

The Power and the Glory

A Consideration of Human Weakness and the Bible

A Senior Studies Report

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I. Graham Greene: "A writer who happens to be Catholic"

Graham Greene was born to an Anglican family in England on October 2, 1904. Greene was not a religious man. Instead, it was said that he was an atheist. The sentiment that non-believers seem to share is, how can someone believe in something that cannot be seen. This sentiment is associated with Saint Thomas the Apostle who is also known as "doubting" Thomas. His unbelief occurred after the Resurrection of Jesus:

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed" (John 20:24-29).

This passage describes faith at its best. However, Greene went through the early years of his life with hardly any faith,

only a church denomination. For many people, the Anglican Church was a way of life since it is the national religion for England, but Greene had other ideas.

Graham Greene began writing articles to persuade people not to follow any particular religion. When Greene entered Balliol College in Oxford, England, he began focusing those writings on the Catholic Church. He would write articles in the University newsletter to give the Catholic Church a bad name. It did not take long for a change to begin in Greene's life. At the University, Greene met a beautiful girl named Vivien Dayrell-Browning. The first moment he met her, he fell in love with her. However, a different situation began to develop in this new relationship. Vivien was a Roman Catholic and a very devoted one at that. At first the religion issue did not bother him too much, but after some time, the issue began to cross his mind. He began by looking at both religions, the Anglicans and Catholics. Greene soon became upset with the Anglican Church because there were no symbols like statues or other relics. The only place to find these symbols was in the Catholic Church. This thought gave such a lasting impression on him so he began to

consider a change. That change happened May 18 of 1925 when Graham Greene entered a Roman Catholic Church. He arrived in time for Mass and stayed through the whole service. He described the Mass as something which he really enjoyed. This moment stayed with him for quite some time since it was a special feeling for him. In a May 30, 1925 letter to Vivien, he said that he went into the Church, lit some candles and walked around. These feelings caused Greene to drop his atheistic views and become a Catholic (Sherry, 177-193).

There were basically two reasons for Greene's entry into the Church: 1) his wife's Catholicism and 2) the fact that the religion appealed to him, especially after his first visit to the Church. In regards to his conversion, Greene took the nickname of "Thomas the Doubter" because of his earlier unbelief. With his new faith, Greene said that he was, "A Catholic with an intellectual if not an emotional belief in Catholic dogma" (Stratford, 169-198). From this moment forward, Greene went to Mass and Confession and began to read a good deal of theology so he could begin his life over in the Catholic faith.

When Graham Greene left Oxford he began writing poems and novels. He continued this type of writing until 1938 when he took a different approach to his writing. In 1938, Greene traveled to Mexico to cover the religious persecutions of the Catholic Church by the government. When he arrived in Mexico, Greene gave a small description of what he found when he learned of Mexico's anti-clerical policies. To him, "Revolutionary Mexico seemed like an image of condemned humanity, of a ravaged and lawless world offering up the ironic possibility of gratuitous salvation" (Pearson, 280).

While Greene was in Mexico, he was given the idea to write The Power and the Glory from a story that he had heard. The story was about a priest by the name of Father Miguel Pro. Father Pro was a cleric who was executed in Mexico in 1927 for a crime he did not commit. Pro, a Jesuit who had already been sought for holding illegal services, was executed because he was linked to an assassination attempt on the then-Presidential candidate Obregon. The peremptory execution without a trial and without sufficient evidence to establish his innocence during the violent period of the Cristero Wars and President Calles' harsh

suppression of the Church has resulted in a rash of Catholic rebellions throughout the country. When Pro was executed, "Calles inadvertently produced an instant martyr to the rebel cause" (Pearson, 282). Father Miguel Pro was recently beatified by Pope John Paul II and he is now in line to be canonized a saint.

After hearing this story, Greene set out to write his novel which was published in 1940. This book is among three other books in a collection known as the Catholic novels. Graham Greene summed up these novels in a 1980 interview in which he used the title of this section. Greene said, "I disagree with being classified as a Catholic writer, and have all along. . .I'm a writer who happens to be Catholic" (Beckwith, 21).

In discussing The Power and the Glory, the thesis will focus on two main points. The first point will prove the human weakness of the priest in the novel, the second point is the parallel between this novel and the Bible.

II. A priest's humble beginnings lead to a tragic end

The Catholic Church at one time held a prominent place in Mexican society. The Churches were flourishing, priests were everywhere, and the devoted Catholic people were not afraid to worship in public. The priest who is the character in this study remembers those days really well. The priest, who plays the protagonist was a gentleman in every sense. He was cultivated in speech and manners and was much sought after. He was a guest of honor to the rich. With the widows and the housewives he had his winsome ways. A local celebrity then, he had not tasted of privation-when suddenly, everything was changed (Kurismmootil, 59).

This change that ended the last phrase is what brought the Catholic Church down in the provinces of Tabasco and Chiapas in Mexico. The persecutions which were beginning sent worshippers into hiding and priests on the run. Most of the priests either left the priesthood, ran off and got married really fast, or if they were caught, they were shot. However, the priest that remained was bound and determined to keep his vocation so he ran.

The priest did not get far until despair set in. When his despair did not leave, he began drinking and that earned him the title of “whiskey priest” which is what he will be identified as throughout the whole novel. Drinking is a bad habit to start because once you get hooked it is difficult to stop unless the person seeks help. The priest had no one to turn to so he kept on drinking. Despite his difficulty in finding alcohol he continued to maintain his habit as best as he could. However, this habit can cause problems and for the priest, it did. While in a drunken stupor, the priest had relations with a woman who bore him a daughter. This was a mortal sin and he knew it. That is why as he begins his journey to get away from the government, he is continually reminded of this sin.

As a priest, one of the vows which is taken is for celibacy. That is where the ordinand vows ask one to remain single and have no sexual relations. Today's Canon Law states: “Clerics are obliged to observe perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven and therefore are obliged to observe celibacy, which is a special gift of God, by which sacred ministers can adhere more easily to Christ with an undivided

heart and can more freely dedicate themselves to the service of God and humankind" (Canon 277). The priest knew this act was sinful but he could not resist the temptation.

Throughout the whole novel, the priest manages to escape, except for the two times he spent in jail. The first time in jail, he went completely unrecognized and was released after one night. The second time was when he was finally captured. He spent that final night in jail and was executed the next morning. This marked the end of all the priests in this area until a new priest arrived that same night to continue the Catholic Tradition that the last priest had left behind.

The whiskey priest plays a major role in this study since he committed the sin. The focus will be on human weakness which leads to sin. The priest also represents the person of Jesus in the flesh and the parallel to the Bible will look at how this sinful past is like Christ.

III. The Heart of the Story: Human Weakness

The priest has failed because of human weakness which leads to sin. The basis for this comes from a question by Herbert McCabe, O.P. in his book, The Teaching of the Catholic Church. A New Catechism of Christian Doctrine. His question is, "What does St. John's Gospel call the collective failure of mankind to be truly human?" The answer is that, "St. John calls the collective failure of mankind to be truly human the sin of the world" (McCabe, 21). The key phrase in this question and answer is "truly human" for that is what the priest is. The focus for this story will look at the priest in The Power and the Glory and see what his humanness and failure mean.

The first thing that catches our eye as we read The Power and the Glory is that the main character involved is a priest. We assume that he is like other priests, someone who is faithful to his vows and dedicated to his ministry. That is the wrong assumption about this particular priest. We have just put him in a category with others in this profession because priests are called to be holy, faithful, and dedicated. This may be true for all priests, including this one in the novel, but we come to a

wrong conclusion by assuming that. The one thing that we fail to account for is human weakness. By classifying priests as perfect, we make them to be better than us and that is not the case. When a priest is ordained, he may feel like a new and better person, but the key point is that he is still human. A priest is a servant of God, he represents the person of Jesus Christ, but he is human and that means he still has the same worries, troubles, thoughts, and other daily problems that all of us have.

There are two scripture passages which speak of this human weakness in different ways. The first passage comes from Jesus when he is experiencing his agony in the garden:

He took along Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:37-41).

This passage gives some explanation why the priest is in the condition he is in. His running from the government authorities is his agony. Throughout the novel, the priest finds time for prayer to help him get through this ordeal. He is following the example of Jesus who prayed during his own agony. The key phrase from this passage is, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." This phrase resembles the whiskey priest as he journeys for safety. At first, the priest becomes despaired and that leads to the act of fornication which is a sign of the flesh being at work. The flesh is also weak in that the priest is a drunkard as well. He needs alcohol and he would go to any extreme to get it. The priest's other side is that he wants to remain faithful to his vocation and ministry while escaping from the authorities at the same time. He has the spirit to keep up the courage and continue the fight, but his humanness always steps in. This shows that even though his spirit is willing, his flesh is still weak.

The second passage comes from the letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians:

Consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God. It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, so well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," so that, as it is written, "Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord" (I Cor 1:26-31).

This passage can be divided into two parts: the strong and the weak. The strong side in The Power and the Glory would be the government officials who have started the religious persecutions. The weak would be the whiskey priest who is trying to escape the persecutions. He is the weak one that God sent to shame the strong. The priest keeps ahead of the officials by escaping when they least expect it or when he is confronted by them, he always manages to get away unrecognized. The whiskey priest is a lowly, despised person who is weak from being human, but at times like this, his weakness could be considered a blessing.

The discussion on human weakness and The Power and the Glory leads to another aspect. The aspect is the priest as the “wounded healer” which stems from the answer on the collective failure of humankind. In his book titled, The Wounded Healer, Father Henri Nouwen looks at the different aspects of ministry and those people known as the wounded healers. The key word to work with is wounds. There are several words that describe our wounds. “Words such as ‘alienation,’ ‘isolation’ and ‘loneliness’ have been used as the names of our wounded condition. Maybe the word ‘loneliness’ best expresses our immediate experience and therefore most fittingly enables us to understand our brokenness. The loneliness of the minister is especially painful; for over and above his experience as a man in modern society, he feels an added loneliness, resulting from the changing meaning of the ministerial profession itself” (Nouwen, 83). The priest is a prime example of loneliness because he is the only one running from the authorities. He has no one to turn to, it is a struggle that he faces and he will have to do it alone and hope for the best.

There are two key subjects that Nouwen discusses in his book, fear of death and fear of life. This is the problem the priest faces as he journeys across Mexico. He is in a life and death situation and he is going to hold on to his life as long as he can. The priest sees that he has failed because of the mortal sin in his life. He hopes that he will get a chance for reconciliation before he dies and so he will keep up the fight. What the priest is going through now is the reason for Jesus saying, "It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick" (Mark 2:17).

The case study in Nouwen's book focused on a hospital patient who is being ministered to and the fears that come from this study. The minister realized that "death had been at the center of his patient's concern" (Nouwen, 57). If a study like this was done on the priest, the same concern would be the result. The priest knew he was a marked man and if he was ever caught he would certainly be shot on site. This worry is also added to the human weakness that he was already experiencing. Another fear that goes with death is that of sin. The priest had committed several mortal sins and if he was not reconciled before death, he would automatically be condemned. Thinking

about eternal life in hell is a frightening thought and that is the thought the priest lives with daily.

Fear of life is another problem that people in life and death situations have to work with. This fear in Nouwen's book is where many people have doubts. If someone is sick or facing an operation, how would they feel to return to normal life afterwards. A thought like that had to cross the priest's mind as he made his journey. The priest would think about what it would be like to be in parish life again, where there are many people who have respect for their priest and the Catholic Church as a whole. This is a great life, but a life that the priest will never be able to return to. The milieu which comes from this study and the life of the priest is that there are people who are "afraid to die" and "afraid to live" (Nouwen, 61).

To help with his worries and troubles, the priest looks for people who would have mercy and compassion for him, but he never finds any. The only way the priest could deal with this and his weakness was through prayer and action. Jesus' compassion moves, as Karl Barth says, from "the heights to the depth, from victory to defeat, from riches to poverty, from triumph to

suffering, from life to death.” “Jesus’ whole life and mission involve accepting powerlessness and revealing in this powerlessness the limitlessness of God’s love. Here we see what compassion means” (McNeill, Morrison, Nouwen, 27). The priest probably feels something similar to these movements listed above when it comes to finding people to help him. The problem is that his weakness is visible to them, but that does not move the priest too much because weakness is a part of being human.

IV. Biblical Phenomenon

One of the most widely read books in the world is the Bible. The Bible is the inspired Word of God and is beneficial to all people despite human weakness. Our concern for this section is to focus on the New Testament stories of Jesus and parallel them to the priest in The Power and the Glory. There are four different stories to be used for this task. These four deal with the priest as a Christ-like figure, the Betrayal scene, Martyrdom, and the Resurrection principle.

Priesthood with Christ-likeness

To be Christ-like means to follow in the footsteps of Christ, to do what He did. If we are like Christ, then we are His disciples. Our call to discipleship is beautifully expressed in the Gospels:

He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels" (Mark 8:34-38).

This is a powerful statement made by our Lord and it is the truth. Every individual on earth, no matter who they are, is commanded to pick up their cross and follow in the footsteps of Jesus. To be Christ-like, means to pick up our cross and carry it daily. This does not mean that we have to physically pick up a cross. Our pains, worries, troubles, and burdens are our daily happenings and that is the cross we have to bear. Even a priest, as the person of Christ, has a cross to bear as well. Their duty is to instruct their congregations to be like Christ and pick up

their cross and follow him.

The ordained priest is a sign, a sacramental focus of this ministry, which belongs to the whole Church and which speaks of the potential for divinity in all humankind. The classical model is that of R.C. Moberly when he talks of the priestly character of the Church as reflecting the priesthood of Christ.

The ordained priesthood, then, receives its authentication from the Church and, as we have argued, the Church receives each character from the nature of God and his relationship with all humanity. The priest, as a sign, as a walking sacrament, should thus manifest this ministry by presiding at the Eucharist and by blessing and absolving in God's name is utterly logical and consequent. Priesthood is not defined by these acts in a purely functional way; the theological rooting of priesthood in the Church, and the Church in the divine exchange, is vital (Platten, 457).

The first indication of an association with Christ comes from,

a photograph of the priest--the pencilled circle around his portrait producing the effect of a visible nimbus--which hangs next to the photograph of the Yankee criminal, James Calver, in a symbolic foreshadowing of the Passion, Greene's development of the Christ analogy imposes on the vagaries of the priest's journey the predestined order of via crucis (Grob, 5).

From this paragraph, several parallels are brought out:

One parallel is from the life and sacrifice of Christ which is found in the relationship of the priest and the American gangster, Calver. Another parallel is that the name Calver is like Calvary. The photographs in the police station portray them as Christ and Barabbas. The final parallel comes from the account in Luke's gospel which talks of the two thieves crucified with Christ. The priest, like Christ is asked to save himself; a violent man exercises a last act of charity in the only way he knows how and that is through death. The priest's estimation is that they are both malefactors, but a dramatic implication is drawn from the priest's self-sacrifice, his prayer, and his last act for the gangster. Through this, both are saved, just like Christ and the just thief (Sharrock, 114).

Even though he is in mortal sin, it is plain to see that the priest tries to live his life just like Christ.

The Betrayal Scene

The priest encounters the mestizo once again and this time he wants the priest to return to the dying gangster so he can hear his confession. The priest knows this would be his betrayal, but it is his duty as a priest to go, so he does. The priest is Christ-like because Jesus was betrayed himself. Jesus chose Judas Iscariot to be one of his disciples. Judas is greedy and jealous of Jesus' popularity so he communicates with the

authorities about capturing Jesus. The authorities offer Judas thirty pieces of silver for this deed. The scene takes place in the Garden of Gethsemane.

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve arrived, accompanied by a large crowd, with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests and the elders of the people. His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one, arrest him." Immediately he went over to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and he kissed him. Jesus answered him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then stepping forward they laid hands on Jesus and arrested him (Mt 26:47-50).

The priest in The Power and the Glory probably feels the same way after seeing a scripture passage like this because this is basically what happens to him. While he has been on the run from the authorities who were looking for him he would always find different towns to stay at. The priest would usually find some people who would put him up for the night. The first encounter with betrayal happens in a town that the priest was staying in. As he is prepared to leave, a mestizo grabs on to him begging to go with him, but the priest refused. The mestizo starts to follow the priest and it is at this point that a small coal of cruel satisfaction glows at the back of the priest's mind-

this was Judas sick and unsteady and scared in the dark (PG, 99).

The priest gets away from the mestizo and continues his journey through Mexico which should hopefully lead him to safety.

The maturation of his Christian understanding of divine love is illustrated during his next encounter with the mestizo. Instead of reacting with hatred and self-pity, he looks at himself and sees that he, too, has had the capacity for evil--not only to betray but also to feed on ambition, pride, lust, greed, and love of authority. No one should be beyond charitable thoughts, he thinks, for "Christ died for this man too" (PG, 117). Unfortunately, his thoughts of love and charity for others do not last because the priest is arrested the night he returns and shot the next morning.

Martyrdom

Throughout the novel, there is one basic theme that most of the characters refer to and that theme is martyrdom. The first Christian martyr to be canonized a saint was Saint Stephen. For many centuries, there have been martyrs because they refused to turn their backs on Christ and give up the faith. This

scenario is being portrayed in The Power and the Glory.

The discussion of martyrdom in the novel is brought about by a pious Catholic woman who is reading The Life of Juan to her children. The boy Luis, begins asking questions about the whiskey priest who stayed at their house one night. This upsets the mother and she wishes that the priest had never showed up. Her husband says, "They would have caught him if we hadn't, and then he would have been one of your martyrs. They would write a book about him and you would read it to the children" (PG, 27).

The priest encounters the idea of martyrdom from Maria, the woman who bore his child. She said, "I know about things. I went to school. I'm not like these others--ignorant. I know you're a bad priest. That time we were together--that wasn't all you've done. I've heard things, I can tell you. Do you think God wants you to stay and die--a whiskey priest like you?" (PG, 79). She continues by saying, "Suppose you die. You'll be a martyr, won't you? What kind of martyr do you think you'll be? It's enough to make people mock" (PG, 79). When the priest hears this, he is surprised that someone would consider him a martyr.

There are three parallels between the death of Christ and the priest.

The first is that Christ died crucified between two criminals, while on the wall of the prison office, the priest's picture is also pinned against that of a common criminal. The second is that Christ's death was a voluntary decision and so was the priest's. The third parallel is that of submission. The priest's redemptive role is ever before his eyes. Submission was the core of Christ's mission--submission of all, even His very young life to the Father. The priest too may hold back nothing, even his soul. He must surrender all (Kurismmootil, 88).

The only difference is that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world. He died a Redeemer and a Savior so we would not have to live in sin, but in God's mercy and salvation. The priest, on the other hand, wants to save his daughter from all the evils of the world, but he does not. Instead, he dies a sinner and a probable martyr because he wants to remain faithful to Christ and his priestly commitment.

The Resurrection Principle

This section is one of happiness, peace, and joy because the Resurrection is a great event. When we die from this world we do not die for good, but we live on in the next world. Before Christ came to earth this was not possible because when you died your soul went to a place of waiting in Hell until the expected Savior came. After Jesus' death, he rose from the dead and now everyone on the face of the earth will experience this great event. When the Resurrection took place it was very difficult to understand as the Bible passage will show.

At Daybreak on the first day of the week they took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were puzzling over this, behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared to them. They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. They said to them, "Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised" (Lk 24:1-6).

This is not exactly what happens in The Power and the Glory, but the Resurrection principle does apply. Throughout the novel we have been expecting the end of the priest; and with his death we expect the end of the narrative.

Consequently, the disconfirmation and almost simultaneous readjustment on our part to accommodate the new evidence for an ongoing spiritual reality in the person of the new priest works against the temper of the narrative as narrowly focalized by the whiskey priest throughout the middle sections of the novel. The priest's death is not an end after all; it is the ritualistic beginning of a new cycle (Diephouse, 30).

It is a surprise at the end to see a new priest arrive after all the turmoil that took place with the whiskey priest. The characters who have interacted with the priest are upset after his death. One of those characters is a boy named Luis, whom we met earlier. Luis experiences the Resurrection principle firsthand. After the whiskey priest is shot, Luis answers a late knock at the door and it is the new priest.

The explanation is that the priest has returned, complete with frightened smile and without a particular name. As the novel ends, a new cycle with a new priest has begun, and objective correlative for the new spirit with which Luis is approaching religion. In introducing this priest to the novel at the end of both the whiskey priest's life and the novel's life, Greene calls into question the seeming pervasiveness of the whiskey priest's temporal relativism and returns to an older spiritual period when the Christian rituals asserted the Birth-Death-Resurrection cycle for a dramatization of life, for an allegory of renewal (Diephouse, 31).

It is obvious that these two comparisons, the novel and the Bible, do not give an answer word for word. They both present different scenarios, but it is up to us to make the connections that are displayed in the above paragraphs. The priest as a Christ-like figure shows that everything he did, especially his suffering was like Christ. The Betrayal scene deals with a person's obligation to do something for others, namely, Jesus and the priest. Martyrdom displays the priest's willingness to die for the faith and his commitment to the priesthood. The Resurrection shows that Jesus' return symbolizes the new priest's arrival. In looking back, it is apparent that there are similarities between the novel and the Bible.

V. The Reading of Life and the Bible

As a reader, our role is a two-fold process. The first and most important is to read the novel completely and carefully because it is very important not to miss a single point. If a novel is not read in this manner, then the whole focus can be misinterpreted. The second process will allow us to get more out of the story than we might have by reading it plainly.

Pretend that you are an extra character in the story and become a witness to all that happens to the priest. This extra character will be able to detect all of the critical parts within the story.

A novel can be considered critical because as it is read, it should allow the reader to use critical thinking which gets to the heart of the story.

Graham Greene is a critical writer who adds different elements to a text so he can write a good story. His experiences and knowledge of Catholicism are a good basis for his writing of The Power and the Glory. This novel is an excellent piece of material. Greene went to Mexico in 1938, heard a story about a priest who was executed for a crime he did not commit, and from that story, he was able to write this novel. The whiskey priest in the novel dies for different reasons, but Greene used the same idea to tell the story. It seems that Greene uses two key ideas for The Power and the Glory and they are human weakness and the Bible.

The first idea deals with life in general, especially the life of the Catholic priest. Life is a sensitive topic to discuss because of the struggles it contains. The priest in The Power

and the Glory has many struggles to face. His main struggle is to live since he is running from the government authorities and their persecution against the Church. Of all the professions in the world, the toughest one to work is life since it is a seven day-a-week, twenty-four hour-a-day operation.

As a reader, I am trying to find a basic theme of life that this novel deals with. The conclusion that I come up with is sin because the priest commits several mortal sins and he carries them throughout the whole novel. However, after discussing this section of the story with a priest, it was decided that sin is not the problem, but human weakness. In the novel, it is apparent that Greene focuses on the cause and not the effect. It is our task as readers to discover the cause, but so much was written over it that it was difficult to detect. Life played a major part, but when it comes to the causes and effects, Greene is able to master the text so well that it is difficult to locate them.

The second aspect of The Power and the Glory is the parallel between the novel and the Bible. With the priest being the central figure, the Biblical stories that are appropriate for him are the ones about Jesus. The stories of Jesus which

parallel the priest are the Passion narratives. The basic narratives are the Betrayal and the Resurrection. Greene did not come right out and say that the parallels existed, but from the action in the story, it is apparent that the parallels are there. Since priests represent the person of Jesus on earth, who says that they cannot have a life similar to his? The whiskey priest experienced similar sufferings, so he is portrayed as Greene's Christ-like figure.

Graham Greene's message to us from this novel is that he presumes all people are sinners because of our human weakness which leads to sin. The biblical aspect means that the inspired Word of God can help us and give us guidance in our daily struggles and weaknesses. In writing The Power and the Glory, Greene shows us that human weakness and the Bible are important because they are both facts of life.

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