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## Too much from too few: church ministry and stress



**C**hildren frequently perceive priests as people who only work on Sundays, and religious as being busy only during school hours, since these may be the only times they encounter them.

Yet those in full-time ministry in the Catholic Church experience all the day-in, day-out pressures of the average 9-to-5 worker. In fact, priests and religious frequently experience far greater demands than those placed on typical employees because they are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The list of responsibilities runs long: funerals, weddings, daily Masses, hospital calls, teaching, meeting with parish staff members, administrative duties, counseling. And the work load only gets heavier with the number of active priests and religious declining each year.

Attempting to fulfill these obligations — and still make time to attend to their personal needs — can be such an overwhelming challenge that some members of the clergy and religious orders find they can no longer cope with the pressures alone.

Sister Mollie Brown, RSM, is founder and director of Spirit  
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By Mike Latona, Staff writer

# BURNING