



# **Thirty-Three Good Men: Celibacy, Obedience and Identity. A Sociological Study of the Lived Experience of Irish Diocesan Priests in Modern Ireland, 1960-2010**

*John A. Weafers*

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Thirty-Three Good Men analyses the lives of thirty-three Irish Catholic diocesan priests and former priests during a period of significant change in the Irish Church and Irish society, 1960–2010. The book focuses on the way Irish diocesan priests understand and experience celibacy and obedience in modern Ireland, and how they understand their evolving identity as priests. Other related topics, such as the alleged crisis in priesthood, are also discussed.

Apart from their common gender, these men are quite different from each other, with diverse backgrounds, personalities, behaviours and attitudes. While most of them are active priests in good standing, others have left the priesthood; while some are young, most are middle-aged and elderly; while most are heterosexual, some are homosexual; while most live celibate lives, others are sexually active; while most hold orthodox Catholic beliefs, others are more liberal in some aspects of Church teaching; and while some are enthusiastic about their priesthood, others have become disillusioned.

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