

# MORE OR LESS THE SAME?

Church of England Parish Clergy  
in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

# MORE OR LESS THE SAME?

## The Fate of the Clergy

Towler & Coxon revisited

Clergy in decline

Conservative / radical  
outlooks

Social marginalisation

# MORE OR LESS THE SAME?

## Managing Clergy Lives Research

Peyton & Gatrell

In search of Church of  
England parish  
priesthood ..... clergy  
lives in their own words

- ▶ Content and morale of ministry
- ▶ Community expectations, recognition and professional status
- ▶ Relationships and boundaries
- ▶ Work / life balance
- ▶ Priestly authenticity and endurance

## MORE OR LESS THE SAME?

Activity

Identity

Agency

In shaping clergy lives

# Faithful community pastors

- ▶ Right decision
- ▶ Busy, varied
- ▶ Core activities
- ▶ Appreciated, but a dark side
- ▶ Residence
- ▶ Competing expectations
- ▶ Vocational capital, social marginality
- ▶ Public / private, relationships
- ▶ Adapting

## MORE OR LESS THE SAME?

Clergy are not unique in their working arrangements, but the disciplinary reach of ordination gives rise to intense pastoral embodiment

# Obedience

Ordination theology

Foucault's panopticon

Self-governed soul

Visible, vulnerable

Public gaze

Everyday death

MORE OR LESS  
THE SAME?

Everyday death, God  
first, no finishing line

MORE OR LESS  
THE SAME?

# Sacrifice

Sacrificial embrace

Covenant

Ministerial virtue

Ambition, suspicion

Labour without reward

Accumulative cost

I don't ever feel 'not  
priest' ... I can't say I  
ever switch off

# Intimacy

'Married' to ministry

Loneliness

Postmodern households

Coming out

Critical incidents

Work / home balance

Happy or hiding

MORE OR LESS  
THE SAME?

Priesthood imprints all  
relationships ... the  
professional  
contamination of the  
private sphere



# Clergy authenticity

‘Most priest’

Profound moments

Hinterland midwife and shaman

Loosing the way

Emotional labour, managed heart

Still called after all these years

Becoming priest

## MORE OR LESS THE SAME?

Embracing sacrifice is the hallmark and enduring trajectory of vocational faithfulness and identity .... priests need to feel authentic in answering God’s calling

# More or less the same?

Mixed economy

Divergence

Big initiatives

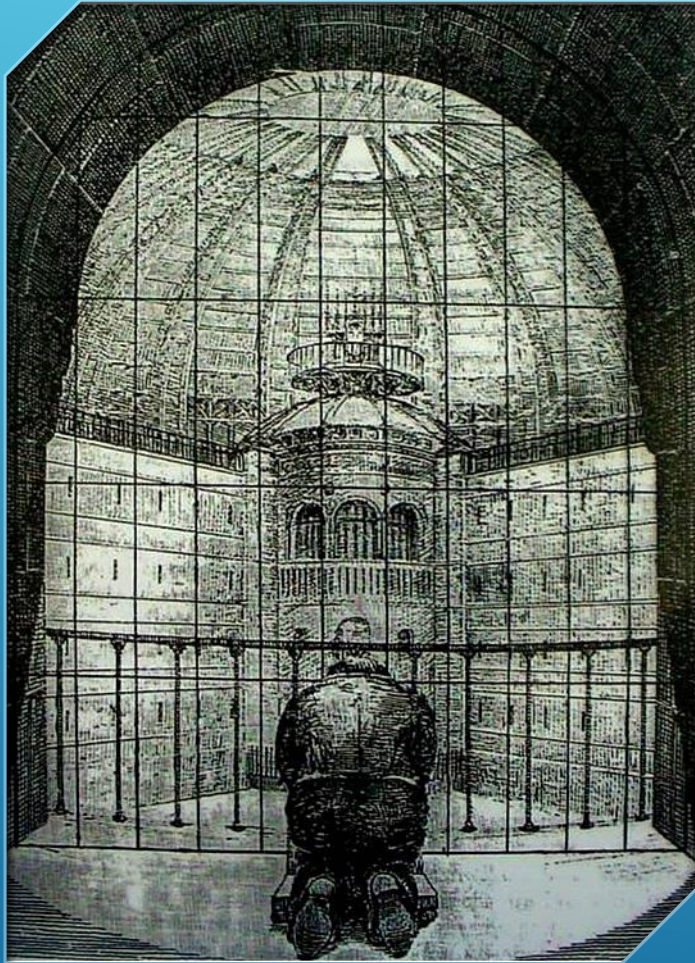
Vocations, glass cliff?

The story we tell ourselves

The fate of the clergy

## MORE OR LESS THE SAME?

Maybe there are enough decent priests for the Church not to despair, just yet ....



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