



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR EVANGELISATION, LAITY AND MINISTRY

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Catholic clergy have strong sense of wellbeing

A new study has found Catholic clergy have a strong sense of wellbeing and recommended further work on ways to support them.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry commissioned a survey involving 825 priests and deacons in a bid to identify how they can be better supported and, in turn, better serve their communities.

A second phase of the study involved interviews with 78 priests and deacons, who provided valuable feedback on their working and personal lives.

The study report *Thriving (and Surviving) in Ministry* proposed a plan for "targeted pastoral strategies to support clergy in areas of wellbeing, mental health, and spiritual care".

"This study stands as a hopeful and pioneering effort—one that opens the door to deeper understanding, continued dialogue, and meaningful action to nurture the wellbeing of those who serve the Church," the report said.

The bishops agreed at the November plenary to set up a working group to explore ways to better support clergy.

The study found most clergy (95 per cent) valued their ministry and work and 73 per cent felt adequately supported. As well, 71 per cent said they were "hopeful" and 75 per cent had good or very good self-confidence.

Challenges expressed by clergy in the report included experiences of loneliness, difficulties in pastoral ministry, heavy workloads and gaps in training and mentoring.

Those taking part in the survey encouraged future priests and deacons to embrace their vocations with enthusiasm but to have realistic expectations, undergo deep discernment and engage with their local communities.

Commission chair, Archbishop Christopher Prowse, said: "I encourage dioceses to read this report carefully and for clergy particularly to reflect with their bishop and others on the significance of these findings for the ongoing pastoral care of our priests and deacons."

The executive summary and the full report, *Thriving (and Surviving) in Ministry*, can be found at the National Centre for Pastoral Research [website](#).