these incredibly horrific stories of abuse – sexual, physical – where no one is found accountable and nothing has been done.” (L346-348)

Lena felt that the students’ perceptions of the Church as judgmental might not always be off the mark. As she put it, “It does create a real conundrum when, as the frontline pastoral care workers, we say all are welcome, all are good, all are whole, all are pure, and uh, and on the other side we are sort of given the directive of, well yes everyone is holy and everyone is pure and everyone needs to be loved, but we have to make sure that they are held in a glass ball.” (L199-203). Lena used the image of a glass ball to indicate someone who was different in the eyes of the Church, and who had to be kept apart. The transparency of the glass meant that a pretense was made that the person was included, but the glass actually kept them apart. She gave one example of a student who was gay and wanted to start a Gay Straight Alliance as someone who would be placed in the glass ball, and another example of anyone who would question the place of women in the Church (L316-323). But the ball failed to delude anyone in her opinion. “The people around the ball right closest to the glass ball who can see in are the other students who say there’s something wrong with this” (L212-214). The supposedly invisible barriers to belonging were clearly visible not only to students but also to their chaplain.

Yet as a representative of the Church in the school Lena indicated that she was often the person students turned to for answers when faced with questions around issues
such as these. Jack indicated the same, as did Lauren. For example, approached in her office by two students who consider themselves atheists and who wished to challenge her over some bible verses, Lauren welcomed them and entered into conversation with them. She says:

*I believe that these students were looking to scare me, perhaps anger me, and probably expected me to ask them to leave my office. This was not the case however. I believe I had an ethos of hospitality when dealing with these students. I didn’t outright reject them and their opinions; I even agreed the verses were a strange read. I wanted them to still feel welcome and know their opinions were valid.* (LFQ10c)

On the one hand, the fact that students would approach the chaplain with their concerns indicates a strong and supportive relationship. On the other hand, students’ questions could be challenging for chaplains. As Lena says:

*They always press you right? What do you think, Miss? Do you think that’s right? Do you think that’s wrong? And that’s when I feel that I have to walk this line and it really bothers me. Because I know who Christ was. I know the principles of why he spoke the way he spoke and why he loved the way he loved. Because he knew this unconditional God. And so now all of a sudden, I’m being tasked to put conditions on what I understand to be an unconditional God.* (L241-245)

Lena articulates here the multiple responsibilities she feels, that pull her in different directions. She is pulled in one direction by a fundamental conviction toward loving and thus including all students regardless of who they are, based on her understanding of Christ’s call as she was taught within the Catholic Church. Yet she expresses that the teachings of the Church that pertain to the specific issues such as homosexuality and gender roles constrain her, and she has a responsibility toward Church authorities and the
School Board to uphold those teachings. She must make a call between an overarching principle and a specific one, between conscience and obedience.

David expressed a similar sentiment around the Eucharist (although he did not consider this an issue of judgment).

In the mass, it’s a difficult one in the sense that I see it as a representation or re-enactment of the last supper which was to a very select group. [...] And so, the challenge for me in organizing and running liturgies [masses] is to make sure that everyone understands that whether they’re receiving communion or not they’re still fully holy, accepted and loved by God, and being blessed by God. But it does pose a difficulty with our theology and our ministry (D80-87).

Again, David recognizes that to students, the limitation of the sacrament may appear like an act of exclusion, a perception that he must find ways to counter in his ministry.

6 Summary of Challenges

This chapter has identified many of the challenges encountered by the participants in their ministry particularly in their efforts to welcome a diverse school community.

Those challenges may be summarized according to the following fifteen points:

1) Different visions of chaplaincy between supervisors (ecclesial and educational) and chaplains

2) Pressures on chaplains to make the schools ‘more Catholic’

3) Pressures to address Church issues like vocations and Church attendance

4) Tension between hospitality and maintaining a Catholic identity

5) Challenges over the use of space, including use of the chapel and the place of the Blessed Sacrament
6) Challenges over catechetical teachings about homosexuality and the place of women in the Church

7) Tension between following one’s conscience and obeying Church and school directives

8) Recognition that chaplains have become primary religious leader for most students and some teachers, and school has become locus of spiritual practice

9) Difficulty of welcoming a religiously diverse community in the mass

10) Tension from parents and students who do not support, and sometimes oppose, Catholic practices

11) Tension from staff who are not always fully supportive of Catholic practices and hospitality

12) Perceptions of the Church and thus chaplains as judgmental

13) Perceptions of the Church, due to the sex abuse scandals, as uncaring and unaccountable

14) Societal emphasis on wealth/connections that interferes with spiritual focus

15) Recognition that chaplaincy has become missional in focus

7 Conclusion

All of the challenges mentioned by the participants point to their recognition of the Royal Consciousness at work within society, including the Church and schools. However, at no point did they describe society or the schools as ‘post-Christian’. Instead
the issues of society were understood to be strongly entangled within issues of the Church.

The participants’ ability to see both the real pressures their students face, as well as the gift of the Church even with its flaws surfaced repeatedly. For the participants, faith was lived through hospitality and relationship with their school communities, and it was through this act of living with the community that they offered faith. Despite the challenges, they saw their schools as “very Catholic”, and yet also completely integrated into the fabric of the community with all its diversity. Over the course of the Focus Group and interviews, stories emerged illustrating over and over again the chaplains’ connectedness to the gritty struggles of teenaged life, whether it be because of socioeconomic issues, peer pressure, mental health issues, sexual orientation, or some other aspect of their reality. These stories were grounded in efforts at hospitality, of revealing God’s presence in a community where all are at home.

This chapter and the previous one demonstrated that the theology of ministry of these participants was very much in line with the one that I operate under. There was a desire to ‘be there’ with the students to help them experience the presence of God. And there was an effort at social transformation, not only through formal social justice initiatives but also through efforts to make the school more welcoming. On the other hand, several of the participants opened my eyes to new concerns and possibilities. The Blessed Sacrament for instance has never been available in the chapel at my school – it seemed too distant for the students to relate to on any profound level. I will reconsider this in dialogue with colleagues. Likewise, the difficulties that some participants had
with fellow staff members underscored for me how important those relationships are, and to some degree how they must be prioritized so the chaplain does not become either isolated or begin to think that they have final say in all things religious.

The analysis of the data undertaken in this chapter and the previous one demonstrates that an ethos of hospitality helped the participants both in the performance of their ministry and in discerning the right path in the face of challenge. Importantly too, their struggles were seen in terms of the Gospel, and were thus meaningful even when frustrating. They connected the chaplains to the story of Christ and of his life, with all the challenges he and his companions faced. At no point did the participants ever even hint that the frustrations were so overwhelming that they would consider quitting. They were inspired by the biblical stories of hospitality, as well as contemporary ones to dig deeper and work harder for the students. As Lena said in her follow up questionnaire, “Ministry is of the heart, and young people inspire my heart!”
Chapter 7
Living the Questions

…I would like to beg you dear Sir, as well as I can, to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don’t search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.210 - Rainer Maria Rilke, 1903, in Letters to a Young Poet

The previous two chapters analyzed participants’ views on hospitality, chaplaincy, and the challenges they face. This chapter revisits the original statement of investigation to see what else may be learned for various partners in Catholic education, and what directions might be suggested for further research or thought. Once again, our question has been:

This study will investigate how an ethos of hospitality may assist chaplains in Ontario Catholic schools to minister to increasingly diverse school populations, in a way that takes seriously the complex realities of both the Church and contemporary society.

As stated in the last chapter, the participants’ responses affirmed much of my personal theology of ministry while exposing challenges and points of tension in our

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shared vocation, and suggesting new directions for reflection. An ethos of hospitality was revealed to play a fundamental part in the role of chaplaincy. When caught in the crosshairs of different visions of chaplaincy or different acceptance levels of diversity, the participants generally chose their way forward through the exercise of conscience informed by an ethos of hospitality. This was coupled with a recognition that their primary role was to be there for all members of the school community. Tensions surfaced when supervisors or colleagues held conflicting visions over where the limits of hospitality might be found. This was true even when the intention of supervisors (ecclesial or educational) was to protect the Catholicity of schools, or foster vocations. The chaplains wrestled with questions over the use of space, particularly when they feared Catholic practice might make a student feel unwelcome.

All of the participants were inspired by stories from scripture, but it was the living Christ rather than the crucified Christ that surfaced most in their discussions. The second is really the culmination of the first – Christ so deeply grounded in humanity that in his ‘being there’ he would allow himself to be crucified and die. It is this self-emptying Christ, the kenotic Christ, that is revealed in every action of reaching out and hospitality that Jesus engages in. As Pope Francis states, “Jesus’ whole life, his way of dealing with the poor, his actions, his integrity his simple daily acts of generosity, and finally his complete self-giving, is precious and reveals the mystery of his divine life.”

In this chapter, the theologies and perspectives identified so far will be brought into conversation with each other, in order to seek insight into the ministry of chaplaincy

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211 Francis I, *E. Gaudium*, par. 265.
in Ontario Catholic schools and consider possible implications for partners in education. This chapter is as much about questions as answers, for the mutual search for responses to new situations may be the greatest source of strength for a community. As will become apparent, one overarching suggestion will be that in Catholic schools as in the Church as a whole, an emphasis on living Catholicity should take precedence over an emphasis on teaching Catholicity. On the one hand, new legal restrictions are limiting the capacity of schools to formally teach religion. On the other, the life of Christ, the writings of Pope Francis and the testimony of these participants suggest that faith becomes most meaningful through the way it is lived in the world. This suggests that the New Evangelization’s emphasis on Creed, Commandments, Lord’s Prayer and Sacraments should cede place to Francis’ emphasis on Catholic social teaching as a means of both transmitting and living the faith. The participants’ testimonies also indicated new areas that deserve exploration, and some additional resources will be brought in to this conversation where necessary. Several questions will guide this chapter:

1) What may be learned for schools:
   1.1 About diversity and difference?
   1.2 About ways of thinking about Catholic identity?
   1.3 About welcoming diversity while maintaining Catholic identity?

2) What may be learned for the Church?

3) What may be learned for chaplains?
1 What May be Learned for Schools?

1.1 About Diversity and Difference

Chaplaincy embraces the whole school, therefore chaplains are encouraged to find direction for their ministry in the reality in which they live. Diversity is not an afterthought to be fit in, but indicative of the rich differences found in a community. According to the participants, chaplaincy begins with an acknowledgement of the presence of God within all of humanity and specifically within their schools. This suggests that Catholic schools should explore their identity as complex communities made up of different people who reflect the vastness of God.

In order to practice hospitality authentically however, Catholic school leaders – including chaplains – must be aware of their own fault lines in terms of dealing with difference. Conversations with the participants, including the Case Study, revealed that besides the overarching societal context of difference in Ontario (and the world), within Catholic schools specifically three identifiers stand out as marking members of the community as ‘different’ in a potentially negative light (for difference is not necessarily negative) because of Catholicism itself. They are gender, religion, and sexuality.

Gender may become a marker of ‘otherness’ (different in a negative sense) in Catholic schools, because of the distinct roles of men and women within the Catholic Church hierarchy as a whole. Consequently, there is a clash between attitudes in the wider Ontario culture which assert that women and men have equal access to the same vocations (at least theoretically), and the Church which maintains specific gender roles particularly as regards ordination. The question of who is called to ordination is decided
at the level of the magisterium (understood here as bishops and Pope), and therefore lies beyond the reach of local decision making. However, it is vital that the Catholic school community ponder questions of gender as a source of difference, and work to mitigate any sense of ‘otherness’ female students and staff might acquire by ensuring that women have both a voice and access to leadership roles within the school. Furthermore, Catholic schools must ask themselves whether those who oppose the Church’s position against female ordination, student or staff, would be welcome within the school. Are schools and Church willing to make themselves vulnerable by embracing dialogue with dissenting voices?

Religion becomes a marker of ‘otherness’ in Catholic schools when Catholics are offered Masses and liturgies, but members of other denominations or religions are not offered services from their religious tradition, and in fact are often required to attend mandatory masses even though they cannot receive the Eucharist. Likewise, Religious Education classes focus on Catholic religious education, and even the grade 11 World Religions class is offered from a Catholic perspective. None of this is of course surprising or unexpected within a Catholic school. However, it may leave students feeling that they are somehow ‘Other’ or marginal to the dominant group. While continuing to offer Catholic faith opportunities and perspectives, this study suggests schools must be vigilant that all students feel welcome regardless of their religious background.

Sexual identity can become a marker of ‘otherness’ in Catholic schools because Catholic teachings on homosexuality risk leaving LGBTQ students feeling excluded. On
the one hand the Church asserts that they must be protected from all unjust discrimination (#2358, Catechism of the Catholic Church). On the other, it names homosexual activity as “intrinsically disordered” (#2357). It can be difficult for students, let alone adults, to distinguish between action and identity. Efforts to address bullying against these students have generated conflict and misunderstanding around the issue of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs). Again, the participants’ experiences suggest that the concerns of LGBTQ students and their parents must be heard, and school staff (with the bishops) should be encouraged to explore how they may best offer solidarity, hospitality and relationship to this often marginalized group. Schools might wish to ask themselves to what extent staff or students would feel comfortable or safe revealing that they are a member of a sexual minority, and conversations should be initiated (or continued) to verify that all feel welcome.

Although gender, religion and sexuality hold particular significance as markers of difference in Catholic schools, this does not mean other issues are unimportant. As already noted, disability, poverty, ethnicity (including aboriginal identity) and many other factors arising from the dominant embrace of a competitive market (and thus culture) in Ontario may cause someone to feel marginalized. A particular life condition like grief, anxiety or depression may also lead to isolation. In contrast to issues of gender, religion and sexuality, Catholic Social Teaching offers strong and unequivocal support for efforts to address the kinds of exclusion that might arise from these conditions of life. These teachings provide one of the strongest bases for Catholic education.
1.2 What might be learned for schools about Catholic School identity?

Before proceeding further it may be helpful to ask how we frame the category of ‘Catholic high school’. High schools are both communal and hierarchical, and a tension exists at times between the two natures of a school. School boards must answer to the people of Ontario in various ways, including through the media and as represented by the Ministry of Education. Directors of Education with their Executive Councils (comprised of Supervisory Officers) are held accountable for the operation of schools and for the hiring and firing of employees. In the Catholic system, the Executive Council is also called upon to answer to the Bishops. And beneath all of this lies the fundamental Catholic belief that every person in the final analysis answers to God. The participants’ diagram of the power dynamics reflected in the case study demonstrated this. All of this will colour any directives sent down the line, first to school principals and then the rest of the staff. School employees will in turn answer to those above them as well as to students, colleagues, parents and members of their respective communities. Finally, students answer typically to their teachers, peers and parents. With this multitude of perspectives and social locations, disparity in views is almost inevitable and may be viewed either as a source of enrichment or a source of dissension.

Despite this potential cacophony of perspectives, reflection on the purpose of Catholic schools can help inform chaplains in their ministry. A model of Catholic schools, limited and partial though it may be, could help focus the vocation of chaplain and inspire vision for the work.
Paul G. Hiebert states that “‘Christian’, like many other words in English, refers to a category of people, a category we create in our minds.”\textsuperscript{212} The same is true for ‘Catholic’ and ‘Catholic schools’. He identifies three ‘sets’ or mathematical categories that may be used as model.

The first way of categorizing people or objects is through the use of bounded sets. Hiebert notes, “Objects within a bounded set are uniform in their essential characteristics.”\textsuperscript{213} In addition, no person or object can be partly in the set. Catholic elementary schools set up an essential characteristic for students with their insistence on baptismal certificates. While adherence to such characteristics makes the task of defining who belongs fairly straightforward, Hiebert notes, “There is an excluded middle. . . . We need carefully defined membership lists in church, and a distancing from those in the world.”\textsuperscript{214} This model does not function well for Catholic high schools in Ontario since essential characteristics do not differentiate students at Catholic schools from students at other schools. The full diversity of the Ontario population may potentially be found in a Catholic high school.

Hiebert’s second model, ‘centered sets’, may be more helpful. A centered set, “is created by defining a center, and the relationship of things to that center. Some things may be far from the center, but they are related to or moving towards the center;
therefore, they are part of the centered set.” 215 As far as Catholic schools are concerned, the discussion moves to what the recognized center should be, how such a center may be discerned, and who will discern it.

A perception of Catholic schools as centered sets leaves room for greater diversity in schools. Currently, there appear to be two competing centers in Catholic schools. On the one hand, graduation with an Ontario Secondary School Certificate might be the center from the perspective of the Ministry of Education. 216 But for Catholic schools the center must align in some way with the foundational narrative of the Christian faith. The ethics of Christ, modeled by his life and represented by his kenotic self-giving on the cross could stand as the ultimate center. 217 The stories chosen by the participants all point to this vision of the love and hospitality of God. If the Ministry of Education’s perspective can be moderated by the ethics of Christ, the resultant wisdom will be rich and meaningful. The ethics of Christ, meaning his model of inclusive love for others (not

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215 Ibid., 423

216 According to the Ministry of Education of Ontario website, the top three priorities until April 2014 were all achievement-based, namely: 1) High levels of student achievement, 2) Reduced gaps in student achievement, 3) Increased public confidence in publicly funded education. In April 2014, two other goals were added: Ensuring Equity and Promoting Well-being. This is a positive step and as implementation continues, will hopefully have a beneficial effect on students, families and society. “Who We Are,” Ontario Ministry of Education, accessed Feb. 28th, 2014, and August 10th, 2015, http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/whoweare.html.

217 Not all Catholics would necessarily agree – some might suggest that conversion to Catholicism should be central, others might point to the Eucharist. But these concrete sacramental acts (whether baptism, confirmation or communion) need not be understood as separate from an ethics of Christ. For Catholics, they are foundational. But for non-Catholics, especially those completely uninterested in conversion, this language is more accessible than the language of sacrament. Furthermore, the ethics of Christ must be understood as discernment of action based on love of the other, not a list of morality rules.
a list of moral rules), may open the imagination of educators to create school
communities that are just, welcoming and effective both academically and socially.

Hiebert’s final model is that of the ‘fuzzy set’. Fuzzy sets have no clear
boundaries, and objects or people may be only partly in the set, and also a part of other
sets at the same time. Hiebert argues rightly that this perception of Christianity has
“serious theological and missiological problems.”218 This set hardly allows Catholic
schools to pursue their own identity.

Yet students themselves may operate more like members of fuzzy sets. In their
search for identity, young people move from one interest to another, negotiating the
intersections of the many groups which hold their allegiance. Rather than perceiving this
movement as aberrant, this should be accepted as the actual reality of teenage life. One
task of schools and their chaplains is to help students grow in their ability to discern and
integrate their identity. The school itself needs to have a stronger understanding of
identity or purpose than a fuzzy set allows, while accepting that a young person’s
exploration of identity and belief may travel a fuzzy road. This may be helped by
recognizing the hybridity of each person’s identity. While the notion of a fuzzy set
underscores better than the other models the need for openness toward others, it still risks
undermining the identity of a school since no single vision can prevail.

Catholic schools, if they are to be Catholic at all, must ask in what direction
Christ points. In this sense, I would argue that the centered set perspective, with the

ethics of Christ at the centre, is most helpful. The heart of chaplaincy as expressed by the participants in this study is to help students experience the presence of God in their lives and discern a way of life that responds to the love extended to humanity by the divine. Graduation is not so much an end in itself as a means to better live a life of compassion and relationship. Thus, education should focus on wisdom and relationship over knowledge and success. Skills and knowledge become tools to live an ethical life, embraced by the love of God, recognizing that an ethical life is more than simply responding to one moral dilemma after another. Ethical living involves conversation and acts of imagination that may lead to social transformation.

Importantly the recognition of a specific center for Catholic high schools cannot carry with it any notion of rigidity or exclusion. According to Hiebert, in a centered set, those who are not travelling towards the center or not somehow related to it do not belong, but this must be rejected. Who is to judge in which direction a person is travelling? One of the things that all of the participants firmly rejected was such judgement. Furthermore, from a Catholic perspective, all humans are created in the *Imago Dei* and thus are related to Christ. Life is complex and ‘fuzzy’, and conversation must be maintained across widely varying perspectives. Even if all members of the Catholic school community were to agree that Christ stands at the center of the set, debate would and should still continue on the translation of meaning of such a notion into the operation of the school. That debate in itself proclaims the healthy relationships that constitute a meaningful community, and could lead to imaginative solutions.
Unfortunately, the experience of these chaplains suggests that debate and dissent are not always welcome. The distance between those at the top of Catholic education (Bishops, Executive Council), and students or school staff may lead to a disparity of views. The power differential may lead chaplains to wrestle with their conscience over how to respond to their students’ needs, while remaining true to their supervisors and ordinaries. The fears demonstrated over the potential loss of jobs, and the frustration expressed over differences in vision must be addressed. These barriers to communication need to be overcome in order to allow all partners to work together to build community and highlight the presence of God in the lives of students. Again this will take collaborative acts of imagination to approach things differently. Could circles be formed that transcend hierarchy? Can we find a way to truly see and hear each other?

1.3 What might be learned for schools about welcoming diversity while maintaining Catholic identity?

In earlier years, it appears that schools could point to two main features as evidence of their Catholicity: 1) the population of the school was predominantly Catholic; and 2) Catholic liturgies, Catholic religious education, and sometimes other Catholic activities (like retreats) were mandatory. While the Catholic identity of schools was never limited to these features, they were the most obvious. Both of these points must be revisited in order to consider their viability and applicability in the current context.
Despite efforts to protect the Catholicity of school populations by prioritizing the hiring of Catholics and by limiting enrollment in elementary schools to baptized Catholics, school populations are increasingly disconnected from the Catholic faith. The evidence provided by participants indicates both an increasing trend toward religious diversity, and a disassociation from parish and catechism on the part of those students who are even baptized Catholic. The Catholic identity of schools can no longer depend on the notion of a majority of engaged Catholic within the school. Even the practice of requiring a recommendation from a priest for hiring purposes has little meaning since the reality on the ground within schools suggests that not all staff hired with priestly recommendations are in actual fact deeply associated with a parish. There is no reason in the short term to expect this situation to reverse itself. Therefore the maintenance of a Catholic identity cannot be assumed on the basis of a Catholic school population in general. This is a starkly different situation from the challenges to Catholic education that arose in the past. In the 1800s through to the late 1900s, there was no shortage of Catholics to support their school system. Now, the hiring of a chaplain able to witness to the presence of Christ becomes an even greater priority.

While the number of staff connected to their Catholic faith is diminishing in Catholic schools they still form, if not a majority, then at least a sizable minority in schools. The question arises as to whether this group is being adequately fed by their school and their parish communities to help ensure they continue to adhere to Catholic practice. Do they feel they have a stake in the Church, or has it in their minds become the domain primarily of the priest? The experience of chaplains working in complex
multi-faith environments may be a fruitful area of exploration for the Church in search of a means of building stronger connections to Catholic faith. This will be part of the focus of the following section on Church.

In addition to developing the connection between staff members, students and faith practice, this research suggests that schools should seek to offer a Catholicity that speaks to the broad range of humanity found in their halls. The chaplains relied heavily on dialogue and conversation, suggesting that as a whole, schools should continue to seek common ground with other faiths and value systems, while at the same time offering distinctively Catholic worship practices, theology and education. Schools may wish to consider how Catholicity as lived can take precedence of Catholicity as taught. This Catholicity must speak in the language of the world, and of the specific communities where the schools are found if it is to be heard. Catholic schools in Ontario are becoming reminiscent of early mission fields according to the participants, where a broad range of society was educated. In partnership with the Church, schools might ask what it is the world needs now. How may spirituality be nurtured in a way that is relevant to today and addresses the challenges of today? Here an ethos of hospitality as a primordial focus will help schools to provide an education that is profoundly Catholic and fully in line with Catholic Social Teachings. Ultimately Catholic schools have the opportunity to become transformative agents in the world through a focus on hospitality that leads to justice and peace.

School boards have traditionally pointed to the visible practices of faith as a means of indicating their Catholic identity. Up until April of 2014, students were
required to take religious education classes, and attend masses, and only under rare circumstances could an exemption be obtained. But the fault line of religion is shifting. In April 2014 a family successfully challenged this requirement. “A three-member panel of the Ontario divisional court ruled Oliver Erazo’s son Jonathan should not have to attend any religious liturgies or retreats at Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School in Brampton under provisions in the provincial Education Act.”

Schools of course continue to offer Catholic religious instruction and related Catholic activities such as retreats, but students are no longer obliged to engage in them. Boards may continue to point to the availability of Catholic activities as an identifying marker, but students’ disconnection from parish life and thus Catholicity may lead to reduced participation.

This may feel like a loss for many Catholics. However, in many ways it is more firmly in line with Catholic Social Teaching and the principles of social justice of the Catholic Church. In particular, it reflects a stronger sense of hospitality. One common criticism of missionary work (whether always legitimate or not) is the refusal to provide ‘goods’ – whether education, food, clothing or employment – to local people who do not participate in the religious side of the mission. Rather than fight the legal change then, school boards may wish to promote their religious difference as a meaningful gift for

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those who want it, rather than a mandatory requirement. This moment of crisis is also a profound moment of opportunity. Once again, how this gift is offered will require thoughtful conversations and creative imagination.

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario appears to have begun to adopt this attitude. According to Director Gartland’s message on the website, “We foster a positive and nurturing learning environment where students are inspired to learn and grow, through the Gospel. Guided by the Catholic Graduate Expectations, we continue to evaluate and revise our curriculum to maintain alignment with best practices, and current educational trends.” The Catholic Graduate Expectations (CGEs) were developed by the Institute for Catholic Education in 1998 to form a basis for curriculum in Ontario Catholic schools. They consist of seven overarching principles with sub-themes. These principles are: 1) A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community; 2) An Effective Communicator; 3) A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker; 4) A Self-Directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner; 5) A Collaborative Contributor; 6) A Caring Family Member; and 7) A Responsible Citizen. Only the first is explicitly Catholic, and students are not assessed on their achievement of these expectations. Beyond these references to the Gospel and Catholic Graduate Expectations (CGEs), expressions of the board’s Catholic identity are limited to, “social justice

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221 A link to Catholic Graduate Expectations is also found on this page. Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario. [Accessed March 3rd, 2015].

222 Ibid.

initiatives, anti-bullying campaigns, and our ongoing mission trips. Our Board is known for its outstanding contributions, through the many acts of kindness which support the most vulnerable in our community, and beyond.”224 The emphasis here is on Catholic social doctrine. No mention at all is made of sacramental practices or required religious education classes. This demonstrates an effort on the part of the board to offer something meaningful to all its students.

With this, Catholic schools may be viewed more clearly both as sites of rich interaction across diversity in a common search for justice, and also mission grounds, to offer students the opportunity to become more aware of the presence of Christ. To quote Pope Francis, “It is not the same thing to try to build the world with his Gospel as to do so by our own lights. We know well that with Jesus life becomes richer and with him it is easier to find meaning in everything.”225 The Church offers of itself in the school, but Catholics within the school must also open themselves to the world to learn at a deeper level. This is Church in the world. Could the chaplains’ example of inviting, reaching out, providing welcome, and promoting justice become the standard for how school’s live out their Catholic identity?

What would it look like for a Catholic school to operate and interact across diversity at a deeper level? Rather than having school officials (whether chaplains, teachers, principals or board personnel) answer that question themselves, is there a way to engage students and parents in a conversation around what the imaginative possibilities

224 Ibid.

225 Francis I, E. Gaudium, par. 266.
might be? The participants’ experiences suggest that conversation and interaction may be key to relationship and belonging – elements at the root of just communities.

Conversation may also provide the key to addressing the constant tension in Catholic schools around maintaining a Catholic identity and welcoming all.

In schools as in houses of hospitality, decisions are made by those who perceive themselves as having most ownership or responsibility for the space. In Catholic high schools, chaplains hold responsibility for the operation of chapel spaces and chaplaincy offices (where they exist). They may also carry responsibility for conveying a sense of Catholicity through the décor used in hallways and classrooms. This in turn conveys a message to the students about the school’s values and beliefs that may impact on questions of hospitality and belonging. Chaplains need be mindful of this as they make decisions around the use of space. But the issue is even more complex than that.

The Royal Consciousness asserts that owning space is legitimate and desirable. But this means there are always those who do not have space. Canada’s particular colonial narrative imposed ownership (and thus ‘dis-ownership’) on our aboriginal peoples.\footnote{In \textit{A fair country: Telling truths about Canada} (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2008), John Ralston Saul argues that Canada has in fact been torn between two historical realities, one reflected in our colonial heritage, and the other reflected in what he calls a Métis heritage. This perspective may offer insights for a way forward.} Already we have discussed Ontario Catholic schools’ unique history and location without reference to the invisible people (from a colonial perspective) whose lands these schools were established on. What space then does Christianity point to?

Michael Nausner insists importantly that Christianity should in some sense always be
located in a borderland. It is not the space so much as the continual process of developing and strengthening relationships of solidarity that should define Christianity. This is not to say that location does not matter; it does, tremendously. As I have already argued, all theologies and ministries are contextual. But we must turn our thinking away from the idea of ownership of space, to the idea of belonging to a space.\textsuperscript{227} At the same time, Christian ground must be constantly shifting and the borders permeable. Boundaries still exist, but they do not become walls. Instead they may demonstrate areas of responsibility while at the same time becoming places of encounter which generate energy and wisdom.\textsuperscript{228}

Although this investigation has unearthed differences in vision, the consistency of views between participants regarding hospitality suggests that the CDSBEO is intentionally hiring chaplains who will prioritize this work. Since an ethos of hospitality is not limited to Catholic practice, it provides an important common ground with the wider world, one that for Catholics is deeply embedded in the Gospel call. Prioritizing hospitality in combination with the specific Catholic viewpoints and activities that are offered in Catholic schools provides an identity that is accessible not only to Catholics, but also to many others. In other words, Catholic schools might strengthen efforts to move their focus from knowledge, whether it be science, technology, literature or

\textsuperscript{227} For a beautiful articulation of this, see: Margaret Atwood, \textit{The Moment}, accessed Feb. 28\textsuperscript{th}, 2014, \url{http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-moment/}.

\textsuperscript{228} For my ministry, this may be reflected practically in the use of office or chapel space. Sometimes the chapel is a place for quiet worship, sometimes a place for group prayer, and sometimes, as described in the beginning, just a place for fellowship and sanctuary, music and conversation. Often it is a place to laugh.
religious education, to wisdom which looks for the impact of that knowledge for the most marginalized and ‘different’, and seeks to build relationship and community for all.

Hospitality cannot be reduced to duty. Catholic schools cannot simply accept non-Catholic students, and the wide diversity of humanity, just because the Ministry of Education states that they must. Rather, the whole identity of Catholic schools must reflect the hospitality of Christ, whereby the last are first and the first are last (Matt 20:16). Stanley Hauerwas notes that, “As such, the church does not have a social ethic, the church is a social ethic”

229 (Italics in original). The same may be said of schools, particularly Catholic schools. We may speak of a Christian duty to hospitality only as one strategy to help us overcome our fears, but it should be only a temporary part of a holistic school identity that aims to form embracing relationships that are transformative to society as a whole by their very existence across difference. In other words, an ethos of hospitality must prevail. Notwithstanding the crisis of identity this may provoke for schools and church alike, the hospitality of Christ suggests that Catholic schools should in fact be open to all.

Faith goes deeper than hours spent in worship, or a day on retreat. Faith is a way of living based on the life of Christ. According to the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church once again, the social doctrine, “is a distinctive way for the Church to carry out her ministry of the Word and her prophetic role.”

230 Some of its


clearest articulations may be found in many of the passages already mentioned, such as Luke 4, Micah 6:8, Matthew 5 and Matthew 25. If Catholic schools can no longer rely on the structures of the past to demonstrate their Catholic identity, then this provides an opportunity to go deeper. As Lena says, “I think when I boil it down it comes to this: The youth that I work with are attracted to what I am as a person of faith, because of me. Not that I’m important but because I create that hospitable environment. If I wasn’t hospitable, they wouldn’t be attracted to faith at all because there’s nothing else for them to cement their anchors to” (L352-355). Lena and the others are seeking to reveal the presence of God through their acts of hospitality. The entirety of a school is called to do the same.

If Catholic schools and their chaplaincy leaders wish to offer a critique of the Royal Consciousness and draw students to God then they must operate in contrast to that Consciousness. In other words, hierarchies of power and the treatment of individuals as disposable goods, so easily accepted within society, must be challenged by school communities that not only teach but also function in contrast to that paradigm. The necessary critique of current society and the construction (never finished) of an embracing community are not two separate things. According to Canadian bishop Remi J. de Roo, “We understand and proclaim the gospel to the degree that we live it in daily reality.”

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All schools in Ontario, whether public or Catholic, face challenges from diversity and the Royal Consciousness. But Catholic schools are blessed with a particular focus revealed over and over again in the Gospels. This focus points to an overriding hospitality that seeks relationship with all, and particularly with those who are marginalized or oppressed with society. This may mean that when decisions regarding inclusion must be made, the principle of subsidiarity should as much as possible be put into effect. Those working most directly with students should where possible be enabled to make decisions. And where there is disagreement, could the circle model of conversation with all partners lead to imaginative new solutions? Situations such as that surrounding the Muslim student prevented from praying in the chapel could perhaps be avoided. While this may be somewhat countercultural to the dominant economic agenda of hierarchy, it provides common ground with multiple philosophical, humanist and religious perspectives while at the same time remaining profoundly Catholic. This is the heart of Matthew 25. The praxis at the center of that passage still points for Catholics to the all-embracing welcome of Christ. It still points to the Gospel. It still points to God.

2 What may be learned for the Church?

As the participants made clear, the challenges facing Catholic education are rooted not just in society but also in the Church. While it is important that schools ask themselves how to live their Catholic identity in contemporary society, it is just as important that parishes – and the Church as a whole – do the same. Questions might be asked about where traditions are standing in the way of connecting people with their
parish. Ultimately Catholic schools will be lost in terms of their Catholic identity if no one within them has any remaining connection with the parish.

The ministry of chaplaincy provides insights for the larger Church. If priests, ministers, parish councils and committed lay people asked themselves more frequently where they might go to serve the world, instead of how they might fill the pews, they might achieve the growth in congregations that they so often seek. Rather than preach, the participants relied mainly on their presence with members of the school community to demonstrate the wisdom of faith. As Brad Lewis, author of *High School Ministry from A to Z* states, “The more our students see our faces and hear our voices, the easier it is for them to knock on our door when they need us. Being present makes that possible.”

This is potentially true for all ministry.

How do you do ‘hallway ministry’ in the community? Who needs a listening ear? Who is hungry for either food or relationship? Are they being fed? Is the parish engaged with the marginalized and the needy or is their sole contribution to issues of justice limited to an annual March for Life? Is the priest the only one who visits the sick? How might we imaginatively address these questions? The language of faith must be the language of compassion if it is to have meaning in a society assaulted again and again by the Royal Consciousness. And it must be loud. The Church is called to live in the world. It cannot hang back simply hoping people will show up on Sunday. In reaching out to the stranger the Church, like Abraham, may be reaching out to God.

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The Church has powerful teachings supporting engagement with the world. The Vatican II document *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*) makes this clear:

Nevertheless, with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent. For in truth it must still be regretted that fundamental personal rights are still not being universally honored.233

*Gaudium et Spes* affirms the need for Catholics to engage with others in the establishment of a just society. The language used here offers a profoundly Catholic understanding of contemporary issues, while tying culture and Church together. In *Gaudium et Spes* the Church recognizes its context. If Christ is incarnate in the world, the Church must follow suit.

Pope Francis picks up this theme in *Evangelii Gaudium* when he states:

Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord gets involved and he involves his own, as he kneels to wash their feet. He tells his disciples: “You will be blessed if you do this” (Jn 13:17). An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distance, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers thus take on the “smell of the sheep” and the sheep are willing to go hear their voice. An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be.234

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234 Francis I. *E. Gaudium*, par. 24.
According to Pope Francis, the path to evangelization is through patient compassion with people, through living the Gospel in the accompaniment of all, without exclusion and without timeframe. This in turn can lead to joy.\textsuperscript{235}

To work for justice in the world means to be open to dialogue with the world. This effort requires conversations that, in their openness to the voices of others, leave the Church vulnerable to criticism. But, as Brueggemann and others have already noted, criticism has its place. The risks involved in conversing across difference are essential to truly further Christianity’s presence in the world. This may be the key to avoiding the mistakes of the past, including the mishandling of sex abuse cases and, particularly in Canada, the issues around residential schools. As Douglas John Hall says:

True contextuality means the initiating and nurturing of a \textit{dialogue} with one’s culture, a genuine give-and-take, in which the world is permitted to speak for itself, and in which therefore the Christian community opens itself to the \textit{risk} of hearing things that it had not anticipated and to which it cannot \textit{readily} respond. In other words, in a fully contextual approach to its subject, the disciple community sees its sociohistorical habitat, not only as a field to be investigated but as a partner in the investigation – and therefore as contributor to the theological task itself.\textsuperscript{236} (Italics in original).

The importance of dialogue, which only becomes \textit{dialogue} and not \textit{monologue} when we are truly open to the challenge of difference, cannot be overstated.

A willingness to engage in honest self-critical reflection will legitimate broader criticism of - and engagement with - the wider world. Once again, as expressed by the participants, the tragedy of sexual abuse cover-ups within the Church, and the painfully

\textsuperscript{235} Ibid.

slow process by which the Vatican has acknowledged and dealt with them, has undermined the credibility of the Church to speak and work for justice in every arena. Catholics must demonstrate their engagement with the world and their willingness to admit to sin (not to mention crime), if they expect their schools to be welcomed in the wider world.

Pope Francis prioritizes dialogue across difference in *Evangelii Gaudium* (par. 238-258), and reminds Catholics that, “the Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction.” The Church and each individual parish should be encouraged to counter any temptation to form a garrison, and focus instead on community.

For bishops seeking to guide their dioceses, engaging in conversations with chaplains may offer useful insights into how the Church may become more grounded in the community. Unfortunately, the participants’ responses indicated that at times their bishops’ vision of Catholic education clashed with their own. Since the CDSBEO covers three dioceses, and since there have been changes of Ordinary in all three over the course of employment of most participants, experiences were mixed. However, Lena spoke of the fear she felt bishops had that the schools were not Catholic enough and how this was ‘suffocating’. Ann spoke of the pressure to find vocations. Gordie received conflicting instructions about the Blessed Sacrament. And David worried about his job if he

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237 Francis I. *E. Gaudium*, par. 88. Pope Francis demonstrates an effective model of criticism and energizing in this exhortation.
contradicted his superiors. This may arise from a lack of dialogue. The hierarchical structure of the Church means conversation between chaplains and bishops do not always flow naturally or easily. Educated in the post-Vatican II era, chaplains rely more heavily on discernment of conscience perhaps than blind obedience, and are more prepared to focus on the vision of Church as community than as hierarchy. But still they may be fearful to speak out. Bishops must ensure that they are truly open and willing to listen to the chaplains on the ground. In this way then, the hierarchy of the Church may better support the schools they so wish to have endure, and through them reach out more effectively to the wider world.

The lack of sufficient dialogue between the hierarchy of the Church and lay ministers in general may be reflected in the fact that, in the entire *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* little mention is made of lay ministry. The laity are encouraged to live their faith meaningfully in the world and witness through their way of life. This does reflect in some ways the chaplains’ approach to ministry. But there is an intentionality, and one might even say method as reflected in their similarity of their approaches, that appears to be frequently overlooked when the Church speaks officially about ministry. Pope Francis attempts to bridge this gap in *Evangelii Gaudium*, yet chapter three on “The Proclamation of the Gospel” is still primarily directed towards priests.238 The overarching assumption seems to be that pastoral ministry still belongs mainly to the ordained priesthood. But this is simply no longer the case, as demonstrated

238 Francis I, *E. Gaudium*, 111-175.
not only by chaplaincy leaders in Ontario Catholic schools, but by many lay people working in a multitude of contexts.

Chaplains live closely within the diversity of their community. Their way of doing ministry takes into account the struggles of the contemporary world. Diocesan officials and clergy would do well to listen to their experience not just for what might be learned about schools but because of the potential to learn new methods of ministering to the world. There is room in the Church for lay ministry - a type of chaplaincy – that seeks to reach the world. Already there are organizations within the Church that work for justice, charity and peace. These include the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Catholic Worker movement, the Catholic Women’s League, and many others. But the fact that they are separate organizations might suggest that they are understood on some level to be at arm’s length from the primary mission of the Church. The decrease in vocations and the rapidly emptying pews seem to hold the attention of some clergy more than the poverty and suffering of society. Somehow, the idea of reaching out in compassion and hospitality must be centralized within Church understanding. Such an occurrence may combat the Royal Consciousness of society on the one hand, and the growing disconnection from the Church of many Catholics on the other. All Christians are called to reach out to their neighbour, but not all are comfortable. At the moment, a focus on justice and peace is often the purview of deacons, but deacons are few and the diaconate is limited to men. Could a role be found, modeled on school chaplaincy, for a ministry of laity in the world based on principles of hospitality and social justice?
While the bishops may begin conversations with chaplains, it is important that they also move beyond that to hear the different voices of students and staff in Catholic schools. Postcolonial theology reminds us that wisdom is found at the margins, with those who may be excluded or forgotten. World Youth Day and similar regional events bring Catholic youth into the company of bishops, but this leaves many students in Catholic schools still unheard and unseen. Could bishops visit GSAs? Could they show up for social justice initiatives like ThinkFast or our annual Walk Against Poverty? This might allow them the time to simply converse with students who may not even be Catholic about their common understandings, and through this share wisdom on faith. All clergy, within the limits of their time, should consider prioritizing this kind of presence in the school and wider community. Instead of rueing the fact that few enter the church doors anymore, clergy could lead by example in living Church in the world. This shift from teaching Catholicity to living Catholicity is reflected when Pope Francis calls on the Church to ‘go forth’, saying, “I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.”

Again, we return to the need for imagination, and the belief that all things are possible.

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239 Francis I, *E. Guadium*, par. 27.
3 What may be learned for Chaplains?

This research has suggested that chaplaincy is concerned with three interrelated goals – being with students and staff in their struggles and joys, helping reveal the presence of God in the school, and working for social transformation toward justice and peace. The work is necessarily evangelical, in the sense that chaplains seek to make the Gospel alive for the school community. As Lena noted, the chaplain as role model, as a person striving to live the faith and build community and relationship, may in itself be a great draw to opening hearts to the message of Christ.

Jack made the point that the work of chaplaincy is now missional. This reflects the larger reality of the Church according to Pope Francis in Evangelii Gaudium. This exhortation has surfaced again and again throughout this research, perhaps because the situation in Catholic schools is simply a variant microcosm for the reality of the larger Church. Pope Francis’ appeal to a recognition of the joy of the Gospel, and of the need for Catholics to be present with the world according to the Gospel-based principles of Catholic Social Teaching, is timely for chaplaincy leaders in Ontario Catholic schools.

Regardless of the response of other Catholics, or of the school boards, or of parishes, this study suggests chaplains should live as missional people of faith who embrace diversity and are present to their communities. Pope Francis indicates three ‘areas’ of evangelization, all of which are present in Ontario Catholic schools. These include “the faithful who regularly take part in community worship,”240 the baptized who

240 Ibid., par. 15.
are no longer connected meaningfully to the Church, and “those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him.”\textsuperscript{241} Regardless of where a school community member might identify themselves, the approach of the chaplain must be essentially the same – invitational, compassionate and relational. Sharing the stories of scripture, and hearing the stories of the living community will draw all into relationship, with each other and with God.

Chaplains then should strive to continue their efforts to be as aware as possible of the context of the members of their school community. Who is poor? Who might be marginalized? Who might be forgotten? Who needs someone to ‘be there’ with them? Chaplains (like all people) are called to act as Christ did and reach out to the excluded, bringing them home. While the chaplain holds tight to their own faith identity, and speaks of that faith, according to these participants they must seek to refrain from judgment or rejection of members of the community. LGBTQ students, those who are sexually active, those who have had abortions, those who use or sell illegal drugs, those of other religions, the atheists and the agnostics – everyone – must feel the welcome which alone can lead to an understanding of what it means to follow Christ. As Ann mentioned, hospitality is evangelization.

In the Encyclical \textit{Redemptoris Missio}, Pope John Paul II reminds Catholics that mission is intrinsic to the Church as a whole.\textsuperscript{242} Pope John Paul II notes the profound

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\textsuperscript{241} Ibid.
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\textsuperscript{242} John Paul II. “Redemptoris Missio: On the Permanent Validity of the Church’s Missionary Mandate” (December 7\textsuperscript{th} 1993), par. 71, accessed June 12\textsuperscript{th}, 2015. \url{http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html}.
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importance of understanding the culture – and living within it - for missionaries.  

Chapter VIII – *Missionary Spirituality* - of this document in particular may be a fruitful resource for reflection for chaplaincy leaders. Here, John Paul II discusses the centrality of the presence of Christ and the meaning of self-emptying in the missionary context. The chaplain may ask what it means in their context to be “a contemplative in action” (par. 91) and a “person of the Beatitudes” (par. 91).

Ronald Rolheiser identifies four points that should be adopted in approaching mission to secularity – and arguably they apply to all mission:

- Our mission to and within secularity needs to be non-proselytizing and non-combative, a mission within which we see ourselves as walking with our own children who, while they have much to teach us, desperately still need our support, moral guidance, and constant cajoling. […] (60)
- Our mission… must be in solidarity with the poor, the vulnerable and the powerless. […] (61).
- Our mission… needs to witness particularly to fidelity and stability in a culture too much given to infidelity and instability. […] (63)
- Our mission… needs to incarnate a fuller maturity, an inner-directedness, and a wider inclusivity. […] (64).

Catholic schools and their chaplains are ideally placed to engage in this kind of mission work, one that emphasizes witness and presence. As Michael Downey says, “Our first task in mission is not to correct and chide, but to remain approachable and open, collaborative and supportive of all who truly seek common cause and common good.”

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243 Ibid., par. 53.
244 Ibid., par. 91.
246 Michael Downey, “Consenting to Kenosis”, 130.
Based on the words of this study’s participants, the chaplain would be advised to go beyond this however, and believe that all do ‘seek common cause and common good’. None can be judged as being less of a seeker than others within a school context, regardless of the temptation to exclude.

This is challenging work. Marilyn Legge calls for three ingredients to sustain the minister in a diverse environment:

Consider also these three ingredients for sustaining vocational commitment: personal groundedness, discernment and responsibility within communities of solidarity and compassion. [...] Theologically, we are sought out by God and sustained with divine-human love that calls us to act our way into meeting basic needs with gladness in this postmodern terrain.247

Personal groundedness means knowing the self, centering in prayer, and returning to the love of God on a daily basis. The resources the participants named helped them return to this groundedness in both their faith and their personal life. The search for personal groundedness is indeed personal, but the point is well taken that time should be set aside for its pursuit.

Discernment is called for on every level of action, not only to decide who amongst those who are struggling should be approached first, but also how this should be done and what steps should be taken to criticize the Royal Consciousness and energize the community. Given the fears expressed by participants about repercussions should they address issues in ways that do not meet their supervisor’s approval, discernment is also an important way of ensuring that the chaplain feels they are living with integrity.

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Finally, ‘responsibility within communities of solidarity and compassion’ implies that efforts at social transformation begin within the school community and move from there to the local and global community. The chaplain leads by example, taking responsibility to offer hospitality and draw others to God in compassion and care. Thus, the difficulties some chaplains faced with colleagues need be approached with the same discernment and compassion afforded students. Building a community of solidarity and compassion is by definition not the work of a single person, and little by little chaplains could consider ways of drawing in more allies, and gently building community. Sharing stories, listening to them, affirming the works of individuals, and issuing invitations to collaborate on gospel-centered endeavors – without preaching or antagonizing – may strengthen a divided staff. Likewise, the chaplain might wish to think about how open they are to the leadership of others. Can they receive hospitality as well as they give it? Chaplaincy is a community endeavour, and the chaplain needs a sense of belonging as much as anyone else.

An important part of all three aspects (personal groundedness, practicing discernment, and living in community) would be to ensure that the chaplains themselves have chaplaincy peers they can turn to for support. All of the participants expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this research, and stated in one way or another that it had deepened their understanding of their ministry. As Lauren said, “I found participation in this research very valuable to my ministry. When we met as a group it felt less like research for a project and more like a group sharing ideas.” Gordie noted, “I realize that every high school is different, in the aspect of their own school
culture, but the characteristic that remains the same in our Catholic high schools is that of hospitality.” And, reflecting on the process and his vocation David shared that, “There are moments that we actually grasp the sacredness of people, and this is really all there is to it. When we – for a moment—comprehend the sacredness before us, holy ground becomes the only ground there is. There is only sacredness, and sometimes my soul expands enough to grasp it. Sometimes I remember this, and it keeps me going.” But these kinds of conversations do not necessarily arise casually, or with others who do not have a relatable experience of ministry. At the present time, due largely to geographic circumstances, the chaplains of the CDSBEO usually only gather together once or twice a year. I would recommend, based on the favourable experience of the participants that we work to increase our opportunities to be together and discuss our ministry. It may be easier to live the questions when we do so together.

In their efforts to foster hospitality, the participants felt they put into practice Letty Russell’s definition of hospitality as, “the practice of God’s welcome by reaching across difference to participate in God’s actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis.” They recognized that this was anything but easy, and yet still strove to give what they could even though they were aware of the struggles this caused over identity and ownership as suggested by Derrida’s antinomy. The twenty themes on hospitality that surfaced through their discussions underlined how important this practice was to

248 Russell, Just Hospitality, 19.
them, but they recognized the very real challenges they – and their communities – faced in implementing them.

The diversity found in Catholic schools means that chaplains will continue to be challenged by new and unexpected situations. A focus on developing relationships, on reaching out, and on drawing each person into a circle of conversation, may shift these situations away from conflict to a deeper harmony across diversity.

The participants’ testimony indicates that diversity might be considered a gift, even when challenges come, for this is part of the richness of a community. Speaking of the commitment to serve others as a way to serve God, Pope Francis says, “It means learning to find Jesus in the faces of others, in their voices, in their pleas. And learning to suffer in the embrace of the crucified Jesus whenever we are unjustly attacked or meet with ingratitude, never tiring of our decision to live in fraternity (sic).”249 This echoes Jack’s comment about finding Christ in others as the heart of chaplaincy. And if the chaplain can find Christ there, so may others. Thus, rather than pushing students out to Church – a task the participants recognized as impossible – they may continue to draw them in, to relationship with the chaplain and others in the community, and ultimately God in a way that respects their individual identity.

This focus on solidarity and compassion points to the idea that chaplains should be operating most often on the borders of belonging, with those who seem to live on the periphery of the school community. This location has risks. Here we find Lena’s glass

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249 Francis I, *E. Gaudium*, par. 91.
ball with all the unmentionable truths of rejection that many would prefer to pretend do not exist. According to some fundamentalist Christians and the powerful, this is where the sinners are found, along with the poor and the different. Acting in solidarity with the most marginal and always welcoming them may bring chaplains into conflict with the powerful or judgmental. A strong sense of spirituality may counteract the stress this could bring. Courage is required then. It takes courage to reach out to those who may in the end reject you. It takes courage to be visible in living the gospel by reaching out. It takes courage to try to break the glass ball. Chaplains will be judged, and they may be condemned. Nevertheless if they are to live vocations grounded in the example of Christ, there is no question that this is where they should be. As Pope Francis says, “The disciple is ready to put his or her whole life on the line, even to accepting martyrdom, in bearing witness to Jesus Christ.”

According to the participants in this research, chaplains may strive to testify to the love of Christ through their lives, in their efforts at hospitality and welcome. They are not always successful, and trip over their own fears and frustrations at times, but they return again and again to the struggle, for this is the call of their vocation. They turn to the gospels to find the divine model of a messiah who was always with the liminal people of his time, and who denounced injustice and exclusion. Christ’s kenotic self-giving even onto death proclaims the way for chaplains as for all Christians. As Michael Downey says, “Kenosis is the scene on which God appears, refusing to identify with

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250 Francis I, *E. Gaudium*, par. 24
human achievement, resisting the inordinate need, or demand to measure success, to assess projected outcomes. […] This is a God who does not fill in for human want, but is present *amidst* it, *amidst* human longing and want. This is the meaning of God’s kenosis.”251 (Italics in original). Such a perspective affirms the chaplain’s desire to be present within the community, for this is where God is found.

Part of the challenges that could be addressed with this perspective in mind will be around space. Prioritizing above all *being with* the other person, wherever that may be, should perhaps come first, for this is closest to the example of Christ. Issues around the presence of the Blessed Sacrament must take into account whether or not enough students are ready to appreciate that presence. This research indicates that effective chaplaincy begins with people where they are. Christ does not offer space in a house or institution to those he meets; he offers himself. In a world so deeply infiltrated with the idea of ownership of space, and the corresponding identification of hospitality with the offering of such space either as charity or as product (such as the ‘hospitality industry’), this aspect of Christ’s embodiment of hospitality may be easily overlooked. As already suggested, discussion on how to move from thinking in terms of ownership to thinking in terms of belonging may be helpful. Reflecting on the meaning of the homeless Christ’s kenotic love may provide direction.

For these participants hospitality appears to be primarily about a relationship between people who – though they will each be unique, and will each have different levels of access to power – are finally, equals before God. The message here for

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251 Michael Downey, “Consenting to Kenosis”, 125.
chaplains is powerful. Where institutional expectations, either from the Church or from the school or even from society, may throw up barriers to hospitality, the chaplain must still through the exercise of their conscience offer that hospitality and relationship. There can be no barriers to the relationship of care and responsibility that the chaplain offers all members of the school community. Although that responsibility is embedded ideally in a community ethos of care, at times it is also a personal reflection of the exercise of conscience, and may come at a cost. This is the ‘self-emptying’ Christ calls us to.

Ronald Rolheiser puts it this way:

> To “self-empty” in the way Jesus is described as doing means being present without demanding that your presence is recognized and its importance acknowledged; it means giving without demanding that your generosity be reciprocated, it means being invitational rather than threatening, healthily solicitous rather than coercive; it means being vulnerable and helpless, unable to protect yourself against the pain of being taken for granted or rejected, it means living in a great patience that does not demand intervention, divine or human, when things do not unfold according to your will; it means letting God be God and others be themselves without either having to submit to your wishes or your timetable.  

The experiences of one group of chaplains could easily facilitate the discernment process of others. If wisdom is a goal, then a further recommendation is that a resource be prepared to aid chaplains in their discernment and the practice of hospitality. The themes expressed in this research could be used for further reflection. Similarly, a collection of case studies and reflection questions could give chaplains a starting point to reflect on the challenges they may face, so that they are better prepared when new

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situations arise. Examples of Catholic hospitality in the contemporary world could be included, as well as examples from the lives of the saints and scripture. Perspectives from other partners in education could enrich the discussion. All of this would facilitate dialogue and strengthen the ability of Catholic school chaplains to welcome all in their schools. Such a resource could be expanded for all those who work in Catholic schools.

4 Conclusion

This research has explored the present and historical context of Catholic schools in Ontario as well as the development of high school lay chaplaincy. It has proposed a developed theology of ministry based on the concept of ‘being there’ with community members – one that has two major foci: the Pastoral and the Prophetic. Through listening to the voices and experiences of a small group of lay chaplains in Eastern Ontario, it has used qualitative research methods to search out themes and stories around hospitality and its challenges in Ontario Catholic schools. Finally it has proposed ‘learnings’ and questions for further discussion, ever mindful that it is through conversation and relationship that we mitigate tension, build belonging and transform society in the direction of justice and peace. This research does not offer the final word, it offers questions, a beginning, an invitation to ponder more deeply. The process of questioning and reaching out, of conversing and relating will in itself strengthen our schools.

It is possible that the giving of the self in hospitality, in taking responsibility for the other, actually strengthens one’s identity even as it strengthens one’s awareness of God. This appears to be the suggestion of Emmanuel Levinas as he reflects on the “Here
I am”. Indeed, the ‘here I am’ of the prophets, of Mary, of all those witnesses across millennia whose stories fill the bible, must be echoed every day in the hearts of chaplains. The inevitable tensions that we all must live with may be eased if, instead of striving to pull apart, we strive to come closer, to offer ourselves, to honestly say “Here I am” with compassion and love.

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253 Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*. 144.


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Appendices

Appendix i

Participant Information and Consent Form

Greetings! My name is Catherine Cavanagh, and I am a student at Regis College, Toronto School of Theology (U of T), conducting an Action Research study for my Doctor of Ministry thesis. I am writing to invite you to participate in this study.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to gather your stories and thoughts on how we as chaplaincy leaders address diversity and difference within our schools, and the value of an ethos of hospitality in doing so. Here is my approved thesis question:

This study will investigate how an ethos of hospitality may assist chaplains in Ontario Catholic schools minister to increasingly diverse school populations, in a way that takes seriously the complex realities of both the Church and contemporary society.

Procedure: The research involves the following:

1) A brief preliminary questionnaire, which should take about 10 minutes.
2) A full-day workshop together in September or early October where we will investigate the nature of diversity within our schools, and discuss our understanding of the concept of hospitality with the help of written and video material created by recognized thinkers in this area (for instance Jean Vanier). We will also consider the applicability of the concept of hospitality to our work in schools. The board has graciously granted the equivalence of 1 full day during school time for us to work on this, should you be
willing. The workshop will take place at the CDSBEO board office in Kemptville. The group discussion sections of this workshop will be audiotaped.

3) A follow-up questionnaire which would take between 20 - 45 minutes to complete, depending on the detail you wish to share.

4) An individual interview which would take about an hour, in which I would ask for clarification on the follow-up questionnaire, and for any further stories or thoughts you might have on the topic. This interview will be recorded.

**Time Required:** Overall then, the time commitment on your part would include the day provided by the board, plus approximately two hours more arranged at your convenience over the course of the fall term. I will travel to you for the interview.

**Voluntary Participation:** If you choose to participate, you may still refuse to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may also withdraw from the study at any time.

**Risks:** There are no known risks associated with this research. However, should any of the activities or conversations cause you distress, please inform me promptly.

**Benefits:** While there is no guaranteed benefit, it is possible that you will enjoy sharing your answers to these questions, or that you will find the activities and conversations meaningful. This study is intended to benefit chaplaincy leaders in Ontario in the performance of their ministry by deepening our understanding of why and how we do our work.

**Confidentiality/Anonymity:** Your name will be kept confidential in all of the reporting and/or writing related to this study. I will be the only person present for the interview and the only person who listens to the recordings. When I write up the data, I will use pseudonyms – made up names – for all participants, unless you specify in writing that you wish to be identified by name. If you choose your own pseudonym for the study, please indicate the first name you would like me to use for you here: ____________________.

Recordings and written material will be kept until one year after completion of the degree. They will be stored on an encrypted USB drive, locked in a cabinet in my home office. After the year, they will be destroyed.

**Sharing the Results:** I am happy to share the results with you once the study is complete, either through a follow-up meeting or via email or phone. The results and conclusions I draw from this study will be included in my Doctor of Ministry Thesis which
will first be submitted to my Thesis Director and an examination committee. If successful, the thesis will then be posted on T-Space, a website accessible to University of Toronto students, staff and other academics.

**Publication:** There is a possibility that I will publish this study or refer to it in published writing in the future. In this event, I will continue to use pseudonyms (as described above) and I may alter some identifying details in order to further protect your anonymity.

**Contact Information:** Be sure that any questions you may have are answered to your satisfaction before signing.

- My telephone number is 613-345-4173, and my email is [Cathy.Cavanagh@cdsbeo.on.ca](mailto:Cathy.Cavanagh@cdsbeo.on.ca)
- My Thesis Director is Dr. Mary Jo Leddy and her email address is [m.leddy@utoronto.ca](mailto:m.leddy@utoronto.ca). Her telephone number is: 416.922.5474 ext.217
- The Office of Research Ethics can be contacted at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273

Finally, If you agree to participate, a copy of this document will be given to you.²⁵⁴

**Participant’s signature:** _________________________________ **Date:** ________________________________

**Please print name:** ________________________________

**Researcher’s signature:** ________________________________ **Date:** ________________________________

**Please print name:** ________________________________

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²⁵⁴ The format for this consent form has been adapted from: Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 235-236.
Hi Catherine.

Just a quick follow-up regarding your request for time to pursue your inquiry related to your doctoral thesis with the chaplaincy leaders of the Board. I have reviewed your request with Executive Council and I am pleased to say that you have been granted the equivalent of 1.0 day for this purpose – you may wish to break that into two-half-day sessions and then religious education would have a half day each time to explore other items of mutual interest.

I hope that you experience great success going forward.

Marg

Marg Shea-Lawrence
Superintendent of School Effectiveness
Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario
1-800-443-4562 ext. 207
Appendix iii
Chaplaincy Context Questionnaire

Name: ___________________________

School: _________________________ Grades: 7-12/9-12 (Please circle)

Number of students in your school (approximately): _________________

How many years have you been a school chaplaincy leader in Ontario? _________

Please indicate the amount of time you spend on the following activities where (feel free to clarify in the margins if you want to!):

0= this does not form part of my ministry
5= this takes up 50% or more of my chaplaincy time

Mandatory retreats (including organization):

0 1 2 3 4 5

Optional retreats:

0 1 2 3 4 5

School masses:

0 1 2 3 4 5

Class masses:

0 1 2 3 4 5

Interdenominational prayer services:

0 1 2 3 4 5

Interfaith prayer or worship services:

0 1 2 3 4 5

Hallway ministry:

0 1 2 3 4 5
Individual pastoral care to students:

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Group pastoral care to staff:

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Rainbows/Spectrum (or similar) grief and divorce support groups for students:

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Support group for LGBTQ students (GSA or similar):

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Restorative Justice Group:

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Mission trip:

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Anti-bullying/ inclusivity campaigns:

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Charitable events (such as a Canned Food Drive, Relay for Life, etc):

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Staff faith activities or prayer:

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ThinkFast or similar:

0 1 2 3 4 5

Other social justice activities (awareness campaigns, letter writing, etc):

0 1 2 3 4 5

Providing or finding assistance for students with economic constraints:

0 1 2 3 4 5

Ministering specifically to students with multiple exceptionalities (outside of other activities):

0 1 2 3 4 5

Classrooms visits to discuss Catholic perspectives on current issues:

0 1 2 3 4 5

Classroom visits to discuss interfaith perspectives:

0 1 2 3 4 5

Sacramental preparation:

0 1 2 3 4 5

Meeting with parents for any chaplaincy issue:

0 1 2 3 4 5

Other:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Your School**: Simply give your opinion (best guess) in answering the following questions. There is no need to do research on these questions.

How many students in your school would you guess are baptized Catholic?

- Few
- A quarter to a third
- About half
- Most
- All

How many students in your school would you guess attend Catholic mass on Sunday (or Saturday evening) at least once a month?

- Few
- A quarter to a third
- About half
- Most
- All
How many students in your school would you guess belong to a Christian denomination other than Catholicism?

- Few
- A quarter to a third
- About half
- Most
- All

How many students in your school would you guess belong to a non-Christian religion?

- Few
- A quarter to a third
- About half
- Most
- All

How many students in your school would you guess belong to no particular religious tradition?

- Few
- A quarter to a third
- About half
- Most
- All

Besides Catholicism, do you think there other religious traditions that compose a sizable group within the school? Please name them:

_____________________________________________________________________

In your opinion, how many students in your school would you say belong to a visible minority?

- Few
- A quarter to a third
- About half
- Most
- All

How many students in your school would you guess are immigrants, including refugees?

- Few
- A quarter to a third
- About half
- Most
- All

In your opinion, would you say your school is becoming more multicultural, less so, or staying about the same?

_____________________________________________________________________

In your opinion, would you say students in your school would be comfortable self-identifying as LGBTQ? Please circle:

- Don’t know
- Somewhat
- Very comfortable

Which description best describes your student body:

- Mostly wealthy
- Mostly middle class
- Mostly economically disadvantaged

THANK YOU!
Appendix iv

Workshop for DMin Research on Chaplaincy

Material Needed:

- Chaplaincy Context Questionnaires
- Write the following on another piece of chart paper: Hospitality is “the practice of God’s welcome by reaching across difference to participate in God’s actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis” (Letty Russell)
- Computer with internet access, sound, and projector/screen
- Case study and questions
- Lined sheets and pens to write down follow up questions

Location: Room in CDSBEO school board office.

Time: 9:00-2:30pm

Description of Process:

9:00am     Greetings, social mingling, and coffee/tea
9:15am     Icebreaker game
9:30am     Gather in a circle or around table and read the Consent Form together. Answer any questions and invite participants to sign. Copies will be given to them at lunch or interview.
9:45am     Brief discussion of Chaplaincy Context questionnaire completed in advance:
            Questions to be asked by researcher:
            1) Was there anything that you hadn’t really noticed before, or that surprised you when you completed the questionnaire either about your school or your ministry? Allow discussion of the questionnaire to continue as needed
2) What does ‘diversity’ mean to you?
3) What does ‘difference’ mean to you?
4) How would you say our Catholic high schools differ today from 40 years ago?

Ask participants to think quietly for a moment about the kinds of things that might result in students being excluded, bullied or stereotyped. We will call these things ‘difference’. I will share Letty Russell’s definition of difference: “Difference is not just diversity or variety in general. It refers to concrete elements in our lives that separate, distinguish, or contrast one group or person with another.”

I will also read the following excerpt from Jean Vanier:

We are all frightened of those who are different, those who challenge our authority, our certitudes, and our value system. We are all so frightened of losing what is important for us, the things that give us life, security, and status in society. We are frightened of change and, I suspect, we are even more frightened of our own hearts.

Ask participants if they would agree with Russell’s definition and Vanier’s remark. Do they see evidence of the fear Vanier identifies in their schools?

10:30am Break, if needed. Adjust as necessary.

Introduction to the concept of hospitality

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Invite the group to watch the following clips from Jean Vanier speaking about hospitality. Ask participants to listen for key points that resonate with them.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0q0KO0IJDxk (Jean Vanier speaks to Secondary Students about Hospitality 3b 2nd 2) – 1:08

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9ZBD0zUFM0 (Jean Vanier speaks to Secondary Students about Hospitality 3b 1st and 2nd) – 2:45.

After the viewing, form a circle again and ask participants:
1) What struck them or resonated with them the most from Vanier’s talks?
2) Was there anything that Vanier had to say about hospitality that they didn’t agree with?
3) Does Vanier’s understanding of hospitality have any extensions or applications to our work of chaplaincy?
4) Vanier says that hospitality is Jesus’s message. Do you agree? What scripture evidence is there for this?

Introduce participants to Letty Russell’s definition of hospitality as, “the practice of God’s welcome by reaching across difference to participate in God’s actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis.” Post this on the wall on chart paper (prepared in advance). Ask participants to meditate on Russell’s definition for a few minutes. Then ask:
1) What words or expressions struck them?

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2) Do they see any connections between this definition and their chaplaincy work? It may be helpful here to take the definition in sections with key words/phrases like ‘practice’, ‘God’s welcome’, ‘reaching across difference’, ‘to participate in God’s actions’, ‘bringing justice and healing to a world in crisis’. Offer participants paper and pens, if they wish to jot down their thoughts as they reflect.

3) Are there things they disagree with in this definition?

4) How is hospitality already a practice for chaplaincy leaders, or, if participants do not believe it is, how could it become one if at all?

5) What is the place of dialogue and relationship within an ethos of hospitality?

6) How could an ethos of hospitality assist chaplains, if at all?

Tell participants that several thinkers (Derrida, Pohl) have pointed out that hospitality has difficulties associated with it as a practice. For instance, if I welcome someone into my home so that it is fully their home, at what point is it no longer ‘my’ home to offer? People who live in community or houses of hospitality might struggle with how many people they can actually welcome into the home before they must turn some away, and also who gets to decide who is welcome. Ask participants to reflect for a moment about where the challenges might be for us as chaplaincy leaders in Catholic schools (again, they may jot ideas down if they find that helpful). If necessary, prompt participants with suggestions such as: where are the challenges around use of space? Where are the challenges around religious practice? Etc.
12:00 Lunch

1:00 Case Study: If there are six or more participants, divide them into two groups. Ask each member of the group to read the case study aloud, one at a time, so that it will be read/heard at least three times before answering the questions. Each group will then discuss and respond to the questions provided. Once the case study is completed (one scribe per group), have participants share answers with me and the group to give them the chance to expand if needed. The case study will deal with a situation involving the provision of chaplaincy care in a diverse context.

2:00 Ask participants whether they think hospitality as a practice or attitude, as explored today, might be/has been helpful for them. Share with them the follow-up questionnaire. Ask them to write down for me other issues/questions/opportunities/concerns around hospitality they believe should be explored in the follow-up questionnaire and interviews. A finalized copy of the questionnaire will be sent to them, to be collected at the time of the interview and serve as a guide for that interview.
Appendix v

Case Study
A Muslim student at a Catholic high school asked to pray salat (the five daily prayer times) in the chapel at the school, and was given permission by the chaplaincy leader and priest chaplain. Months later, at a chaplaincy leader meeting, the superintendent of education announced that, while Muslim students must be found an appropriate place to pray at school, they must not be allowed to pray salat in the chapel. The priest chaplain argued the case with the superintendent but her decision was unchanged. The chaplaincy leader kept quiet, but after returning to school decided she could not ask the Muslim student to pray elsewhere, as she felt this would be a breach of hospitality. She informed the priest chaplain that she would take full responsibility should it come to light, but chose not to inform the superintendent of her decision for the moment. The student in question is graduating this year, but the chaplaincy leader has not decided yet what to do should Muslim students make this request again.

Please respond to the following questions:

1) Identify all characters involved in this case study:

2) Place the events of this case study on a timeline:
3) What are the basic issues at stake?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

4) Who are the decision-makers in this case study?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

5) Create an organizational chart to identify the relationships between people:
6) What other people or interest groups might have a stake in this issue?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

7) What do Jean Vanier’s views on hospitality (as ‘opening the heart’), or Letty Russell’s definition of hospitality (as “the practice of God’s welcome by reaching across difference to participate in God’s actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis”) contribute to clarifying or clouding the issues here?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

8) What other theoretical or theological resources might help clarify the issues in this case?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

9) What decision would you make regarding future Muslim students praying in the chapel, should they ask to do so? Give reasons for your response.

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
Appendix vi

Follow-up Questionnaire

1) What does the word ‘hospitality’ mean to you?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

2) Please name one or more biblical stories that come to mind when you reflect on the concept of hospitality:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

3) For one of the stories, please explain why you feel it demonstrates or evokes the concept of hospitality well:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
4) In the Gospels, Jesus often receives hospitality, and even requests it, as part of his ministry (as in the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:7-11). What might we learn for high school chaplaincy from stories such as this?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

5) Have you experienced hospitality in some way in your life? Can you briefly share one or two instances when hospitality has impacted you (either as host, guest or in some other way), and how it has done so?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

6) What resources, other than scripture, have influenced your understanding of hospitality (e.g. writers, movies, etc.), if any?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
7) How is hospitality exercised in your ministry, if at all:
   a. In the organization or running of liturgy:
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
   b. In the organization or running of retreats, social justice activities, and other large group activities:
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
   c. In pastoral ministry:
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
   d. In the use of the chapel or other spaces over which you have input:
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________
e. In other ways:

8) How has your ministry, or your school, been enriched by diversity, if at all?

9) How has your ministry, or your school, been challenged by diversity, if at all?
10) Please select one instance where your ministry or your school was challenged by diversity, to respond to the following questions:
   a. What was the issue?
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
   b. How did you, or other staff, respond?
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
   c. Do you feel an ethos of hospitality was present among decision-makers? If so, in what way?
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________

11) What is the connection of dialogue and relationship to hospitality, if any?
    ______________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________
12) Where is it challenging, or might it be challenging, to adopt an ethos of hospitality in your ministry?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

13) Where is it helpful, or might it be helpful, to adopt an ethos of hospitality in your ministry?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Do you have other thoughts on Catholic school chaplaincy and the concept of hospitality that you would like to share?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________
Appendix vii
Thesis Proposal

Ministry Amid Diversity:
The Value of an Ethos of Hospitality for Ontario Catholic School Chaplains

A D.Min. Thesis Proposal
Submitted to the D.Min. Thesis Proposal Committee
Toronto School of Theology
June 19th, 2014

By
Catherine Cavanagh

Signature: _______________________________________
Mary Jo Leddy (Thesis Director)

Signature: _______________________________________
Joseph Schner (College Representative)

Signature: _______________________________________
Christine Taylor (Collaborative Learning Group Representative)

Signature: _______________________________________
Michael O’Neill (Ministry Base Group)

Ministry Context
Ryan, a grade 12 student, sits strumming his guitar on one of the upholstered seats that run along the walls of the chapel. I recognize ‘Tears in Heaven’ by Eric Clapton. Ryan’s mother has entered another of her ongoing cancer treatments and the music helps him cope with his anger. Kaitlin, another grade 12 student, sits on the carpeted floor, cutting out paper trees for a simulation game we will be doing with all grades later this week to learn about Palestinian oppression in the occupied territories. A popular, easygoing person who co-chairs our social justice club, she chats with Aimee, a grade nine student who often drops into the chapel during religion class. She struggles with anxiety and prefers to work in this quieter place.

I am the Chaplaincy Leader at a small publicly funded Catholic high school in Brockville, Ontario. According to the vision statement of my professional organization Catholic School Chaplains of Ontario (CSCO), “School chaplaincy is a pastoral role carried out in an educational setting in a collaborative and cooperative manner in order to promote the spiritual and human development of the members of the Catholic school community.” From my perspective, chaplaincy involves two major foci. The first is to engage in a ministry of presence, of being there for conversation, support and prayer. The second is to promote a Gospel-centered vision of the world, and to draw the school community together to work for ongoing social transformation in the footsteps of Christ. The two tasks are inseparable. My view embodies a Trinitarian perspective that acknowledges that the

258 I use the terms chaplain and chaplaincy leader interchangeably in this paper. Chaplaincy Leader is the term currently approved by the Bishops, and found on their most recent documents, while ‘chaplain’ is the earlier title, but is still the one used most frequently in schools.
vastness of God is reflected in the diversity of people I meet. School populations are diverse and ever-changing. As such, Chaplaincy leaders often minister at the intersection of cultural and religious difference.

Context impacts heavily on how chaplaincy is carried out in any particular school. Cultures and contexts are in a perpetual process of transformation, and nowhere is that more true than in a high school ministry context. A student in grade 12 will have changed significantly from the person they were in grade 7. Further, an entire school student population will change completely every seven years. Contexts and cultures overlap and mutate with time, and the chaplain must keep awake to change. As Douglas John Hall says, “A theology which knows that it is not timeless will always need to know what time it is hic et nunc.”

According to Catherine M. Pead, author of Bridges to Faith: The Why and How of High School Chaplaincy, “Unlike a curriculum, the chaplaincy program is an extension of the chaplain’s relationship with the particular school community. Therefore, every school’s chaplaincy program should look different, because the people and their spiritual needs will be different”. Let me begin then by offering a description of my particular community. Of the 700 students in my high school (grades 7-12), I would guess that no more than a third would attend Church with any regularity. Many of our students are baptized Catholic, but we also have students who are Sikh, Muslim, Protestant, Evangelical or of no particular religious tradition. As far as I am concerned every student in my school is a child of God,

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and a brother and sister in the Spirit. I embrace the diversity of our student body, and I am available to minister to (and learn from) anyone who crosses the threshold of our front door.

I spend at least an hour of my day simply in conversation with students in the halls or in the tiny chapel which also doubles as my office (I have a desk at the back). Sometimes these are scheduled meetings but more often students simply drop in. This is just the starting block. I also teach a grade 12 religion class on ethics for one 72 minute period a day. My original vocation was to teaching, and I still love being in the classroom. My teaching duties keep me grounded in the rhythm of my school. Then there are the larger questions of helping create a just hospitable environment, and working for social transformation.

Throughout a typical week I will spend a lunch hour with the Social Justice Club (the Justice League), another lunch hour (and sometimes all of March Break) with the Guatemala Mission Trip team, another lunch hour with the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) and the other lunch hours on duty in the grade 9 hallway. Our Grief Support group will meet once a week in the chapel during class time, and I will run prayer services on Friday mornings during Advent and Lent and as needed throughout the year.

Different seasons bring different activities. I spend many hours planning events with students and staff, including a massive Advent Canned Food Drive, a Lenten Project, a Walk Against Poverty, a Solidarity Fast, retreats for all grade levels, monthly Masses, fundraisers, justice awareness events, speakers, and so on. A cooperative approach turns planning time into active ministry in itself. I visit classes at the request of teachers to talk with students about particular biblical, theological or spiritual issues. I am there for those struggling with
poverty, divorce, grief, heartbreak, pregnancy, sexuality, bullying, and betrayal. At times my ministry is mundanely administrative, as I juggle schedules and meetings. At times it is deeply personal as in the accompaniment of a pregnant teenager or a staff member or student who is sick or dying. I am a sounding board, a resource, an instigator, a wanna-be prophet, an organizer, a prayer partner and sometimes a spiritual director.

In terms of transcendent values, I believe in the love of God, the dignity of all life, the importance of hospitality and compassion, the need to listen to the voiceless and marginalized, the unacceptability of violence, and the equality of all people regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or any other difference. These beliefs fuel my ministry and inspire me to engage with others at the boundaries of our different experiences. I do not think of myself as ministering to my students and colleagues so much as ministering with them. Together we reveal to each other the light of the divine and the music of heaven, which in my case, today, sounds an awful lot like a quiet Clapton song, soft-strummed and gently picked by a thoughtful teenage boy.

**Thesis Statement:**

This study will investigate how an ethos of hospitality may assist chaplains in Ontario Catholic schools to minister to increasingly diverse school populations, in a way that takes seriously the complex realities of both the Church and contemporary society.

Chaplains tread a fine line; called to promote and foster a specific religious denomination – Catholicism - they must also live Christ's teaching to neither judge, nor diminish, nor turn away any of God's children, but instead to embrace and serve all with love and
acceptance. Many chaplains seek to embed in schools the concept of the preferential option for the poor and marginalized, but they work within a society that often prioritizes affluence and ability, and within a Church that fears loss of identity to the wider culture and thus may resist diversity on some levels even while embracing it on others. The advent of full funding in 1984 and therefore full access to Catholic secondary education for all Ontario residents has made the question of how Catholic schools embrace difference more salient still. The resultant increase in diversity in Catholic school populations might be seen by some partners to challenge the Catholic identity of a school itself. How chaplains approach diversity is critically important since, as the Ontario Bishops state, “secondary school chaplaincy is exercised for the whole community, students and staff.”

It is my hypothesis to be explored here that an ethos of Christian hospitality may assist chaplains as they embrace the stranger, the poor, the marginalized, and the different (including non-Catholics) within Catholic schools.

**Personal Journey with these Questions:**

My interest in questions of diversity and difference has been longstanding, prompted significantly by the eight years I spent as a Canadian living and working in rural Africa (three as a child in Ghana and five as an adult volunteer teacher in Malawi and Zimbabwe). I dealt there with questions of poverty, wealth, faith, education and injustice, and I learned,

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very importantly, what is like to be an outsider within a larger society. I deeply appreciated the compassionate hospitality offered to me as a stranger a long way from home.

Other travels where I have received welcome have also deeply impacted my thinking. Raised a Catholic, I began my chaplaincy vocation at a camp for underprivileged boys from Toronto, where the awe of the natural world gave city boys, some who were away from home for the first time, an enduring experience of the divine. As mentioned already I continue to engage students in ‘Mission’ or ‘Poverty Exposure Trips’ to places as diverse as Latin America or the streets of Washington DC. In the summer of 2012 I traveled to Palestine with the Basilian Peace and Justice Pilgrimage and met with Jewish, Christian and Muslim peacemakers who work together for a better and more just future for all. There, the words of scripture justify violence for some, while leading to peaceful resistance for others. The tension between different views of scripture and religion lies exposed on the boundaries where the different peoples of the Holy Land live, and serves as a reminder to me of its presence, more subtly, within my own community. The question of who is in and who is out, and where and why we build our Separation Walls (both visible and invisible) continues to preoccupy me and has contributed significantly to my research interest.

My experiences in the classroom as a DMin student reinforce the value I place on story and conversation, both significant components of my research. The stories and thoughts of my peers and professors, even when I may take a different view, move my thinking in new directions, revealing to me both what I treasure and what I lack. In response to classroom activities and questions, I have discovered how much praxis means to me, how frequently I
reflect on scripture, and how infrequently I think about issues of conversion or salvation. Furthermore, I realize that very little of my time is spent on sacramental preparation in contrast to my Catholic ministry peers, in particular those who are ordained. I will walk with a student who desires baptism or confirmation, but my primary orientation is toward sacredness within the wider world, including human relationship.

I belong to a professional organization called Catholic School Chaplains of Ontario (CSCO), and have just completed my final term on the executive. The network of support the organization provides, and the sharing of ideas and stories of chaplaincy, has fed me profoundly over the years. It has also made me aware of the great creativity and variation with which school chaplains approach their vocation. Yet there appears to be a fundamental understanding across the province that our role involves an effort to draw together student and God, and foster communion through relationship. This is one of the assumptions underlying my research.

I approach my ministry from my own Catholic perspective, while conscientiously striving to stay open to the new perspectives each student brings. Openness can be a struggle; the giving of self to others does not always come naturally. Students expose my assumptions, and challenge my willingness to accept. I believe this to be true of chaplains in general. This struggle on the part of the chaplain, to be welcoming and embracing while maintaining a specifically Catholic identity for themselves and for the school, is at the heart of my research interest. It is my belief, to be tested here, that hospitality puts love into practice, with all the forgiveness, negotiation and conversation it entails. Hospitality criticizes the
dominant imperial consciousness, whether of society or sometimes Church, by subverting it. Christine Pohl states explicitly, “Christian hospitality has always had a subversive, countercultural dimension.”\(^{261}\) And finally, I believe my research will show that hospitality energizes the community by providing a framework for discernment, prayer and relationship.

**Theoretical Framework and Assumptions Involved in the Study**

My theology of ministry might be summarized as ‘relational’, if I were forced to choose only one word to describe it. Similarly, to the question of what the one thing occupies most of my time, I would have to answer conversation. These conversations take many forms, and may involve prayer, laughter, tears, and even silence. But through conversation we work together as a community to support each other and reach out to God. As Paul VI stated, "the whole history of humanity's salvation is one long, varied dialogue, which marvelously begins with God and which God prolongs with human beings in so many different ways."\(^{262}\) For this reason, I believe the ‘Synthetic Model’ of contextual theology, as explained by Stephen Bevans, best fits my ministry model.\(^{263}\) The synthetic model emphasizes an openness to dialogue, with truth emerging in a complex interaction of present

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context, scripture, tradition and other contexts or thought forms. This is the model that will be applied in the exploration of my thesis, as I look at multiple fronts to assess the thesis question.

A number of theoretical bases will inform this study. The role of the lay Catholic school chaplain will be explored through several texts. Walter Brueggemann’s *The Prophetic Imagination* in particular offers suggestions for interpreting the role of chaplain as someone who both criticizes dominant forces of exclusion within either the Catholic Church or society, and also energizes the community to imagine and work towards new ways of living together across difference.

Paul G. Hiebert’s model of sets in regards to Christianity helps clarify questions of identity and mission within the Catholic school. While no model is perfect, his work sheds light on such issues as what lies at the heart of a Catholic education. What defines the ‘Catholic School set’, and for whom? How is this addressed by chaplains within Catholic schools? How does this affect approaches to diversity? These questions of identity have shifted and changed over time in response to historical and political forces. A brief but important exploration of the development of fully-funded Catholic schools in Ontario will form a part of this study.


The central value of story lies at the heart of this study. Conversation and reflection remain key for chaplains in search of interpretations that respond to contemporary needs. This study will seek out the personal stories of chaplains, and also the way in which they perceive and interpret the larger Christian story, both biblical and historical, in terms of their vocation and their commitment to minister to the whole community. The Catholic school in Ontario today is not a community made up entirely of Catholics. That is the reality. Rather, I will argue it is a relational community arising from, and sometimes struggling with, foundational Christian narratives that interact with ethical views on the world and are reflected in faith practices. Thus, narratives matter. Stories matter. Tom King affirmed this for Canadians when he stated in his Massey lecture, “The truth about stories is that that’s all we are.”

While King exposes the harm stories have done to aboriginal peoples, he also reveals the strengths and insights people draw from their stories. The same is true within religious communities. But all stories must be approached critically, since they may be used in isolation to reinforce dominant narratives, and thus work against authentic relationships. Postcolonial theology offers lessons on the value of stories, while warning of the dangers of metanarratives. Chandra Talpade Mohanty for instance cautions against a false harmony that hides or disowns the multitudes of experiences of those involved in the educational journey. She emphasizes the importance of telling stories to share experiences and understanding. Likewise she underscores the value of dissent and critical thought that challenges dominant

knowledge systems, practices and curricula. Schools are in the business of sharing and expanding knowledge, but such knowledge must be connected to the greater concept of wisdom, a theme to be explored briefly in my study.

Postcolonial theologies likewise point to the existence of borders and boundaries, and compel us to ask how we converse with each other across difference. But what constitutes ‘difference’ in Catholic schools specifically? Letty Russell clarifies that, “Difference is not just diversity or variety in general. It refers to concrete elements in our lives that separate, distinguish, or contrast one group or person with another.” In Ontario as a whole identifiers such as race, ethnic background, religion, gender, ability, and sexuality can constitute borders between people, and markers of difference, depending on location and regional culture. But within Catholic schools specifically, there may be identifiers that mark members of the community as ‘different’ because of Catholicism itself. These may include gender, religion, and sexuality for instance. Identifying difference and its impact must be approached carefully, without reducing individuals to a single trait. The postcolonial concept of ‘hybridity’ reminds us that all humans are complex, and comprised of multiple identities.


Certain key Catholic documents and biblical texts anchor this study. Particular texts relating to hospitality and justice indicate the potential for Christian thought in relation to these themes. I expect an exploration of passages from Luke will be given priority, including Jesus’ proclamation in Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30), the meal with Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50) and the story of the Compassionate Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). These will be brought into conversation with other scriptural passages, including the Beatitudes (Matt 5:7).

Conversation, story-telling and interpretation come together clearly in this approach to scripture. The bible provides stories as a ground for building (and perhaps sometimes destroying) relationship with the world, humanity and God. My research will look to theologies and philosophies related to hospitality, including but not limited to some of the works of Jean Vanier, Christine Pohl, Dorothy Day, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Miroslav Volf, and Jessica Wrobleski, to explore the concept in depth and ask how hospitality surfaces in the vocation of lay chaplain in Catholic schools. Such perspectives demonstrate the complexities and difficulties of offering meaningful and profound hospitality while holding on to a specific, life-giving, but potentially exclusionary Catholic identity. Hospitality compels us to offer ourselves to the Other, but how much can be offered before we lose the Self? Further, we may ask in what ways hospitality is connected to space, and in what ways is it connected to relationship? And how does this lead us to God? Matthew 25:39 offers a response: “And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these, who are members of my family, you did it to me”.” Rather than isolating each of us, diversity compels us toward richer conversation, greater understanding, and a deeper connection with the divine.
**Action in Ministry Component:**

In conducting this qualitative research I will employ primarily a multi-methods adaptation of what Tim Sensing calls Action Research. In examining the application of an ethos of hospitality, some aspects of a phenomenological approach will be most suitable (as in understanding the ‘phenomenon’ of hospitality) and at other times a case study approach will be most in evidence as I gather and analyze the stories or cases that chaplains share. As Sensing states, a multi-methods approach “allows various perspectives to engage in a critical dialogue that leads to several sets of rich data, resulting in the possibility for deeper understandings.”

The Action-in-Ministry component of this research will engage a group of lay chaplains in reflection and conversation over issues arising from diversity in schools, on what is meant by ‘hospitality’, and on the applicability of an ethos of hospitality in ministering within their diverse contexts. Although many ordained persons engage in chaplaincy in Ontario Catholic schools, this investigation will be limited to lay people. One assumption here is that the ministry of a lay person often takes a different form from that of an ordained person, who is called upon to provide sacraments. I hope to find 4-6 lay chaplains in eastern Ontario to participate in this study. A broad assumption is that findings from this particular corner of Ontario will be relevant in some way to the rest of Ontario. Given the shared vocation,

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270 Ibid., 54
religious affiliation and history of chaplaincy, I believe this is a sustainable assumption even though there will be regional variations in terms of the practice of chaplaincy.

I will function in two primary capacities during the data collection phase. The first is to introduce the issue of diversity and the concept of hospitality, and provide reflective activities on them. The second is to gather responses and stories from chaplains about how well this concept might help inspire them to engage in ministry across diversity.

**Data Collection and Time lines:**

The projected time line for the action-in-research component of this investigation includes a preparatory phase in July and August of 2014, where I will finalize the tools to be used and work on the introductory chapters. A copy of the Information and Consent Form will be sent to all participants in advance, describing the research process (Appendix 5). It will be read together and signed at our first gathering. The research will be comprised of three parts:

1) A full day retreat/workshop in September or early October. I have received consent from the Executive Council of the Catholic District School Board to conduct this workshop during school time (Appendix 6). Perceptions of ministry challenges brought by a diverse school population will be investigated here, as well as understandings of the concept of hospitality. The day, as outlined in Appendix 2, will include an initial questionnaire to be completed by participants to help me gather background information on their perception of their school context and ministry (Appendix 1). We will then explore the challenge of
difference and diversity in our Catholic school contexts, through a discussion of the questionnaire, and quotes from Jean Vanier and Letty Russell. After the break, I will introduce the concept of hospitality so that we understand terms in a similar fashion. Here, I will show short video clips from Jean Vanier on hospitality, introduce a definition of hospitality from Letty Russell, and share commentary with them based on my readings from the literature. Participants will gather in a circle and after each clip, reading or commentary, and they will be invited to respond to a set of questions as listed in Appendix 2 and discuss. We will also discuss the challenges of offering hospitality.

After lunch, the participants will participate in a group case study (Appendix 3). The analysis of the case study will be adapted from Sensing’s helpful outline in *Qualitative Research.*

At the end of the day, I will share the Follow-up Questionnaire (Appendix 4) with participants, and ask them to write down for me any further questions they feel arise from the day’s experience as regards the applicability of an ethos of hospitality. These questions will be incorporated into the questionnaire and a final version will be sent to them via email for the next step of the research process (see below).

I plan to audiotape the discussion section and take notes on the day. I will also gather the initial questionnaires on school context, group answers to the case study, and written suggestions for the questionnaire and interviews.

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2) A Follow-Up questionnaire will be sent out to all participants including questions generated during the initial day together, as explained above (see Appendix 4). The completed questionnaires will be gathered when I meet with each participant for the individual interview, or emailed to me by November 30th. In addition to questions generated during the initial day together, this questionnaire will ask for one or more examples from the chaplain’s own life where they or the school community has been challenged because of the diversity of their school population. It will ask them to comment on whether or not, looking back, an ethos of hospitality was present either consciously or not, and if it was not present, whether they feel it would have assisted them.

3) An individual interview with at least three - four participants will be held. In addition to clarifying all responses to the questionnaire, these interviews will seek to explore in more depth two kinds of stories requested in the questionnaire: first, stories of hospitality from the chaplain’s own ministry context, and second, stories that inspire chaplains to engage in what they perceive as hospitality in order to minister across difference and diversity. These may be stories from their personal life, from scripture, from church or society, or from somewhere else. The chaplains will be asked to ascertain the role of hospitality in these stories, if they find a role at all, and make connections across various stories. These interviews will be intentionally open-ended, and will be audio-taped. The expected timeline for completing all interviews will be by December 2014. I will transcribe interviews as I go. From January through March I expect to interpret the data and write the remaining chapters of the thesis. I expect to submit the completed thesis to my director, Mary Jo Leddy, by April 1st, and submit four unbound copies to the DMin
office by May 1st. This somewhat ambitious timeline may need to be extended, but it will be my goal to work within it.

**Interpretation and Evaluation of Data**

Interviews and discussion will be transcribed and coded in an effort to look for recurrent themes. I will interpret the data in light of recognized scholarship in the fields of postcolonialism, biblical studies, Church teaching, and theology (as outlined in the section on theoretical frameworks, above), and draw it into conversation with my own observations.

My evaluation of the data is consciously but carefully subjective. I have a deep interest in the issues here. I thirst for new perspectives, ideas, stories and considerations on the questions of how we minister across diversity in Catholic schools and whether an ethic of hospitality can assist us, but I cannot pretend that I do not enter this with some bias. In evaluating the responses of other chaplains, it will be my goal whenever appropriate to seek out and name my bias, while being judicious about judgment on their perspectives. As Tim Sensing states, in reflecting on narrative research, “Researchers rooted in a positivist perspective maintain the myth of objectivity; however value-neutral research in unrealizable, self-deceptive, and value laden.”272

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272 Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 160.
Risks and Limitations

There are few identifiable risks to participants in this study. While any conversation changes our perceptions on the world, chaplains actively reflect and converse on practice already. In terms of limitations, this study will not discuss the validity of public funding for Catholic schools in Ontario. Chaplains are not primarily policy-makers (although they certainly have opinions); they must minister within the reality in which they find themselves. Similarly, questions of the historical evolution of Catholic schools, and Catholic school identity, will not be addressed, except as they are relevant to the stories that affect chaplains and the ministry they offer.

Contributions of the Study:

On a personal level, it is my hope that this study will allow me to minister more effectively and with greater awareness. Little research is available on the practice of chaplaincy in Ontario Catholic Schools. My investigations will help address that lack and provide a discussion point for chaplains as a whole as they reflect on their ministry. While this study will not address the validity of full funding for Catholic schools, its conclusions may nevertheless have applications to that discussion. Opponents and supporters of funded Catholic education may be concerned with how a diverse school population is welcomed and a Catholic identity maintained. Finally, an ethic of hospitality in schools may be of interest to educators of all types both in Catholic and secular education.
Appendix viii

Autobiographical Statement

Although labels never tell the full story of a person, they do provide a starting point for situating someone within society. Some that might be applied to me today include white, Canadian, middle-class, female, healthy, married, heterosexual, Catholic, educated, and employed. My parents helped me and my four siblings on our spiritual journeys by making the Catholic faith a central part of life. I embrace adventure, learning and challenges much as they did, and believe that people are fundamentally good and that through them I learn more about God and myself. At this time in my life, my husband Brian and our two children continue to provide me with a primary community of love.

I have lived in three different countries in Africa for a period totalling eight years in all (three as a child). My late childhood and adolescence were spent in Lennoxville, Quebec, and I have lived in Brockville, Ontario for the last twenty years. My five years spent in Malawi and Zimbabwe as a volunteer high school math teacher left a deep impression, opening my eyes to colonial truths that I had completely overlooked until that time in Canada.

I moved to Brockville originally to take up a position as an elementary French teacher with the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario. In the summers I worked for several years as a chaplain at Columbus Boys Camp in Orillia, for underprivileged boys from Toronto. This experience proved to be transformative in terms of my understanding of my vocation. During that time I also began a Masters in Theological
Studies at Queen’s University, graduating at the top of my class in 2009. I transferred to St Mary Catholic High School to become their first lay chaplain twelve years ago.

I have tried to make social justice a priority in my life, and I have been involved with activism around various issues. I enjoy writing as a way of deepening my faith understanding, communicating with others and simply amusing myself. I am particularly grateful for three periods spent as a guest of the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research at the University of St John, Minnesota. My writing has appeared in such publications as DisciplesWorld, Upper Room Disciplines and Weavings: A Journal of the Christian Spiritual Life. My latest article will appear in the book Catholic Women Speak: Bringing our Gifts to the Table (Paulist Press, NJ, 2015).

Through this research project I have tried to articulate something meaningful about high school ministry, something that I hope will be useful to others. I am grateful beyond words that I have found myself in this community, with these people, doing this work, always in the presence of a loving God.
Appendix ix

PROTOCOL REFERENCE # 30462

July 14, 2014

Dr. Mary Jo Leddy
UTM: HUMANITIES DIVISION
UT MISSISSAUGA

Ms. Catherine Cavanagh
UTM: HUMANITIES DIVISION
UT MISSISSAUGA

Dear Dr. Leddy and Ms. Catherine Cavanagh,

Re: Your research protocol entitled, "Ministry amid diversity: The value of an ethos of hospitality for Ontario Catholic school chaplains"

ETHICS APPROVAL

Original Approval Date: July 14, 2014
Expire Date: July 13, 2015
Continuing Review Level: 1

We are writing to advise you that the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics Board (REB) has granted approval to the above-named research protocol under the REB's delegated review process. Your protocol has been approved for a period of one year and ongoing research under this protocol must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

Please ensure that you submit an Annual Renewal Form or a Study Completion Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your current ethics approval. Note that annual renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry.

If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Wakefield, Ph.D.
REB Chair

Dean Sharpe
REB Manager