

Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Mr D Rajagopal Reddy (Reg. No. 1750070), PhD scholar at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), will defend his PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Wednesday, 25 August 2021 at 11.00 am on the WebEx Meeting platform.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Indian Catholic Priests' Identity, Relational Autonomy and Attachment to God: A Narrative Analysis**
- Discipline** : **Psychology**
- External Examiner** : **Dr Sebastian Perumbilly**
(Outside Karnataka) Associate Professor
Southern Connecticut State University
501, Crescent Street, New Haven,
CT06515, USA.
- External Examiner** : **Dr Lancy D'Souza**
(Within Karnataka) Professor and Head
Department of Psychology
Maharajas College, University of Mysore
Mysore – 570005
Karnataka
- Supervisor** : **Dr Varghese K J**
Professor
Department of Psychology
School of Social Sciences
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
Bengaluru – 560029
Karnataka

The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 18 August 2021



Registrar

ABSTRACT

A thematic narrative analysis was carried to explore the 28 South Indian Roman Catholic religious priests' identity, relational autonomy and attachment to God. Fourteen participants were selected from the structured priestly ministry settings namely education ministry and, another 14 participants from the semi-structured priestly ministry settings namely parish and priestly formation ministry settings. The qualitative data collected through the interviews were analyzed through the narrative thematic analysis method. The thematic narrative analysis found five major themes, influence on the priestly identity, value-oriented life, purpose in life, priestly celibacy and challenges in the priestly ministry and 46 subthemes for the participants' priestly identity narratives. For relational autonomy, the study found five major themes, impactful childhood, the influence of priestly formation, interpersonal relationships, relationship with the person in authority and decision making and 42 subthemes. For attachment to God, it found six major themes, God as an attachment figure, seeking and maintaining proximity to God, God as a haven of safety, God as a secure base, perceiving God as stronger and wiser, and individual differences in attachment to God, and 24 sub-themes.

The study results revealed strong support for the correspondence pathway, as the majority of the participants had narratives of correspondence between the attachment to their parents and their attachment to God. It also found evidence for the theme of compensation in three participants' narratives. The qualitative comparison between the groups found that for 19 sub-themes for priestly identity, 20 sub-themes for relational autonomy and 13 sub-themes for attachment to God, the priests from the structured ministry settings differed from the priests from the semi-structured ministry settings. Causal network analysis found that participants' attachment to God contributed to their relational autonomy and priestly identity development, and their relational autonomy contributed towards their priestly identity development.

Keywords: Roman Catholic religious priests, identity, relational autonomy, attachment to God, correspondence pathway, compensation pathway.