

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

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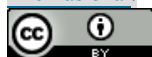
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### ABSTRACT

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.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's society, one important challenge for all the believers is actually posed by the Vatican II document, *Sancrosanctum Concilium*, 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 (Bulatao, et al., 2013).

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 (Congregatio pro Institutione Catholica, 2007). 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.

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* (Abbot, 1966).” 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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. Dilim and Hipolito (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.

## METHODS

This study employed quantitative type of research using a descriptive survey method. The 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.

Participants of the Study

Participants	Frequency	Percentage
Business Administration and Accountancy	150	33.33
Engineering and Architecture	120	26.67
Education, Arts and Sciences	70	15.56
Health Sciences	30	6.67
Hospitality Management	50	11.10
Information Technology	30	6.67
TOTAL	450	100.00

## Research Instruments

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. Also, it involved Focus-Group Discussion (FGD) on the identified respondents to validate the findings of the data.

## Data Analysis

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. 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.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Profile of the Respondents

Table 1.a. Profile of the Respondents

SEX	N	%
MALE	208	46.22
FEMALE	242	53.78
TOTAL	450	100.00
AGE	N	%
16 AND BELOW	11	2.44
17- 18	331	73.56
19 AND ABOVE	108	24.00
TOTAL	450	100.00
SCHOOL/ DEPARTMENT	N	%
School of Business Administration and Accountancy	150	33.33
School of Engineering and Architecture	120	26.67
School of Education, Arts and Sciences	70	15.56
School of Information and Computing Sciences	30	6.67
School of Health Sciences	30	6.67
School of Hospitality and Vocational Education	50	11.10
TOTAL	450	100.00

CIVIL STATUS	N	%
SINGLE	444	98.67
MARRIED	6	1.13
TOTAL	450	100.00
PARISH INVOLVEMENT	N	%
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 *Sancrosanctum Concilium* of encouraging the youth to become fully participative in the Sacred Liturgy to make their faith become living, conscious, and active (Abbot, 1966). 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. Tindowen (2015) 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. Mooney (2010) 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 (Baricaua, 2006). 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 (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1994). 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 (2005) 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 McCleary (2006) 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. Aduca, et al. (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 Wilson (1978), Lunberg (1998), and McCleary (2006) 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 Alejo (2008) 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 Ohio State University (2008) 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 Donlevy (2007) wherein it was also revealed that in term of participation, females are tend to attend outreach and mission activities rather than males. Further, Hazan and Berdого (2002) 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 Lipford (2000) 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 Jeynes (2005) 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 Convey (2013) 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 (Catholic Education Association of the Philippines, 2009). 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.

#### CONCLUSION

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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