

CATHOLICITY OF THE STUDENTS AS MANIFESTED IN THEIR PARTICIPATION TO RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

As the Church's celebration on the year of the laity commences, one important aspect of Catholicity of the institution must be evaluated: the participation of the students to the different religious activities of the Church. Hence, this study aimed to assess the level of participation of the students of the University of Saint Louis, Tuguegarao City, Philippines to religious activities initiated by the Campus Ministry office namely liturgical celebrations, para-liturgical celebrations, enrichment activities, and other religious related activities. 470 respondents across the Louisian community were considered in the study through a descriptive survey and Focus Group Discussion. Results show that mission animation activities have the highest level of participation of students while the celebration of the sacrament of confirmation has the lowest level of participation. Moreover, results of the independent sample T-test and the Analysis of Variance test reveal that sex, age, school/department, and parish involvement affect the level of participation of the students to religious activities. The study concluded that the level of participation of the students to the different religious activities is in moderate extent. As an offshoot of the results of the study, a proposed campus ministry program was developed.

Keywords: *Catholicity, Liturgical Activities, Paraliturgical Activities, Enrichment Activities, Other Religious Related Activities*

INTRODUCTION

As the celebration of the year of Laity of the Catholic Church commences, one important challenge for all the believers is actually posed by the Vatican II document, *Sancrosanctum Concilium* (United States Catholic Bishop Conference, 1987), about the role of the laity in the Church: the challenge of having a full and active participation among the members in all the celebrations of the Church.

Schools are vital instruments for the Church to fulfill its mission of evangelization. Hence, Catholic institution must uphold its Catholicity in order for them to truly realize the mission of evangelization. Clemente (2008) defined Catholicity as the universal characteristics of a Catholic institution of learning envisioned by the Catholic Church. Tindowen (2015) identified five major areas of Catholicity that every Catholic institution must possess: Communicated Vision and Mission, Religious Instruction and Curriculum, Prayer and Liturgy Integration, Service and Social Justice, and Ecumenical Initiatives. The University of Saint Louis Tuguegarao, a CICM Catholic institution, upholding its Catholicity, takes for its mission and vision the integral formation of human person that is rooted in Christ. As a Faith and Christian builder, it is also the task of the institution to fulfill the challenge of the Catholic Church which is promoting a full and active participation in the religious activities especially to the students through providing avenues for the celebration of faith and moments of prayers. These are recollections, celebrations of the sacraments, and caring for the poor among others.

In CICM Schools, one of the four components of Christian Formation that must be present in all CICM institutions is the presence of Prayerful and Liturgical Activities. And with this, prayer and liturgy, especially the celebration of the Eucharist, are at the heart of the life of

the students and other members of the institution. The school community gathers together to celebrate the Eucharist, and express gratitude to God for his bountiful blessings (Abbot, 1966).

The Church document, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witness to Faith* clearly defined the laity as a member of People of God. As such, united to Christ through Baptism, he or she shares in the basic dignity that is common to all members. For, they share a common dignity from their rebirth in Christ. They have the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection. They possess in common one salvation, one hope, and one undivided charity. Therefore, it is clear in the definition that laity includes all members of the Body of Christ who are baptized. The youth and the students then in Catholic Schools belong to the laity. And hence, the youth, actually has also its role in the Catholic Church (Miller, 2005).

The Vatican II document *Sancrosanctum Concilium* stresses the call of the laity to participate actively in Religious celebrations stating that, "the mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to full conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations, which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people is their right and obligation." Hence, the youth are encouraged by the Church to fully participate in all religious activities to make their faith become living, conscious and active.

As it celebrates its 50th year of excellence and mission, one aspect of Catholicity must be evaluated: Prayer and Liturgy Integration specifically, the Participation of its students to religious activities. Maniwang, Parallag, and Washington (2013) stated that in all CICM educational institutions, prayer and liturgical celebrations, especially the celebration of the Eucharist, are at the heart of the life of the employees and the students. Hence, the purpose of this study is to find out the level of religious participation of students in the University of Saint Louis specifically on the different religious celebrations spearheaded by the Campus Ministry Office. Being a Catholic institution and having Christian Living as part of its core values, this study is geared towards the students, being the main respondents of the study. It sought to determine the level of participation of students to the different religious activities spearheaded by the Campus Ministry Office. Moreover, it will also answer if there will be a significant difference on the participation of the respondents on the different religious activities when grouped according to profile variables. And finally, the output of this research is an enhanced Campus Ministry program of the university that will focus to the spiritual and religious participation of students.

METHODS

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative types of research using a descriptive survey method. The respondents used a questionnaire developed by Baricaua (2006) with two parts to gather the data needed to the study. Also, it involved Focus-Group Discussion (FGD) on the identified respondents to validate the findings of theThe respondents of the said research were the 470 college students of the University of Saint Louis Tuguegarao. In order to gather the respondents, simple random sampling was utilized following this set of criteria: (1) must be at least third year college student, (2) completed all the required twelve units of Religious Education subjects, (3) presently enrolled in the University for the Academic Year 2014-2015, and (4) must be a Roman Catholic.

Instruments and Procedures

This study utilized a questionnaire with two parts which was answered by the respondents for the gathering of data. The first part was a researcher-made questionnaire for the profile of the respondents. It contains basic profile of the respondents such as age, school or department he/she belongs, civil status, and involvement to parish activities.

For the second part of questionnaire, the researchers used a questionnaire developed by Baricaua (2006) to assess the level of religious participation of the respondents and to identify the reasons why students are attending and not attending religious activities. The survey questionnaire was patterned on the different activities and programs spearheaded by the Campus Ministry Office of the University of Saint Louis-Tuguegarao.

The questionnaire was distributed to the participants after the researcher oriented them on the objectives of the study. Retrieval and collation followed after the participants answered the questions. After the retrieval and collection of all the questionnaires, the researcher tallied the answers of all the respondents and the collated data was given to the statistician for processing.

And to triangulate the findings of the data, a focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted to twenty students of this study.

Data Analysis

This study utilized the following statistical treatment:

The frequency and percentage was used to describe the profile of the respondents.

The weighted mean was used as its statistical treatment to determine the level of religious participation of the respondents. The scale of interpretation for the variables being measured to determine the level of participation to religious activities of the students of the University of Saint Louis Tuguegarao follows this range:

| Range | Description on the Level of Religious Participation |
|-------------|---|
| 4.50 – 5.00 | Very High |
| 3.50 – 4.49 | High |
| 2.50 – 3.49 | Moderate |
| 1.50 – 2.49 | Low |
| 1.00 – 1.49 | Very Low |

Meanwhile, to determine reasons of attending and not attending of the respondents to the different religious activities: frequency, percentage, and rank was used.

The Independent T-Test and One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were utilized to determine if there is a significant difference on the level of participation to the religious activities of the respondents when grouped according to profile variables.

The statistical outputs were presented in tables with corresponding qualitative interpretations.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Table 1.a. Profile of the Respondents

| SEX | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| MALE | 208 | 46.22 |
| FEMALE | 242 | 53.78 |
| TOTAL | 450 | 100.00 |
| AGE | | |
| AGE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
| 16 AND BELOW | 11 | 2.44 |
| 17- 18 | 331 | 73.56 |
| 19 AND ABOVE | 108 | 24.00 |
| TOTAL | 450 | 100.00 |
| SCHOOL/ DEPARTMENT | | |
| SCHOOL/ DEPARTMENT | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
| SBAA | 150 | 33.33 |
| SEAD | 120 | 26.67 |
| SEAS | 70 | 15.56 |
| SICS | 30 | 6.67 |
| SHS | 30 | 6.67 |
| SHVED | 50 | 11.10 |
| TOTAL | 450 | 100.00 |
| CIVIL STATUS | | |
| CIVIL STATUS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
| SINGLE | 444 | 98.67 |
| MARRIED | 6 | 1.13 |
| TOTAL | 450 | 100.00 |
| PARISH INVOLVEMENT | | |
| PARISH INVOLVEMENT | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
| CHOIR | 66 | 14.67 |
| LECTORS | 35 | 7.78 |
| COMMENTA-TORS | 14 | 3.11 |
| ALTAR SERVERS | 9 | 2.00 |
| ALM COLLECTORS | 13 | 2.89 |
| SACRISTANS | 7 | 1.55 |
| NONE | 306 | 68.00 |
| TOTAL | 450 | 100.00 |

The table reveals that in the University of Saint Louis, there are more females than males who are respondents of the study. As to age, majority of them belong to the 17-18 age brackets. In terms of civil status, most of the respondents are single. As to the departments or schools, SBAA (School of Business Administration and Accountancy) occupies the highest percentage, while, the least percentage came both from the SHS (School of Health Sciences) and SICS (School of Information and Computing Sciences). And, in terms of parish involvement,

majority of respondents do not have any participation in their respective parishes. Meanwhile, among those who have participation in their parishes, most of them are members of the Choir.

B. Level of Participation of Students to Religious Activities

Table 1.b. Participation of Students to Religious Activities

| Religious Activities | Overall Mean | Descriptive Value |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Liturgical Celebrations | 2.85 | Moderate |
| Para liturgical Celebrations | 2.68 | Moderate |
| Enrichment Activities | 2.36 | Low |
| Other Religious Related Activities | 3.67 | High |

The findings revealed that the level of participation of the students under liturgical celebrations is moderate. Under this area, the Departmental Mass has the highest level of participation by students followed by Sunday Mass and Special/Feast Day Mass, which are all High. This implies that the Campus Ministry office upholds to the call of the document *Sanscrosanctum Concilium* of encouraging the youth to become fully participative in the Sacred Liturgy to make their faith become living, conscious, and active. Also, it is important to note that the lowest among the activities under liturgical celebrations are Sacramental celebrations such as confirmation and reconciliation/confession due to the poor information dissemination of the Campus Ministry office.

Meanwhile, the findings also showed that the level of participation by the students under Para-liturgical activities is moderate. It can also be gleaned in the result that Rosary Rally, which is being done every October, is the highest among all the activities on Para-liturgical celebrations being attended by the students. Alejo (2008) found a substantial support for this claim telling that people from the Cagayan Valley region holds a strong devotion to Mother Mary due to the presence of the image of the miraculous Lady of Piat. Moreover, most of the respondents of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) stressed that Rosary Rally is one of the activities that students are most excited about because of the human rosary activity. In addition, this study found out that the lowest of all the activities that students being attended to are prayers for the dead and prayers for the sick.

On one hand, the findings revealed that the level of participation of the students on enrichment activities being initiated by the Campus Ministry office is Low. The highest among the activities that students are being participated to is recollection. Sardido [9] stressed that many students are attending recollections and retreats because these activities move the person to become true human in the humanism of religion. And most importantly, in order to live a life in harmony with the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, the findings affirmed the Church document Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on some aspects of Christian Meditation which stated that recollection and retreat are Christian ways to be one with God. Also, every Christian needs certain periods of retreats into solitude to be recollected and, in God’s presence rediscover his path towards Jesus Christ. On the other hand, symposiums/seminars and catechism are the lowest activities being participated by the students under enrichment activities. This is attributed to the fact that only Education students do Catechism since they

have 24 units of religious education subjects (University of Saint Louis, 2014) .Meanwhile, as a result of FGD stressed that many students who are not majoring in teacher education want to become student-catechists but they do not have any ways to participate, except for NSTP 2. In addition, in terms of seminars and symposiums, respondents said that only student leaders are given an opportunity to attend leadership and friendship seminars.

It is important to note that among the four areas of religious activities, other religious related activities have the highest level of participation of students. This implies that students are more actively engaged in mission and community activities rather than on liturgical activities. Results of the FGD claimed that students are more engaged and active when they themselves are the one working and helping the community through outreach activities. This is affirmed by the Church document *Sancrosanctum Concilium* which stated that religious participation cannot not only be seen through Church attendance, but more on taking an active role in changing the society to become better guided with the teachings of Christ. However, there are some concerns raised by the students in the FGD with regards to outreach activities. Most of them said that most of the time, the only participation of students during outreach activities like Alay Pasko is on donation. Many students want to join outreach activities, but only the organizational leaders and SSC officers are the one participating in such activities.

C. Reasons for the Students in Attending Religious Activities

The findings revealed that the main reason why students are attending liturgical activities is to have strength to love and to serve the Lord. The findings support the Church document Catechism of the Catholic Church that people attend Liturgical celebrations to receive graces so that they can become disciples of Jesus Christ and continue his ministry and mission on earth. Further, *Sancrosanctum Concilium* also stressed that participation in the Sacred Liturgy a way for the people to encounter Jesus Christ and with that, people will be given an strength and power to serve God in all strata of humanity. On the other hand, the main reason why students are attending Para-liturgical activities is that they want to give joy and comfort. Results of the FGD of the students claimed that attending activities like these give them an opportunity to share happiness and comfort to the people who are in need. Also, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI emphasized that that the ultimate goal of Para-liturgical celebrations is that people can bring joy and comfort to those who are in need, and to become mediators between God and those who are poor. Further, students are attending enrichment activities primarily because they want to ask forgiveness for God and neighbour. The findings affirm the study of Donlevy (2007) in which he stated that enrichment activities such as recollections and retreats are very important activities that people must attend to since this will give them an avenue to ask for forgiveness and to renew their Christian life again. And lastly, the primary reason why students are attending other religious related activity is to strengthen their compassion to the poor. Dilim and Hipocrito (2013) found substantial support for this findings in which he claims that students of CICM schools are trained to become missionaries and to be one with those who are in need. Also, the findings support the studies of Aduca, Cachola, & Gamboa (2013) proved that students who are engage in religious activities are also found to devote time and energy to a variety of social and outreach activities especially for the poor.

D. Reasons for the Students for not Attending Religious Activities

The findings also showed that the primary reason why students do not attend liturgical activities is that the homily seems irrelevant. Results of the FGD stressed that students observed that they do not understand the meaning that the priest would like to convey. Further, six respondents said that homilies are too long and repetitious. The findings support what

Archbishop Villegas (2014) said that homily must not be long, winding, repetitious, unprepared and irrelevant. But, homily must be simple, priestly sincere, and must be studied. People must see Jesus in the homily so that it can inspire people and sets heart on fire. Meanwhile, under Para-liturgical activities, the main reason why students do not attend such activities is that prayers are simply repeated. Most of the respondents of the FGD said that most of the time, they always hear the same prayers during Rosary Rally and Prayers before Board Exam. Further, they suggested that there must be a variety of prayers so that students will not be bored attending such activities. On the other hand, the main reason why students are not attending enrichment activities is that they are not informed. Most of the responses of the students in the FGD are that they are not aware of the activities because the Campus Ministry bulletin is not updated and sometimes, there are no announcements posted in the bulletin. And finally, under other religious related activities, the main reason why students are not attending such activities is that they have other concerns. Results of the FGD stressed that since most of the time, mission activities happen every weekend, and students claimed that these are the only time that they can work on their projects and requirements, and even have their quality time with their families.

E. Significant Difference on the Participation of the Respondents when Grouped According to Profile Variables

a. Sex

The findings showed that there is a significant difference on the level of participation of the respondents on activities under liturgical celebrations and other religious related activities when grouped according to sex. Under liturgical celebrations, it is important to note that females are more participative rather than males. This is supported with the study conducted by the Pew Research Center [20] in which it was found out that women are more likely to attend Church's liturgies and celebrations than men because Liturgies now have become more feminine and men's lack participation in the Church could revolve around societal gender roles. Meanwhile, along other religious related activities, it is also revealed that females are more likely to participate in such activities rather than males. The finding affirms to the study conducted by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies wherein in it was also revealed that in term of participation, females are tend to attend outreach and mission activities rather than males. Further, Donlevy (2007) stressed that women tend to be more sensitive, more caring and more creative by their nature than men. Hence, it is expected that women will be more involved in activities that strive for the welfare of the community and of the people in need.

b. Age

Results of the Analysis of Variance test revealed that there is a significant difference on the level of participation of the respondents on liturgical activities when grouped according to age. This shows that students whose ages range from 16 years old and below are more likely to attend liturgical activities rather than those students whose ages range from 17 and above. This is supported from a study of Gallup Alejo (2008) which indicated that students are more religious and active on liturgical activities during their early teen years whose age ranged from 13 – 16 years old, and that level of religiosity and participation began to decline when they reached the age of 17-20 years old.

c. School/Department

The findings revealed that there is a significant difference on the level of participation of the students to the different religious activities initiated by the Campus Ministry Office when grouped according to school/department. It was found out that students coming from SEAS are more likely attending religious activities. This is attributed to the fact that education students

have 24 units of religious education and they are required to attend religious activities of the school. Also, they are considered as student-catechists, and hence, they must be the one to model the Catholicity of the institution. Moreover, result of the FGD revealed that most of SEAS students are active ministers of their own parishes and most of the CICM scholars are coming from the SEAS department. In addition Flangan, (1991) stated that students of Liberal Arts have a higher tendency to participate to religious activities because of the training that they get from their teachers: reflective, meditative, and liberal. On the other hand, the findings also revealed that students from the SICS have the lowest participation to religious activities in the school. Result of the FGD showed that SICS students, especially male students prioritized more on playing computer games instead of attending school masses and liturgies. Moreover, the findings affirmed the study of Tindowen, (2015) in which he stressed that of all the disciplines, those students enrolled in computer related courses are the ones who have the lowest level of religious participation and involvement in the Church.

d. Civil Status

Result of the Independent Sample t-test showed that there is no significant difference on the participation of the respondents among the four religious activities spearheaded by the Campus Ministry when grouped according to civil status. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that civil status is not a factor in attending religious activities of students.

e. Parish Involvement

Results of the Analysis of Variance also revealed that there is a significant difference on the level of participation of the students on liturgical activities, Para-liturgical activities, and enrichment activities when grouped according to parish involvement. It was found out that those students who are active ministers of their own parishes are more likely to attend religious activities in the school than those students who do not have any participation in their parishes. The findings support the Church document *The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* which challenged the members to use their special gifts within the apostolate of the Church. Hence, the members should participate and become apostles both in their family communities and in their respective parishes. Moreover, the result of the FGD revealed that students who are lay ministers in their own parishes attend religious activities initiated by the school because they believed that participation is not just merely an obligation to the Church but more on mission and vocation in life. In addition, some of the respondents who do not have any participation in their own parishes expressed their desires to be part of the Church but they do not have any avenue to share their gifts of charism since there are already CICM scholars who are working in the Church.

CONCLUSIONS

The level of Catholicity of students as manifested in their participation in the different religious activities being initiated by the Campus Ministry office is in moderate extent as affected by the variables such as sex, age, school/department where students belong to, and parish involvement. As a Catholic institution, the University of Saint Louis upholds the call of the Church's document *Sancrosanctum Concilium* in the promotion of full and active participation of the members to religious activities. Also, students have the highest participation in mission animation activities and have a lowest participation in the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. And finally, students are attending religious activities to nurture and to enhance their vocation and mission as Christians, and not primarily for the sake of checking of attendance.

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