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Student name: Michael Dookie

Student ID no.: 86911920

Degree Program: Theology

Supervisor: Dr. Adanna James

Title of Thesis: Exploring the Effects of Postmodernism on the Worldview and Behaviour of Catholics in Trinidad and Tobago.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the effects of Postmodernism on the worldview and behaviour of Catholics in Trinidad and Tobago. The primary aim of this research is to determine if Postmodernism is a likely cause for declining Catholic Mass attendance in the Archdiocese of Port of Spain for the period 2007 to 2019, excluding the effects on Church attendance in Trinidad and Tobago due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown from March 2019. The secondary aim of this research seeks to answer Catholic Archbishop: Charles Jason Gordon's concern about Catholics having contrasting perceptions of Church that cause unhealthy tensions between the priests and the people.

Research for this thesis focused on the philosophical tenets of Postmodernism which investigate show the negative effects of relativism, the deconstructed-self and globalization through media affect the worldview of Catholics in Trinidad and Tobago. Theological information providing the Church's response on the effects of Postmodernism on Catholics from Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI's were also conducted by examining encyclicals and theological documents. To contextualize this research to reality in Trinidad and Tobago, data was gathered via a questionnaire that was designed and sent to Catholics throughout this Archdiocese. Additional data was gathered using unstructured interviews with clerical and lay leaders. The data was analyzed in order to determine if Postmodernism is a cause for declining Mass attendance in Trinidad and Tobago and is also responsible for contrasting perceptions of Church that cause unhealthy tensions between the priest and the people in this Archdiocese.

Key Words and Phrases: **Postmodernism; Declining Catholic Mass Attendance; Contrasting Perceptions; Worldview; Relativism, Deconstruction; Globalization through Media and Archdiocese.**

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ABBREVIATIONS

AbTT	Archbishop of Trinidad and Tobago
ADPoS.....	Archdiocese of Port of Spain
CMA.....	Catholic Mass Attendance
COVID-19.....	SARS-CoV-2
CRA.....	Christian Research Association
IR.....	Industrial Revolution
OPPD.....	Office of Pastoral Planning and Development
PM.....	Postmodernism or Postmodern
PP.....	Pastoral Plan of the Archdiocese of Port of Spain
SC.....	Sacrosanctum Concilium
T&T.....	Trinidad and Tobago

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INTRODUCTION

Pope John Paul II (1978-2005)¹ in an article: On the Eucharist² and the Mass³, stated that it is through the Mass that, “The Lord unites us with Himself through the Eucharist,” and “Eucharistic worship constitutes the soul of Christian life” (loyolapress.com). So crucial is this to Catholics that it has been written into church law which states that “Sunday is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation” (Canon 1246.1). In spite of papal encouragement and canonical insistence, there has been a decline in Catholic Mass attendance (CMA) which is of great concern for the Catholic Church as well as the Archdiocese⁴ of Port of Spain (ADPoS).

0.1: Rationale

Global research conducted by Australia’s Christian Research Association (CRA)⁵ shows that declining Mass attendance is caused by a range of factors attributed to different degrees of religiosity, spirituality, lived experiences and ageing which are underpinned and shaped by societal constructs such as individualism and experientialism (CRA 2010).

¹ The papacy of Pope John Paul II began on 16th October 1978 until his death on 8th April 2005. He was the first non-Italian pope in 455 years and the first from a Slavic country. His pontificate of more than 26 years was the third longest in history. He was canonized in 2014. However, he was born on 18th May 1920 in Wadowice, Poland and given the name Karol Jozef Wojtyla (britannica.com/biography/Saint-John-Paul-II). Accessed 15/11/2020.

² Eucharist is: “The source and summit of the Christian life. The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1324).

³ Mass is: “The celebration of Sunday observes the moral commandment inscribed by nature in the human heart to render to God an outward, visible, public, and regular worship “as a sign of his universal beneficence to all. “Sunday worship fulfils the moral command of the Old Covenant, taking up its rhythm and spirit in the weekly celebration of the Creator and Redeemer of his people” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2176).

⁴ An archdiocese, from the Greek suffix indicating “head” or “ruler,” is a diocese that includes a larger city or an area with a large Catholic population. An archdiocese is headed by an archbishop, and the archbishop of the largest diocese in a region is known as a metropolitan archbishop (www.aletia.org). Accessed 10/2/2021.

⁵ CRA is: “The Christian Research Association, established in August 1992 after a group, formerly the Presbyterian Research work group, decided to re-form as a group with a wider view. It was to become an independent and inter-church body with members drawn from a broad range of denominations” (cra.org.nz). Accessed 10/2/2021

Within the complexity and multiplicity of reasons for declining CMA is the impact from the phenomena known as Postmodernism⁶. In September 2020, American Bishop, Robert Barron⁷ shed light onto the indicated that a mid-20th Century Philosophy known as Postmodernism (PM) went off the academic radar by the 1990's but its effects are emerging and being experienced in societies across the world (You Tube 2020). The effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics, has not been extensively studied as a significant reason for the decline of CMA. It may be possible that the effects of PM are a significant cause for the decline in CMA in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T).

Charles Jason Gordon, the Archbishop of Port of Spain (AbTT) comments in the Pastoral Plan (PP) 2019-2023: "Parish life is marked by contrasting and competing perceptions of Church, which do not lead to cohesiveness and oneness in the Church. As a result, the dynamic relationship between priest and people that ought to exist is often lacking and in its place, unhealthy tensions arise where particular groups become entrenched and all the faithful are not" (6)⁸. As an abstract philosophical ideology, PM itself cannot be scientifically researched but its effects on the worldview of persons can be scientifically researched.

⁶Postmodernism is a late 20th-century movement in philosophy and literary theory that generally questions the basic assumptions of Western philosophy in the modern period from roughly, the 17th century through the 19th century (www.britannica.com/topic/postmodernism-philosophy). Accessed 16/11/2020.

⁷ Bishop Robert Barron is the: "Founder of *Word on Fire Catholic Ministries* and Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. He is also the host of *CATHOLICISM*, a groundbreaking, award-winning documentary about the Catholic Faith, which aired on PBS. Bishop Barron is a #1 Amazon bestselling author and has published numerous books, essays, and articles on theology and the spiritual life. He is a religion correspondent for *NBC News* and has also appeared on *FOX News*, *CNN*, and *EWTN*. Bishop Barron's website, *WordOnFire.org*, reaches millions of people each year, and he is one of the world's most followed Catholics on social media. His regular *YouTube videos* have been viewed over 50 million times and he has over 3 million followers on Face book" (*Wordonfire.org*). Date Accessed: December 10th, 2020.

⁸ Page 6 of the (2019-023) Pastoral Plan of the ADPoS: "It is clear that in our Archdiocese many situations have developed within the parish structure that negatively affect the life of the community, the wider local Church, and consequently national life. "Parish life is marked by contrasting and competing perceptions of Church, which do not lead to cohesiveness and oneness in the Body. As a result, the dynamic relationship between priest and people that ought to exist is often lacking and in its place unhealthy tensions arise where particular groups become entrenched and all the faithful are not truly represented" (Archbishop Jason Charles Gordon).

0.2: Thesis Statement

This research explores how the effects of PM through relativism, the deconstructed-self and globalization through media negatively impact Catholic worldview and behaviour in T&T as a cause for declining CMA and competing perceptions of Church that result in tensions between priests and the people in the ADPoS.

Parameters of Research

0.3: Chronology

This research focuses on the period 2007 to 2019. During this period, the ADPoS recognized the declining trend in CMA and began collecting census data for the purpose of undertaking initiatives to rectify the decline. Under the leadership of three Archbishops: Edward Gilbert (2001-2011); Joseph Harris (2011-2017) and Jason Gordon (2017- present) the decline in CMA still continues to be of great concern.

0.4: Geography

This research is limited to only Catholics in T&T because the ADPoS is the largest in the English-speaking diocese in the Caribbean. The availability of census data prior to the pandemic lockdown was readily obtained from the Office of Pastoral Planning and Development (OPPD). This data revealed there are approximately 285,671 registered Catholics in T&T (2019).

0.5: Themes

The philosophical themes of PM will be limited to three important pillars: relativism that rejects metanarratives, the deconstruction of the-self, and globalization through media. Theological themes will be explored through papal teachings on the importance of truth and the Church's response to the dangers of PM.

0.6: People

Due to constraints caused by the COVID-19, this research is limited to the Catholic community of T&T and excludes other Christian denominations. As an aspirant to the priesthood of the Catholic Church, this researcher wants to understand the significance of the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics and its impact on the socio-religious relationships between the Church and the people.

0.7: Objectives

The aim of this research is to identify and evaluate the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T through two investigative questions.

The main investigative question: Are the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T a significant cause for declining CMA?

The secondary investigative question is: Are the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T a cause for competing and contrasting perceptions of Church resulting in unhealthy tensions between priests and the people?

To research these objectives, the following framework for this investigation was established:

a) Examine the general philosophy of PM according to philosophers: Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Karl Popper and others. Attention will be given to the effects of three pillars of PM on the worldview of humans viz the rejection of metanarratives that cause relativism, the deconstruction of the-self, and globalization through media.

b) Evaluate papal teachings of John Paul II and Benedict XVI in order to theologically assess the points of divergence between the teachings of the Church and the philosophy of PM.

c) Interpret and analyze the data gathered from primary and secondary sources to establish if the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T is a cause for declining CMA and also a cause for contrasting perceptions of Church which result in tensions between priests and the people in the ADPoS.

The findings of this research ought to inspire and generate future research on PM and other philosophical paradigms that shape and influence tensions between the worldview of Catholics and the Church Leadership in the ADPoS.

Methodology

0.8: Data Collection

Data for this research was gathered by use of primary and secondary sources. Primary data sources consisted of questionnaire and interviews. A structured questionnaire was developed and emailed to one hundred Catholics throughout T&T. The questionnaire was designed in a multiple-choice format with predetermined options to choose one response. The questionnaire consists of twenty-five questions that were designed to discover if the worldview of Catholics in T&T is impacted by the effects of three pillars of PM: relativism that rejects metanarratives, the deconstruction of the-self and globalization through media thus causing CMA to decline. In addition, the questionnaire explored if the effects of PM cause contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between priests and their parishioners. Anonymity of the respondents, their parish and their respective parish priest encouraged participation. An encrypted link for the questionnaire was developed and sent via WhatsApp for widespread dissemination and prompt response. Ninety-five to ninety-eight percent of persons responded to the questionnaire.

The investigation was expanded to include persons of clerical and lay leadership in the Church. To facilitate this process, primary data was gathered using unstructured interviews. Two

priests, one lay association leader based in Trinidad and two deputy leaders based in Tobago were interviewed to determine if the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics is a cause for declining CMA and contrasting perceptions of Church that cause tensions between priests and the people in the ADPoS.

Secondary sources of data were used to explore the PM philosophical tenets of relativism, deconstruction of the-self, and globalization through media. Sources of papal teachings were evaluated to provide the Church's response to the effects of PM. CMA data was obtained from the OPPD to confirm the decline in CMA in T&T between the periods 2007 to 2019. Additionally, secondary data was collected from online internet sources as You Tube videos, articles and magazines.

0.9: Data Utilization:

The primary and secondary data used in this research was analyzed to determine if PM is a cause for declining CMA as well a cause for contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between priests and people. CHAPTER ONE is developed from secondary sources of data extracted from philosophical literature on three pillars of PM: relativism, deconstructed-self and globalization through media. CHAPTER TWO draws from the papal teachings of two popes who respond on the Church's position on PM. CHAPTER THREE provides the interpretation and analysis of the primary data gathered through the research questionnaire and interviews with Church leadership. Data analyses utilize a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of interpretation of the data to determine if the effect of PM is a cause for declining CMA and a cause for contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between priests and the people in the ADPoS.

0.10: Research Approach

The research approach for this thesis can be categorized as analytical. The effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics are sub-divided into two parts for investigation and analysis. The main investigative question of this thesis: “Are the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T a significant cause for declining CMA?” is broken into three parts: relativism which rejects metanarratives, the deconstructed-self and the effects of globalization through the media. Similarly, the Church’s response to PM is broken into three parts: the recognition of PM, the truth of the Gospel and the Church beyond PM. The secondary data is analyzed within the context of the primary research data to determine if PM affects the worldview of Catholics that cause declining CMA in the ADPoS. A similar approach is used for the secondary investigative question which analyses the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T as a cause for contrasting perceptions of Church resulting in unhealthy tensions between priests. This question is analyzed from the same pool of data used to answer the primary investigative question.

0.11: Chapter Outline

CHAPTER ONE explores the philosophy of PM. It begins with an exploration of Jean-Francois Lyotard’s foundational philosophy of relativism which rejects metanarratives. This is followed Jacques Derrida philosophical tenets of the deconstruction of the-self. The chapter ends with a review of the philosophy of globalization through media.

CHAPTER TWO explores the Church’s attitude to PM through Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Their theological perspectives will establish the historical context of the Church’s position towards PM. The impact of these papal positions will be explored to determine the level of importance and the recommendation they made about PM.

CHAPTER THREE begins with an analysis of data obtained from the OPPD on CMA in the ADPoS for the years 2007 to 2019. This is followed by an analysis of the data from the questionnaire and the unstructured interviews with clerical and lay leadership in the ADPoS.

The data presented in CHAPTERS ONE, TWO and THREE will be analyzed to determine if the dangerous effects of PM are a significant cause for declining CMA in T&T and a cause for the AbTT's concern over the contrasting perceptions of Church which result in tensions between the priests and the people in ADPoS.

Literature Review

0.12: Introduction

An analysis of the effects of PM on the worldview and behavior of Catholics in T&T require an understanding of the philosophical tenets of PM, the theological position of the Church and the relationship between the two. While general research has been done on the philosophical and theological aspects of PM, no specific research was found on the impact PM has the worldview and behaviour of Catholics in T&T. The context of this research appears to be ground-breaking and fills a void in academia.

This literature review will focus on defining three key references often used in this research: philosophy, theology and PM. This is followed by a review of some philosophical literature on three pillars of PM: relativism, deconstruction of the-self and globalization through media. These three pillars of PM will be developed according to the foundational work of philosophers: Jean-Francois Lyotard (1924-1998), Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) and Karl Popper (1902-1994), as well as the work of other philosophers. The response of the Church to the effects of PM will be reviewed according to literature of Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI (1927-present). This literature review concludes with an analysis of the data to determine if the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T are a cause for declining CMA and the cause for contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between the priests and the people in the ADPoS.

0.13: Key Definitions

Working definitions for key words: philosophy, theology and postmodernism, need to be established. The etymology of the word ‘philosophy’ comes from the Greek word ‘philosophia’. Philosophia combines the prefix ‘philo’ meaning ‘love of’ and ‘sophia’ meaning ‘wisdom’.

Therefore, the literal English translation for philosophy is ‘love of wisdom or knowledge’ (reference.com). Similarly, the word theology is derived from the Greek word ‘theos’ which means God and ‘-ology,’ which is rooted in the Greek word ‘logos’ or “word”. Therefore, theology literally means: “words or the study of God” (Patton, bible.org). Having defined philosophy and theology, the task is more challenging to precisely define PM which is an abstract ideology.

In the book: *After Theory*, Terry Eagleton defined PM as a, “Contemporary movement of thought which rejects totalities, universal values, grand historical narratives, solid foundations to human existence and the possibility of objective knowledge, which tends towards relativism, heterogeneity and pluralism” (13). Eagleton defines PM by its effects on the worldview of humans. The effects of PM will be developed with reference to the work of some philosophers of PM who are foundational to the effects of PM through relativism, the deconstructed-self and globalization through media.

Key Philosophers of Postmodernism

0.14: On Relativism

French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard is considered to be the father of PM by being the first person to use the word PM and develop its key philosophical tenets. In his 1984 book: *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Lyotard referred to PM as a, “Condition of knowledge” and the, “Non-existence of metanarratives⁹” (xxiii; xxiv). Postmodernism denies the

⁹ Metanarrative: “a term developed by Jean-François Lyotard to mean a theory that tries to give a totalizing, comprehensive account to various historical events, experiences, and social, cultural phenomena based upon the appeal to universal truth or universal values. In this context, the narrative is a story that functions to legitimize power, authority, and social customs. A metanarrative is one that claims to explain various events in history, gives meaning by connecting disperse events and phenomena by appealing to some kind of universal knowledge or schema (www.newworldencyclopedia.org/metanarrative). Accessed on 12/11/2020.

existence of universal truths in favor of relativism¹⁰. Research on the philosophy of relativism was done by Paul Copan. In his 2009 book: True for You but Not for Me, Copan states that relativism is a, “Knowledge-denying claim,” which relegates truth to be an opinion that is culturally shaped (12).

0.15: On the Deconstructed-self

Most of Jacques Derrida’s philosophy of Deconstruction is written in French. Derrida is recognized as the father of deconstruction theory. Deconstruction of the-self is referenced from philosophers who extensively studied and wrote on Derrida’s Deconstruction Theory. In the book: Derrida’s Deconstruction of the Subject: Writing, Self and Other, Thea Bellou explains that Derrida deconstructed the phenomenological¹¹ philosophy of Edmund Husserl¹² to arrive at a philosophy of consciousness (17). John Caputo also espoused Derrida’s Deconstruction Theory in his book: Deconstruction in a Nutshell- A Conversation with Jacques Derrida. Caputo referred to Derrida’s philosophy of the deconstructed-self, as an, “Identity without an identity” (113). Deconstruction of the-self asserts that there is no-thing as a stable or permanent identity, a homogenous identity (family or community), or a self-identity. Caputo also mentions that Derrida’s philosophy of the deconstructed-self refers to identity as, “Porous, heterogeneous and an identity that is, different with its-self” (114).

¹⁰ Relativism is generally defined as: “the view that truth and falsity, right and wrong, standards of reasoning, and procedures of justification are products of differing conventions and frameworks of assessment and that their authority is confined to the context giving rise to them. The profusion of the use of the term “relativism” in contemporary philosophy means that there is no ready consensus on any one definition” (plato.stanford.edu/entries/relativism). Accessed 23/11/2020.

¹¹ Phenomenology is: “Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions” (plato.stanford.edu/entries/relativism). Accessed 23/11/2020.

¹² Edmund Husserl (1859-1938): “was the principal founder of phenomenology—and thus one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century. He has made important contributions to almost all areas of philosophy and anticipated central ideas of its neighbouring disciplines such as linguistics, sociology and cognitive psychology” (plato.stanford.edu/entries/relativism). Accessed 23/11/2020.

0.16: On Globalization through Media

Karl Popper is credited with recognizing the phenomena of globalization since 1945 in his book: *The Open Society*. Referring to Popper's concept of the open society, Gabor Steingart's publication: *War for Wealth: The True Story of Globalization or Why the Flat World is Broke*, notes that Karl Popper postulated that: "The open society must first be an open-minded society to avoid a maelstrom of change; and that a nation must subject itself to change before change subjugates the nation" (8). The concept of the open society is a major feature of PM which is referred to as globalization. The impact of globalization is propelled through the media. In his book: *Understanding Media the Extension of Man*, Marshall McLuhan explores the impact of media on the global village. Terhi Rantanen continued research on global media in her book: *Globalization and Media*. Rantanen states that, "Media and globalization go together like a horse and carriage" (1). Throughout her book, Rantanen shows that globalization cannot be fully understood without recognizing the role media plays in sustaining the effects of globalization on humans.

Theological response to PM through the Papacy

Several theologians have written books on the effects of PM, but the Church is dependent on papal guidance to formulate its universal approach and response to matters that affect the lives of Catholics. Though papal response to PM is not very extensive, this does not mean that the Church is not concerned with the dangers of PM on Catholic worldview and behaviour. This literature review features some responses of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI on PM.

0.17: John Paul II

Pope John Paul II was the first pope who officially wrote on PM. In his 1998 Encyclical¹³: *Fides et Ratio*, John Paul II, referred to PM as an, “Age meriting appropriate attention” (IV 91), and it is the, “Task of theology to mediate the content of faith that conceptually clears the way” (92). Recognizing the negative effects of PM on the worldview and behaviour on Catholics, theologian Gerard Mannion in his book: *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in our Time*, also asserts that the Church has the, “Duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel” (3).

0.18: Benedict XVI on the New Homiletic

Benedict XVI is the successor to the papacy after the death of John Paul II in 2005. Similar to his predecessor, Benedict XVI continued the papal response to PM. In addition to the role of theologians to address PM, the Pope’s focus was to directly counter the effects of PM through the preaching role of priests at the Mass.

In 2018, Michael Monshau O.P.¹⁴ wrote an article in the *Antiphon Liturgical Journal*, titled: “The Influence of Pope Benedict XVI Liturgical Initiatives on Preaching Beyond Postmodernity” (Volume 22 No.2). Monshau’s article is grounded in the authority of Vatican II’s

¹³ Papal Encyclical: “The word encyclical comes from Latin *encyclicus* meaning “general” or “encircling”, which is also the origin of the word.” For the modern Catholic Church a Papal encyclical, in the strictest sense, is a letter, usually treating some aspect of Catholic doctrine, sent by the Pope and addressed either to the Catholic bishops of a particular area or, more normally, to the bishops of the world; however, the form of the address can vary widely, and often designates a wider audience. Papal encyclicals usually take the form of a papal brief due to their more personal nature as opposed to the formal papal bull. Papal encyclicals are so famous that the term *encyclical* is used almost exclusively for those sent out by the Pope” ([gutenberg.org/articles/Papal encyclicals](http://gutenberg.org/articles/Papal%20encyclicals)). Accessed 23/11/2020.

¹⁴ O.P. refers to, “The Order of Preachers (The Dominicans) established in 1216 by St. Dominic de Guzman “for preaching and the salvation of souls.”. Following the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of the Order of Preachers, Dominican friars devote their lives to study, contemplation, and preaching” (opeast.org/vocations). Accessed 23/11/2020.

Sacrosanctum Concilium¹⁵ which emphasizes the importance of preaching in the Mass. This resulted in the movement known in Christianity as the New Homiletic. Through the New Homiletic, priests can explore initiatives in their preaching of the Gospel that transcends PM. However, priests are to be aware of the possible danger of intellectual preaching that alienates the congregation.

In the book: *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism*,” Douglas Groothuis boldly asserts that Christianity is a philosophical game, “Reserved for intellectuals” (9). Groothuis confidently defends Biblical Truth (Chapter 3) and explores the Postmodernist Challenge to Theology (Chapter 5). To overcome the potential threat of intellectualism, Gene Edward Veith, Jr.: *Loving God with All Your Mind- Thinking as a Christian in a Postmodern World*, asserts that Christians need to, “Develop the mental faculties of the human mind,” because, “The power to think, to discover, to wonder and to imagine are precious gifts from God” (12). Veith, Jr. argues that it is possible for Christians to, “Engage the contemporary intellectual world without weakening or compromising their faith” (12). This solution creates another problem which contributor David Wells identifies in the book: *The Supremacy of Christ in the Postmodern World*. Wells postulates that the missionary nature of theology in the context of PM needs to understand the relationship between: “Christ and culture” and the “Word and the world” (13).

¹⁵Sacrosanctum Concilium is, “the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy is one of the constitutions of the Second Vatican Council. It was approved by the assembled bishops by a vote of 2,147 to 4 and promulgated by Pope Paul VI on 4 December 1963. The main aim was to achieve greater lay participation in the Catholic Church's liturgy. Sacrosanctum Concilium provides within the framework of restored tradition and sound doctrine, the opportunity to assist the faithful in experiencing more deeply and richly the incarnate wisdom and love of God (simplycatholic.com/why-is-sacrosanctum-concilium-important). Accessed 23/11/2020.

0.19: Conclusion

Further exploration and analysis of the literature identified in the above literature review will contextualize the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T through relativism, the deconstructed-self and globalization through media. This research will reveal how PM impacts upon the worldview and behavior of Catholics in T&T, to be seen a cause for declining CMA and contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between priests and the people in the ADPoS.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1: Introduction

This chapter explores how PM through three of its universal principles: relativism, the deconstructed-self and globalization through media, negatively impact the worldview and behavior of Catholics in T&T. The importance of investigating these three principles of PM will establish their relationship to the pervasive effects of PM on Catholic worldview and declining CMA as well as contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between the priests and the people in the ADPoS.

1.2: Relativism

Jean-Francois Lyotard's 1979 magnum opus: *The Postmodern Condition- A Report on Knowledge*, is foundational to understanding the effects of PM on humanity. Lyotard postulates that: "The status on knowledge is altered as societies enter the postindustrial age and cultures enter the postmodern age" (3). Prior to the Industrial Revolution (IR), knowledge was passed on through an oral tradition of narratives. Lyotard postulates that post-IR; science continuously opposes metanarratives as a source of knowledge. Science views metanarratives as fables and myths that are void of truthful knowledge (3). Lyotard referred to PM as a condition of relativism that is "Incredulity toward metanarratives" (3).

Lyotard believes, "Narration as the quintessential form of customary knowledge," has been interrupted by science which offers a, "Developed or testable form of knowledge," that results in a crisis of truth that weakens social bonds (21). The parameters of science omit the legitimization of metaphysical truth because proof of a transcendental authority cannot be subjected to the scientific method (29). Because biblical narratives are metanarratives, PM through relativism cultivates a worldview of skepticism or rejection of the Bible as a source of

truth. Relativism which rejects the veracity of biblical metanarratives can be a cause of declining CMA as well as a cause for contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between priests and the people in the ADPoS.

In his book: *True for You but Not for Me*, philosopher and theologian Paul Copan stated that the ongoing war between truth and relativism is not new to the 20th Century but, “Its dominance of a culture is new” (3). Consequentially, instead of having a respected and powerful public voice, religion is steered into the realm of the, “Private and the personal” due to the negative effects of relativism (17). Copan further believes that a person’s religion and faith are individual perspectives which should not be investigated as a, “Public truth under the scrutiny of science” (17). Because of the tensions between science and biblical metanarratives some Catholics may be inclined to stay away from attending CMA and this can be a cause for contrasting perceptions of Church resulting in tensions between the priests and the people in the ADPoS

1.3: Deconstruction of the-self

Another feature of PM is the deconstruction¹⁶ of the-self. This concept is immediately connected to what constitutes appropriate behaviour in relation to the-other as espoused in the 1960s by philosopher Jacques Derrida. In the book: *Derrida’s Deconstruction of the Subject: Writing, Self and Other*, Thea Bellou notes that consciousness of the-self, is in reference to the subject’s understanding of his or her identity a Being-in-the world¹⁷. As a Being-in-the-world, a

¹⁶ The philosophy of deconstruction of the self by Jacques Derrida: “consists in an attempt to re-conceive the difference that divides self-consciousness that is the difference of the “of” in consciousness of oneself (plato.stanford.edu/derrida). Accessed 23/11/2020.

¹⁷ Being-in-the-world is a philosophical concept of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) espoused in his book: *Being and Time*. Being-in-the-world refers to “a type of being which is characteristic of humans. This existence is supposed to be oriented towards more growth and meaning. The being is meant to become a state rather than just an activity, while the world in human life means more than just the environment (plato.stanford.edu/ heidegger). Accessed 23/11/2020.

person understands his or her identity of the-self, as a relationship between the-self, and the-other (17). The-other can be referenced as an individual or a group of individuals such as a family or a church community. As Beings-in-the world, the relationship between the-self, to the-other is governed by cultural expectations that are considered as acceptable and appropriate or unacceptable and inappropriate. As the-self, navigates its Being-in-the-world with the-other, interpersonal tensions arise causing instability and changes in the relationship between the-self, and the-other.

Bellou further states that deconstruction of the-self, is based on an, a-priori¹⁸ consciousness of-self, that is primarily preoccupied with the concept of the existence of the-self, and not the-other (17-19). Deconstruction of the-self, from the presence of the-other, presents a challenge to living the virtues and values of Christianity. Pope John Paul II indicates that Christianity requires, “Committing ourselves wholeheartedly to the service of the Church” (Redemptoris Missio¹⁹, 1). The Pope stresses that Christian identity necessitates the serving of the-other, before serving the-self, in order to fulfill the mission given by Christ to Church (1).

Philosopher John Caputo in his book: Deconstruction in a Nutshell- A Conversation with Jacques Derrida, writes about “identity without identity” (112-113). Caputo notes Derrida’s emphasis on the instability of self-identity which is not homogenous throughout time but is in a state of flux (112). Derrida also states that the-self, yearns to relate and assert its-self-identity over the-other which he explained as, “Differance”²⁰ (113). Difference for Derrida is an apparent

¹⁸ A priori In general terms, “a proposition is knowable a priori if it is knowable independently of experience” (iep.utm.edu/apriori). Accessed 23/11/2020.

¹⁹Redemptoris Missio (RM) is “Pope John Paul II's eighth encyclical. Issued on Dec. 7, 1990, it celebrates the 25th Anniversary of Ad Gentes (Vatican II's decree on missionary activity) and the 15th anniversary of Evangelii Nuntiandi (Paul VI's apostolic exhortation on evangelization). RM has the significant subtitle: "On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate" the Pope sounds a clarion and urgent call to all Church sectors to renew their enthusiasm and missionary call to evangelize the world” (Encyclopedia.com). Accessed 23/11/2020.

²⁰Différance is a word made up by Jacques Derrida to further explain “the notion that meaning is derived from difference. "Différance" means to differ and to defer. Thus, the meaning of the word "tree" requires other

pun on ‘difference’ and ‘deferment’. Through language, the-self, differentiates the meaning of words within a system of reference to communicate with the-other. Meaning of words and intention can be delayed or postponed by the-self, thereby causing instability between the-self, and the-other. Pope Francis in his 2021 Encyclical titled: Fratelli Tutti (On Fraternity and Social Friendship) noted that, “Intolerant attitudes towards others are on the rise,” resulting in shameless aggression that has, “Given free rein to ideologies” (42; 45). Differance may be a cause for contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between the priests and people in the ADPoS.

1.4: Globalization through Media

Another pervasive pillar of PM is globalization²¹ through media. Karl Popper postulated that, “No state stands on its own without communication and relationships with other states even if by trial and error” (Steingart, 8-9). This observation by Popper is the essence of globalization. In the book: Understanding Media the Extension of Man, Marshall McLuhan agrees that Popper’s concept of the open society is the option preferred over the, “Tribe of the closed world” (155). In the age of electric technology, McLuhan describes the era of globalized media as the, “Age of Anxiety” (7). Anxiety is characterized by the implosion of media into the lives of the global community which has an insatiable for information or the need, “To know” (7). Easy access to information through multi-media formats such as newspaper, television, radio and magazines generate a plurality of opinions regardless of the, “Point of view” of the sender of the message (7). The plurality of opinions formed through information transmitted via global media is a

signifiers/signifieds for meaning to be established. So, the meaning of "tree" differs to those other words and in a real temporal deferral, the meaning of "tree" is (timewise) deferred to other signifiers (enotes.com/difference). Accessed 23/11/2020.

²¹Globalization is: “A term used to describe how trade and technology have made the world into a more connected and interdependent place. Globalization also captures in its scope the economic and social changes that have come about as a result of global interdependence” (www.nationalgeographic.org/globalization).Accessed 23/11/2020.

characteristic of PM that may result in conflicting perceptions of Church resulting in unhealthy tensions between the clergy and the people.

Terhi Rantanen, a professor of global media and communications also indicates that, “Globalized media transcends time and space to connect people across international borders” (44). Like McLuhan, Rantanen nuanced that globalized media has the, “Effect of shaping peoples’ behavior and attitudes at all levels in the global community” (1). Rantanen notes that, “Media formats such as: print, audio, visual and digital multimedia formats, do not necessarily share the same ideologies but they are forces that are capable of uniting or dividing families, communities and nations through the global dissemination of information” (44). Arising out the plurality of opinions caused by global media, Rantanen notes one negative effect, “Global media decreases the importance of religion as a source of knowledge” (44). Religion is no longer a main source of knowledge and this may influence the worldview of Catholics to have contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between the priests and the people in the ADPoS.

1.5: Conclusion

The information presented above shows that the effects of PM through relativism, the deconstruction of the-self, and globalization through media are three universal principles that shape and influence the worldviews and behavior of human beings. These negative consequences of PM may also be significant reasons that may cause CMA in ADPoS to decline as well as conflicting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between the priests and the people. The theological responses of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI will be explored to assess the Church’s response to effects of PM.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

This chapter surveys the responses of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI who address the negative effects of PM. John Paul II acknowledges the existence of PM and the role of theologians in educating the Church of the dangers of PM. Benedict XVI offers priests a twofold strategy to deal with the effects of PM. The information presented in this chapter will attempt to link PM as a cause for declining CMA in the ADPoS and to establish PM as a cause for the AbTT's concern of contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between priests and the people.

John Paul II

Pope John Paul II in his 1998 Encyclical: *Fides et Ratio*²², acknowledges the existence of PM as the, "Age of Postmodernity," that is, "Widespread, powerful and capable of producing, lasting and important change" (IV: 91). Though the term PM remains elusive and ambiguous to define, the Pope acknowledges PM as having a dangerous impact on the worldview and behaviour of humanity. The Pope stated that due to PM, "The times of certainties are irrevocably past and humans are to learn to live in a horizon of a total absence of meaning or at best ephemeral" (91). He also states that, "Certitudes of faith are not exempted from the destructive effects of PM which promotes and justifies a sense of nihilism that opposes creation and truth thereby resulting in the temptation of despair" (91).

²² *Fides et Ratio*: "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth -- in a word, to know himself -- so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves (cf. Ex 33:18; Ps 27:8-9; 63:2-3; Jn 14:8; 1 Jn 3:2), ([catholic-pages.com/documents/fides et ratio](http://catholic-pages.com/documents/fides-et-ratio)). Accessed 23/11/2020.

Throughout different historical epochs, theology through its understanding of Revelation²³ has always had to, “Mediate the Church’s Deposit of Faith²⁴ to various cultures in appropriate ways” (92). In the era of PM, theology has a dual task: to renew methods for more effective evangelization; and theology must also look to the, “Ultimate truth which Revelation entrusts to it” (92). Armed with renewed methods of evangelization and the truth of Revelation, theologians can challenge the destructive elements of the philosophy of PM with, “Certain faith in the Truth which is the living God and his plan for salvation revealed in Jesus Christ” (92).

Theologian Gerard Mannion points out that the Church has a responsibility to, “Interpret the signs of the times and interpret each epoch in accordance with the truth of the Gospel” (3). The language used by the Church to communicate the realities of each era to its respective generation needs to be accessible, intelligible and practical so that Christians may understand and respond to challenges in the world. Mannion observes that theologians cannot neglect to inform Christians of the dangerous effects of PM on their lives and its impact on the Church (15). Mannion also cautioned theologians to avoid the pitfalls and confusion associated with PM through relativism (15).

Relativism can lead to, “Indifference towards religious doctrines in plural societies and language games, whereby words have a multiplicity of meanings that may dilute the message of the Gospel” (15-16). If the Church does not respond to the negative effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics, community worship in the form of the Mass could become a tradition of

²³ Revelation: “The theological definition of revelation deals with how God has revealed himself to humanity, or in other words, how he has made himself known. Theologians generally distinguish God's revelation in two ways: Public, and Private revelation” (theopedia.com/revelation-of-god). Accessed 11/12/2020.

²⁴ Deposit of Faith: “The Catholic Church defines the “Deposit of Faith” as the teachings of the Catholic Church that are handed down since the time of the Apostles through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition” (atholicdoors.com/faq/qu564). Accessed 12/12/2020.

the past. This may be a cause for declining CMA and a cause for contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between priests and the people in the ADPoS.

Benedict XVI

In his response to the dangerous and pervasive effects of PM on the worldview of humanity, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, the successor to John Paul II continued to pay attention to PM by further developing the foundational work established by John Paul II. Benedict XVI drew from the Vatican II Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) that was promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1963. Michael Monshau O.P. indicates that Benedict XVI's first strategy against the dangerous effects of PM was inspired by Paragraph 52 of SC²⁵. Benedict XVI urged priests to focus on frequent use of homilies during the liturgical year in order to, "Expound on the mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life from the sacred text" (SC, 52).

Monshau indicates Benedict XVI's second strategy was to move the Church, "Beyond PM through the homily" (191). To achieve this, the Pope urged homilists to be faithful to the, "Church's Magisterium in the spirit of inspiring the congregation to understand with heart and mind the mysteries of the redemptive process that transform lives through the Gospel" (191). This New Homiletic²⁶ requires shifting liturgical focus away from the horizontal secular

²⁵ Paragraph 52 of SC: "By means of the homily the mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life are expounded from the sacred text, during the course of the liturgical year; the homily, therefore, is to be highly esteemed as part of the liturgy itself; in fact, at those Masses which are celebrated with the assistance of the people on Sundays and feasts of obligation, it should not be omitted except for a serious reason" (www.vatican.va).

²⁶ New Homiletic: "Most homileticians ascribe singular credit for inaugurating the New Homiletic specifically to Fred Craddock of the faculty of the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, who was an ordained minister of the Christian church (Disciples of Christ). In 1971, he authored *As One Without Authority*.⁴ This work was destined to become heralded as ground zero for the hearer-centered, inductive, narrative, postmodernist preaching movement that would be known as the new homiletic" (Michael Monshau O.P.- *The Influence of Pope Benedict XVI's Liturgical Initiatives on Preaching Beyond Postmodernity*, pg. 188).

ideology of PM to emphasize the vertical relationship between God and humanity as individuals and communities.

Christian philosopher Douglas Groothuis states that, “Truth itself does not decay” but its “Decay is rooted in the philosophical and sociological setting of culture” (15). The essence of truth has been the subject of great debate throughout human existence. This debate echoes Pilate’s question to Jesus, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). The contemporary Church’s response to Pilate’s question on truth is recognized in Benedict XVI’s call for priests to inspire their congregations in order to transform their lives from the decay of truth which is at the heart of the culture of PM. However, the effects of relativism which rejects metanarratives are contained in Scripture may negatively influence Catholic worldview to cause declining CMA and contrasting perceptions of Church which result in tensions between the priests and the people in the ADPoS.

Many theologians believe that the negative effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics can be counteracted by a style of homiletics which reminds Christians that the Word of God is truth in itself. Truth inspires faith in the Word of God, which can overcome PM’s negative effects of relativism on worldviews. Gene Edward Veith, Jr. believes that, “Christians can help to transform the debilitating effects of relativism which distorts the identity of the-self, often seen through global media” (149). Veith Jr. believes that the Gospel is the foundation on which Christians can create a culture of truth, because God is the source of truth (149).

Conclusion

Based on the information presented in this chapter, Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI recognized that PM negatively affects the worldview of Catholics. These effects of PM present pastoral challenges to the clergy and the faithful. In addition to recognizing the dangers of PM, the Popes urged theologians and priests to preach the Gospel as the source of truth that will

counteract the fallacies arising from PM. The ADPoS may not have yet recognized the dangerous effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T. The data gathered in this research will be analyzed in the following chapter to show that there is a relationship between the effects of PM on the worldview and behaviour of Catholics in T&T. This data will be analyzed to show the relationship between PM and declining CMA in ADPoS as well as contrasting perceptions of Church that cause tensions between priests and the people in T&T.

CHAPTER THREE

Introduction

This chapter is an analysis of the data gathered through interviews and questionnaire to determine if the effects of PM through relativism, the deconstructed-self and globalization through media are a cause for declining CMA and contrasting perceptions of Church that cause tensions between priests and the people in the ADPoS. The first task is to confirm the rate of decline of CMA by reviewing the data provided by the OPPD. Thereafter, the data gathered from the questionnaire and the interviews will be quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed to determine the significance of the effects PM on the worldview of Catholics that may result in declining CMA and in the ADPoS. The final part of the data analysis will analyse the pool of data to determine if PM is a cause for contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between the priests and the people in the ADPoS.

Analysis of Data

OPPD: CMA Statistics in ADPoS (2007-2019)

Between the period 2007 to 2019, the ADPoS conducted six (6) CMA censuses throughout Catholic parishes in T&T. In 2007, CMA data was collected over one weekend. Subsequent data was collected at each Sunday Mass for the period of one month in 2010, 2012, 2013, 2017 and 2019. The OPPD collated the data to determine the trend of CMA by vicariate²⁷ in T&T (A.1). The data gathered by the OPPD shows a general decline in CMA between 2007 to 2010 and 2012. There is a minor increase in CMA for 2013 compared to 2010 and 2012, but not equaling or exceeding CMA in 2007. The years 2017 and 2019 show a decrease in CMA compared to 2013. Therefore, CMA in the ADPoS has declined by 19.3% for the period 2007 to

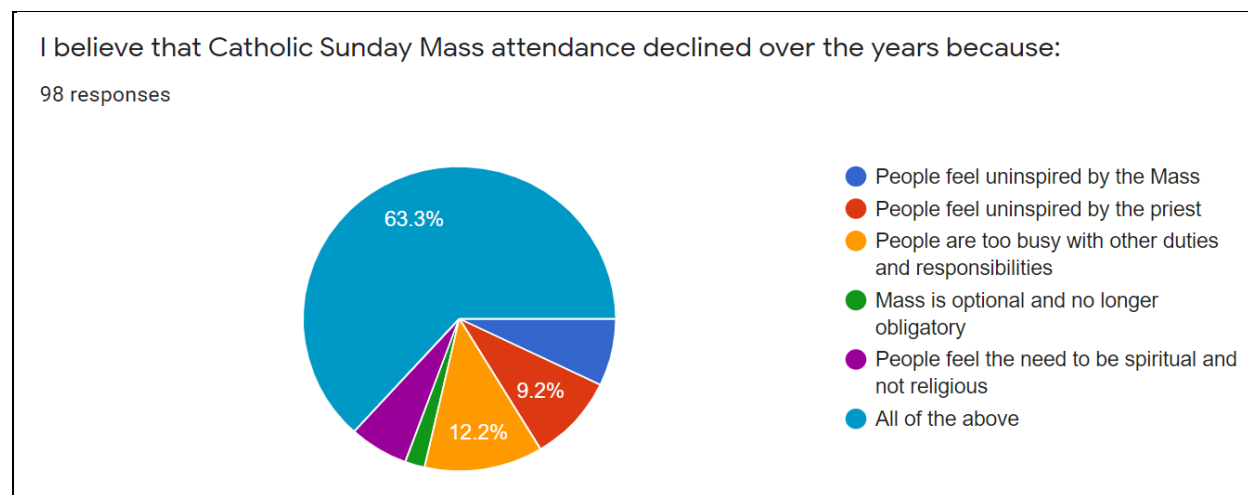
²⁷A Vicariate is a group of parishes within an Archdiocese, defined by geographic area for the purposes of administration (www.cmvic.net/what-is-a-vicariate). Accessed 22/3/2021.

2019 (A.2). The following analysis of the data obtained from a structured questionnaire and unstructured interviews will reveal if there is a relationship between PM and declining CMA in the ADPoS for the period 2007 to 2019.

Effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics the ADPoS

In response to the issue of declining CMA attendance in the ADPoS, the data obtained from the research questionnaire (Appendix B) reveals that 63% of the respondents believe that CMA in T&T declined over the years (see below: C.15). The majority of respondents believe that CMA declined in T&T due to a combination of factors such as: persons feeling uninspired by the Mass and/or the priest; persons being too busy with other responsibilities; the Mass being an option not an obligation; and persons not seeing the need for being religious but being spiritual.

C.15



Further analysis of the data will determine if the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T is causing a decline in CMA in the ADPoS.

Relativism in the ADPoS

In CHAPTER ONE, it was established that relativism according to Jean-Francois Lyotard is a principle of PM that denies the veracity of metanarratives. In CHAPTER TWO, it was seen that Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI called upon priests and theologians to confront the negative effects of PM through the metanarrative of the Gospel. Data gathered from the questionnaire (Appendix B), will be analyzed to determine if relativism is a cause for declining CMA in ADPoS.

Approximately 63.3% of the respondents believe that the world is characterized by a decline in absolute truth and traditions (C3.14). This data supports Lyotard's tenet of PM, relativism rejects universal truths. The negative effects of relativism are further revealed whereby 52% of persons trust their own intuition compared with only 8.2% trusting that of religious leaders (C 3.4). This finding shows that the strategy of Pope Benedict XVI to counteract the effects of relativism by urging priests to preach the Gospel which the Church believes is a certain truth is necessary and important. The data also shows that 73.5% of respondents believe that their worldview is shaped by a combination of several factors such as: life experiences, education, religion, family, friends and media, while only 6% of respondents attributed religion to shaping their worldview (C 3.13). The data strongly indicates that the worldview of the majority of Catholics in T&T is shaped relativism and not the metanarrative of religion.

The data in (C 3.15) reveals that 63.3% of Catholics are uninspired by the Mass and/or the priest, too busy to attend Mass and that the Mass was considered to be an option and not an obligation. Due to the dangerous effects of relativism, Catholics in T&T do not adhere to Church's teaching in the Catechism of the Catholic Church which requires CMA as obligatory

on Sundays (2185). Therefore, due to the effects of relativism, it can be argued that Catholics in T&T have a PM worldview that can result in declining CMA in the ADPoS.

Deconstruction of the-Self in the ADPoS

Deconstruction of the-self is another feature of PM that affects the worldview of persons. The data generated from the questionnaire (Appendix B), shows that 70.1% of persons believe their concept of self is always changing (C 3.5). This finding is consistent with Jacques Derrida's observation that the identity of the-self is always changing (Caputo, 112). Additionally, 73.5% of respondents agree that their worldview is shaped by multiple factors including: life experiences, religious experiences, parents, family and friends and the media (C 3.13). Similarly, 58.3% of persons believe they are best defined by their family values and 28.9% felt their self-identity is due to personal achievements, compared to 9.3% of persons believing that religious leaders shape or influence their defining qualities (C3.6). The data also reveals that 52% of respondents trust their intuition while only 8.2% trusted the intuition of religious leaders (C 3.4).

The data above indicates that the majority of Catholics surveyed in the ADPoS believe that their concept of-self, is always changing due to influences of family, friends and media; and religion is not as strong an influence on the-self's identity. The data in (C3.4) shows that most Catholics surveyed trust their own intuition over that of religious leaders which supports Derrida's concept of Difference. Difference states that the-self, tends to assert its-self-identity over the-other (Caputo, 112). Only 41% of the Catholics surveyed committed themselves to attend the Sunday Mass (C 3.10). The data presented shows that the inconstancy of the deconstructed-self is another principle of PM that affects the worldview of Catholics which can result in declining CMA in the ADPoS.

Globalization through Media in the ADPoS

Globalization through media is another characteristic of PM that can negatively affect the worldview of persons. The data shows that 59.2% of the respondents rely on the internet to verify or obtain information when in doubt, while only 11.2% consult professional expertise and 5.2% consult the Bible (C 3.9). Additionally, 73.5% of persons acknowledge that media plays a role in shaping shape their worldview (C 3.13).

Interviews with Fr. Anthony Buaful and Fr. Arnold Francis also confirm that the media can have negative effects on shaping the worldview of Catholics in T&T. Fr. Buaful indicated: “If mainly negative things are said about the Catholic Church via media, then people would eventually believe it and this will negatively affect their beliefs and behaviour” (Appendix D). Fr. Francis believes that the negative effects of media on the worldview of Catholics can cause many to not see “The Church is a pillar of truth” (Appendix E). Fr. Francis also stated that “Through the media, the plurality of culture creates a way of thinking so that everyone has his or her own narrative and are not necessarily interested in the truth” (Appendix E).

The data reveals that globalization through media is a powerful principle of PM that shapes the worldview and behaviour of Catholics in T&T. The propensity to use the internet for fact checking indicates humans desire to seek information that is true. However, some information obtained via internet sources can be untrue. The data also shows that few Catholics in the ADPoS are willing to consult professionals such as priests; while most Catholics surveyed prefer to believe in the plurality of truth and reject the Church as a pillar of truth in preference for truth mediated relativism through the media (C 3.9). The data in this research is consistent with the observation of Professor Terhi Rantanen, who notes that global media in PM results in, “Decreasing importance of religion as a source of knowledge” (44). If global media erodes the

importance of religion as a source of knowledge; and most Catholics in the ADPoS feel uninspired by the Mass and/or the priests; and they also believe that CMA is optional and not obligatory, then the impact of global media is a cause for declining CMA in T&T (C 3.15).

Contrasting Perceptions & Tensions in the ADPoS

In addition to the problem of declining CMA in the ADPoS, the AbTT identified in the 2019-2023 PP: “Parish life is marked by contrasting perceptions of Church, which do not lead to cohesiveness and oneness in the Body. As a result, the dynamic relationship between priest and people that ought to exist is often lacking and in its place unhealthy tensions arise” (A.1). The data collected from this research will be analyzed to determine if the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T is a cause for contrasting perception of Church that result in tensions arising between the priests and the people in the ADPoS.

Relativism: Perceptions & Tensions in ADPoS

Data from the questionnaire (Appendix B) reveal that 63.3% of respondents believe that a feature of the present world is the decline in absolute truth and traditions (C 3.14). Only 32.3% of respondents believe the Catholic Church is a source of truth; while 35.4% of persons believe that truth is contained in other religions and that it is acceptable for them to worship in other religions, whereas 32.3% of persons prefer being spiritual to being religious (C 3.11). Most respondents: 72.5%, strongly agree and somewhat agree that the Mass is a social construct while only 7.6% of persons strongly believe that the Mass is not a social construct but possibly a divine construct (C 3.7). Data obtained from interviewing Dawn Comissioning and Yvette Phillip of ELC in Tobago indicate that, “A household in Tobago is made up of many religions so there is a level of religious indifference to truth and traditions” (Appendix F, 3). Therefore, the data strongly

indicate that relativism is a condition of PM that causes contrasting perceptions of Church which lead to tensions between the priests and the people in the ADPoS.

Deconstruction: Perceptions & Tensions in ADPoS

In his response to the effects of PM on the Church in T&T, Fr. Arnold Francis indicated that, “PM is characterized by relativism, individualism and media” which shape the worldview and behaviour of Catholics in T&T (Appendix E). He also stated that through the influences of PM: “Some parishioners are inclined to be individualistic and self-centered by disregarding the importance of the welfare of the parish and the wider community” (E, 1: ii). Fr. Francis’ view of the effects of individualism is consistent with Derrida’s deconstruction of the-self, through Differance. Differance is a philosophical concept which states that the-self tends to assert its-self-identity over that of the-other (Caputo, 112).

The-self, through its use of language and/or actions, seeks to assert its identity as an individual independent from the community. This causes the-self, to be perceived as more important than others in the community thereby, undermining the communal building efforts of priests. The 2019-2023 PP of the ADPoS is concerned with the problem of contrasting perceptions of Church that lead to tensions between priests and the people. (6). The data shows that individualism is a condition of PM whereby the-self, deconstructs from the-other in Catholic communities resulting in contrasting perceptions of Church that cause tensions between the priests and the people in the ADPoS.

Globalization Through Media: Perceptions & Tensions in ADPoS

Deborah De Rosia, leader of the Eternal Light Community indicates that: “Media networks bombard persons with information that influence, motivate, shape and reinforce a PM worldview” (Appendix G). After 49 years of lay ecclesial community service and leadership, De

Rosia notes that, “Catholics are not Bible people and do not see the Bible as a source of truth.” De Rosia believes that, “Global media broadcast and publish content that dominate the minds of Catholics who are not formed and informed by the Bible” (G). De Rosia also laments that, “Media promotes individualism and secularism which influence young adults to be absent from Mass and Church activities (G). The data shows that 59.2% of respondents use the internet to verify information compared to 7.2% using the Bible (C 3.9). The data shows that global media reinforces the negative effects of the PM principle of relativism that affects the worldview of Catholics to be a cause for contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between the priests and the people in the ADPoS.

Conclusion

Statistics from the OPPD of the ADPoS shows that CMA has declined by 19.3% from 2007 to 2019. The analysis of data in this chapter shows that PM through the principles of relativism, the deconstructed-self and globalization though media does negatively affect the worldview of Catholics in T&T to be a cause for declining CMA and contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between the priests and the people in the ADPoS.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that PM negatively affects the worldview of Catholics in T&T and is a cause for declining CMA and contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between the priest and the people in the ADPoS. Though PM is an abstract ideology that eludes a comprehensive definition, its principles of relativism, the deconstruction of the-self, and globalization through media are measurable attributes that were philosophically, theologically, quantitatively and qualitatively researched and analyzed.

The phrase PM was coined by Jean-Francois Lyotard. Lyotard identified the negative effects of relativism which rejects metanarratives as sources of knowledge. Jacques Derrida espoused philosophical insights into the deconstruction of the-self, which is an identity that is always changing. Karl Popper was foundational with his concept of the open society which is the precursor to the phenomena of globalization which affects worldview through media. In response to the negative effects of PM, Pope John Paul II called upon theologians to research and guide the Church through the era of PM. Pope Benedict XVI continued to encourage theologians and priests to use homiletics centered on the truth of the Gospel to counteract the negative effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics.

The data gathered through the questionnaire and the unstructured interviews were analyzed to confirm the effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T is a cause for declining CMA and contrasting perceptions of Church that result in tensions between the priest and the people in the ADPoS. Further research is required to determine how the ADPoS can effectively counteract the negative effects of PM on the worldview of Catholics in T&T in order to stop declining CMA and prevent contrasting perceptions of Church so the relationship between priests and the people can be improved.

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APPENDIX: A

Mass Attendance Data from the OPPD T&T (2007-2019)

A.1: CMA DATA by VICARATE (2007-2019)

VICARIATES	Mass Attendance March 2007 (1 weekend)	Average Attendance 2010	Average Attendance 2012	Average Attendance 2013	Average Attendance 2017	Average Attendance 2019
CENTRAL	4,188	3,823	5,950	3,783	4,223	3,921
EASTERN	8,526	6,319	3,904	6,017	7,007	6,756
NORTHERN	18,269	12,149	11,247	15,989	13,489	12,811
SOUTHERN	9,437	5,833	7,028	8,281	7,525	7,384
SUBURBAN	8,414	8,735	8,023	9,046	8,233	7,810
TOBAGO	-	-	-	712	763	723
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>48,834</u>	<u>36,859</u>	<u>36,152</u>	<u>43,828</u>	<u>41,240</u>	<u>39,404</u>

A.2: SUMMARY 2007 vs 2019

	2007	2019	% CHANGE
No. of clergy	60	84	40
Average age clergy	56	56	
Clergy over 60 years old	24	35	45.8
No. of Catholics	289,460	285,671	-1.3
Ratio of Catholics/clergy	4,824	3,401	-29.5
Mass Attendance	48,834	39,404	-19.3

Regards

Gary Tagallie

Office of Pastoral Planning and Development

Offices of the Chancery

RC Archbishop of Port of Spain

27 Maraval Road

Port of Spain

1 (868) 396-2499

APPENDIX: A



The Archdiocese of
Port of Spain

A.3: Extract of Archdiocese of Port of Spain Pastoral Plan 2019-2024 (pg.6)

ADPoS (page 6 of Pastoral Plan 2019-2023).

The Current State of Parish Life

It is clear that in our Archdiocese many situations have developed within the parish structure that negatively affect the life of the community, the wider local Church, and consequently national life.

- Parish life is marked by contrasting and competing perceptions of Church, which do not lead to cohesiveness and oneness in the Body. As a result, the dynamic relationship between priest and people that ought to exist is often lacking and in its place unhealthy tensions arise where particular groups become entrenched and all the faithful are not truly represented.
- Hospitality needs to be more comprehensively and robustly developed at all levels.
- At the moment, clusters generally are not working. The 'cluster' arrangement must be evaluated from the perspective of the parishioners and not only from that of the priests involved.
- There is also a lack of mechanisms to regenerate life and evaluate the work of our parishes.
- Emergent groups, especially those involving youth, are also stunted by a destructive culture of exclusivity. The attitude of some priests, too, who have been at times high-handed, has also posed problems for the faithful.
- Homilies need to be much better developed and delivered.
- Inadequate leadership training and development for both priests and lay ministers.

The consequences of these issues are: no sense of growth; declining numbers at Mass which negatively impacts the morale of priests; lack of appreciation and widespread ignorance of the Sacraments, particularly Baptism and the Eucharist; an unwillingness to collaborate; and an absence of the fire that must enflame the heart, mind and imagination of our people.

APPENDIX: B

Questionnaire

You are requested to answer the following questions based on your memory before the COVID19 lockdowns and restricted access to Church. Please answer all questions. Thank You.

Answer ALL the following questions by indicating the most appropriate response .

Male () or Female (); Age Range: 18-25 (); 26- 40 (); 41-55 (); 56- 70 (); 70+ ()

1. Have you ever heard of the term post-modernism? YES () or NO ().
2. Who do I consider myself to **MOST** trust? _____
(A) Religious Leaders (B) Scientists (C) My own intuition (D) All perspectives
3. The social factor which **MOST** affected my childhood understanding of self is: _____
(A) School (B) Family (C) Church (D) Friends
4. The person/s who **MOST** influenced your concept of self is/are: _____
(A) My mother and/or father (B) School Teachers (C) Parish Priest (D) Friends
5. Self- concept is something that is: _____
(A) Only felt (B) Impossible to control (C) Always changing (D) A, B, C
6. Which of the following is **MOST** dangerous to one's self esteem, motivation and understanding of self? _____
(A) Lack of parental love (B) Not attending Church (C) Arrogance (D) Not enough money
7. I believe that I am **BEST** defined by my: _____
(A) My personal and social achievements (B) My Religion (C) My family values (D) My looks
8. Before the COVID19 lockdown and restricted access, I attended Sunday Mass:
(A) Once per month (B) Every Sunday (C) Sometime (D) On special occasions
9. I feel that the Mass is a social construct: _____
(A) Strongly agree (B) Somewhat agree (C) Somewhat disagree (D) Strongly disagree
10. I attend Mass: _____
(A) Out of duty (B) To please others (C) When I feel the need to (D) I don't attend Mass

APPENDIX: B

11. Truth can be obtained from: _____
(A) Personal experiences (B) School (C) Church (D) A, B, C
12. If I suspect that the something is untrue, I always **FIRST** fact check by using the: _____
(A) Internet (B) Professional expertise (C) the Bible (D) Family and friends
13. Each day there are so many things to get done; if the Sunday Mass was shorter, I would always attend: _____
(A) Yes (B) Maybe (C) Not if I have other things to do (D) No
14. I believe that truth is. _____
(A) Absolute (B) Relative (C) Convenient (D) Conditional
15. After the homily or sermon, I feel: _____
(A) Inspired (B) Confused (C) Tired (D) I don't remember what was said
16. The homily or sermon is: _____
(A) Too Long and Drawn out (B) Too Academic (C) Well delivered (D) Quickly forgotten
17. If I attend Sunday Mass, I do so because: _____
(A) Of my parents/spouse (B) I have to (C) I want to (D) Of friends (E) **A, B, D**
18. If I believe that all religions contain equal truth therefore, I am free to also: _____
(A) Worship in other Religions (B) Leave the Catholic Church (C) Worship at my Church Only
(D) Be Spiritual and not religious
19. I think my Parish Priest is: _____
(A) Caring (B) Impatient (C) Too Academic to Understand (D) I Don't Know Him
20. **My world-view** (how I see and understand the world) is shaped by my: _____
(A) Life experiences (B) Education (C) Religious belief (D) Parents, family and friends
(E) Media (F) **A, B, C, D, E**
21. The **MOST** important thing for me on Sunday is: _____
(A) Spending Time with Friends and Family (B) Sleeping, Study or Work (C) Mass (D) Liming
22. I feel that the Ten Commandments are: _____
(A) 10 options based on culture (B) Not Applicable to Catholics (C) Relevant today
(D) I believe if it feels good, do it.

APPENDIX: B

23. A feature today's world is the decline of absolute truth and traditions: ____
(A) I agree (B) I somewhat agree (C) It does not matter to me (D) I disagree

24. I own a Bible: _____
(A) Yes (B) No (C) Online Version only (D) It is not important

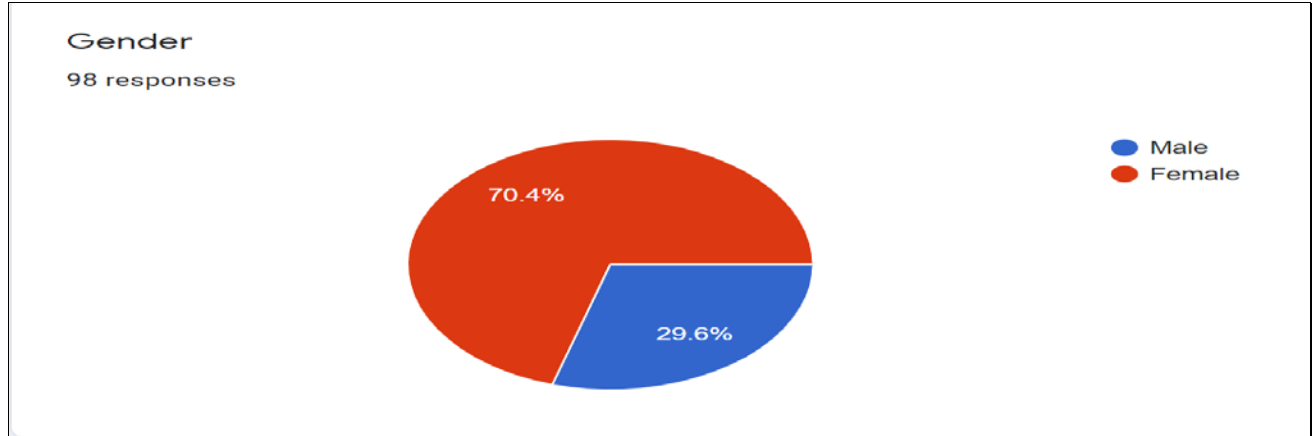
25. I believe that Catholic Sunday Mass attendance declined over the years because: ____
(A) People feel uninspired by the Mass
(B) People feel uninspired by the priest
(C) People are too busy with other duties and responsibilities
(D) Mass is optional and no longer obligatory
(E) People feel the need to be spiritual and not religious
(F) All of the above

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

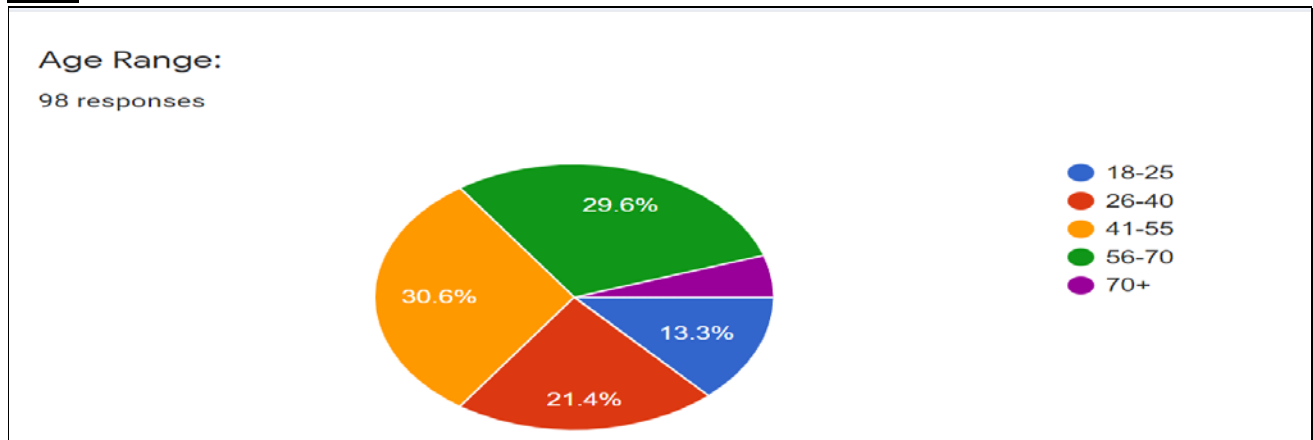
APPENDIX: C

CHARTS

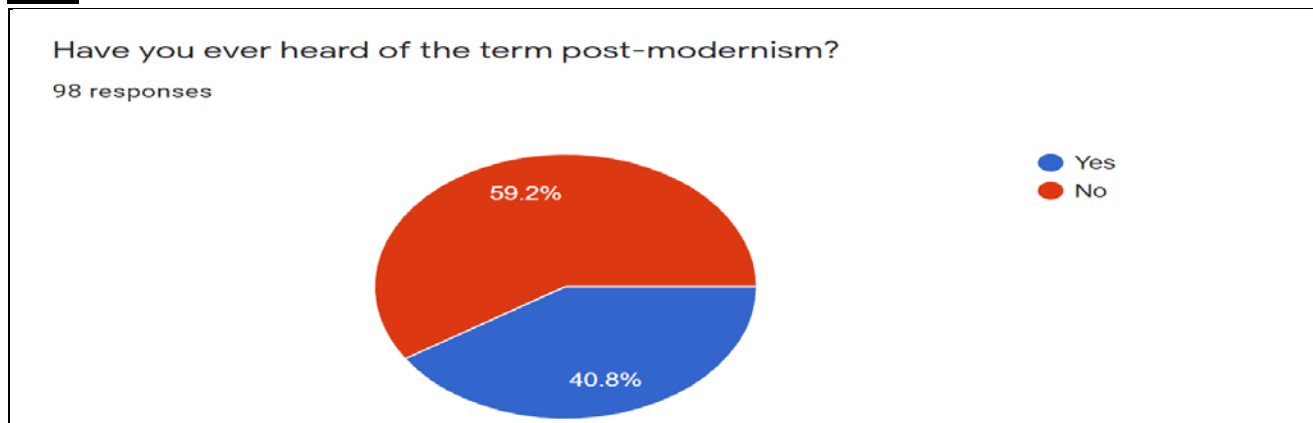
C 3.1



C 3.2



C 3.3

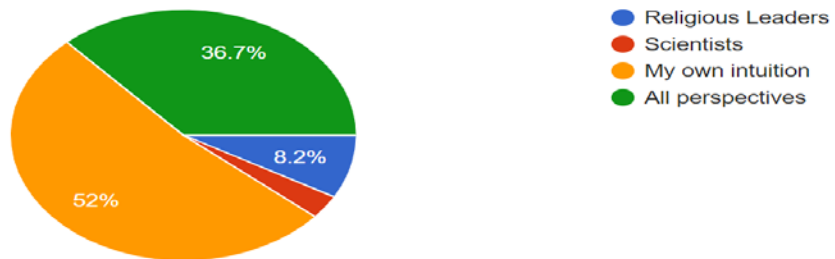


APPENDIX: C

C3.4

Who do I consider myself to MOST trust?

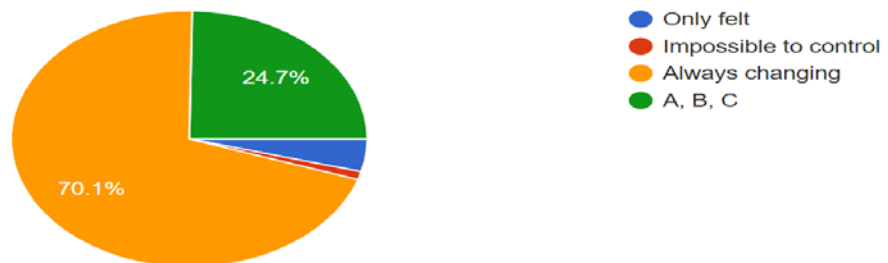
98 responses



C 3.5

Self- concept is something that is:

97 responses



C 3.6

I believe that I am BEST defined by my:

97 responses

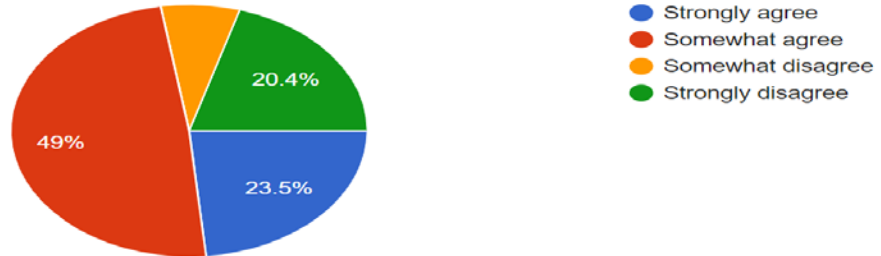


APPENDIX: C

C 3.7

I feel that the Mass is a social construct:

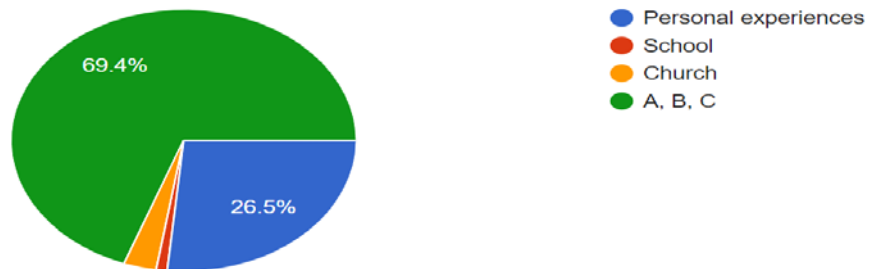
98 responses



C 3.8

Truth can be obtained from:

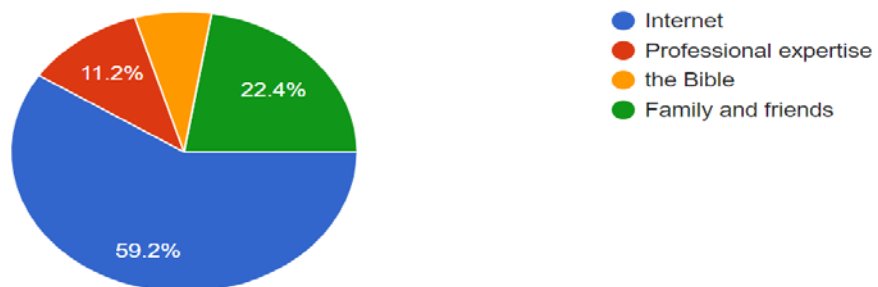
98 responses



C 3.9

If I suspect that something is untrue, I always FIRST fact check by using the:

98 responses



APPENDIX: C

C 3.10

Each day there are so many things to get done; if the Sunday Mass was shorter I would always attend:

95 responses



C 3.11

If I believe that all religions contain equal truth therefore I am free to also:

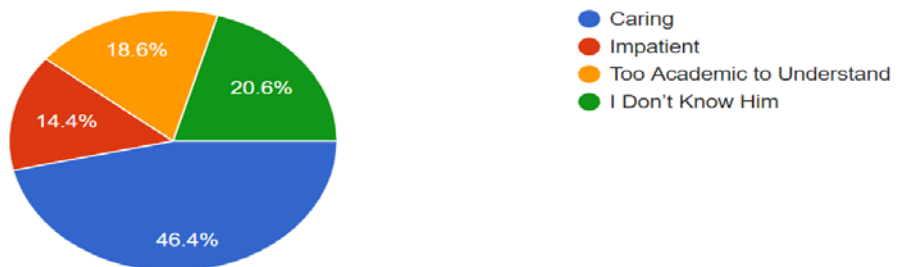
96 responses



C 3.12

I think my Parish Priest is:

97 responses

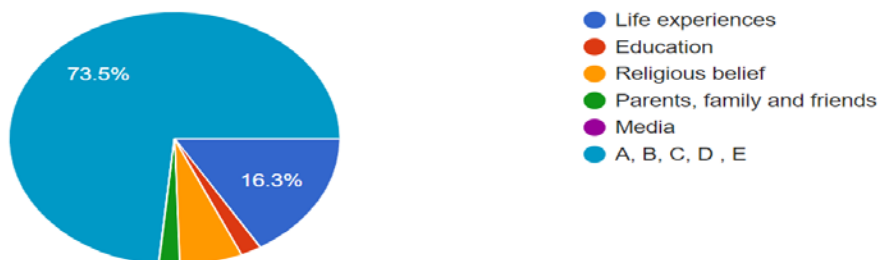


APPENDIX: C

C 3.13

My world-view (how I see and understand the world) is shaped by my:

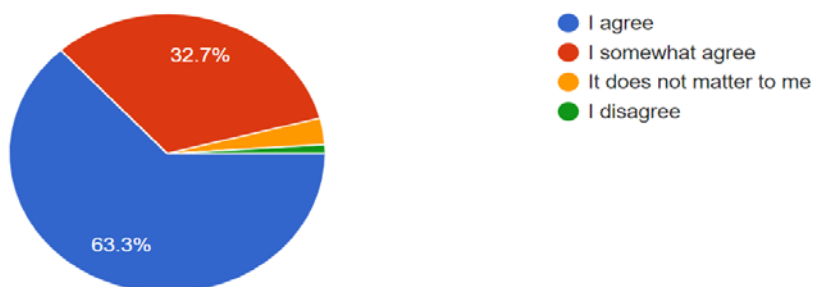
98 responses



C 3.14

A feature of today's world is the decline of absolute truth and traditions:

98 responses



C 3.15

I believe that Catholic Sunday Mass attendance declined over the years because:

98 responses



APPENDIX: D

Michael Dookie interview with Fr Anthony Buaful: **Transcribed Excerpts of Unstructured Interview: 3/12/2020**

1. **Question:** Do you agree that Postmodernism has caused a decline in Mass attendance?

Response: Yes, and Mass attendance will continue to decline because many young people reject absolutism of Church ideals and discipline.

2. **Question:** why do you think young people reject absolutism?

Response: Rejection of discipline begins at the home. Parents have absolute control over their children as minors. They say to their children: “go and shower now, get ready now, go to Church, go to confirmation class,” without explaining anything. Many young adults who come for counselling complain of this and rebel against authority i.e., parents and the Church.

3. **Question:** How significant is the Church in shaping the worldview of Catholics?

Response: The Church’s teachings are seen as inflexible. Unwilling to accept that level of authority, many persons seek validation and truth outside of the Church and turn to friends, work colleagues and the world in general for the answer to their questions. Therefore, the Church is an option that is the least preferred option for shaping the worldview of many Catholics.

4. **Question:** What role has the global media played in shaping the worldview of Catholics, and is this a source of influence that causes persons not to attend Sunday Mass?

Response: “The media plays a major role in shaping the worldview of everyone, Catholics not exclusive to its influence. While not all negative, the media encourages a plurality of views, used as a platform to attack the Church and can distract, obstruct and influence persons to not attend Mass. If mainly negative things are said on media about the Catholic Church and the values of Christian living, then people eventually believe it and it negatively impacts on their beliefs and behaviour.” This can cause a great amount of frustration for priests, “people do not listen to the advice of priests.”

APPENDIX:E

Michael Dookie interview with Fr. Arnold Francis: Transcribed Excerpts of Unstructured Interview: 21/1/2021

1. **Question:** Is Postmodernism (PM) a factor responsible for declining Mass attendance in T&T?

Response: PM is a serious problem that is presently confronting the Church.

2. **Question:** In what ways do you see PM affecting the Church?

Response:

- i. PM is characterized by relativism, individualism and media. Priests represent the Church which is a pillar of truth. Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the world falling under: “the dictatorship of relativism.” In some cases, priests are giving their personal opinions and beliefs rather than the teachings of the Church. Other instances, parishioners undermine the authority of priests by showing a lack of respect for priests.
- ii. Due to PM, some parishioners are very individualistic and self-centered with little regard for the importance of parish and community.
- iii. Through the media, the postmodern culture creates a way of thinking so that everyone has his or her own narrative and not necessarily interested in the truth.

3. **Question:** What is the Church’s response to the effects of PM?

Response: I believe the Church has not taken the issue of PM seriously. The Church is not teaching persons how to cope with the effects of Postmodernism and how to critically assess PM.

4. **Question:** Is PM causing conflicting perceptions of Church that cause tensions between priest and people?

Response: Yes. The Church is the mystical Body of Christ on earth and the Mass is celebrated with reverence by Priests. Many persons are seeking a ‘feel good’ experience which is synonymous with entertainment. Refusal to accept and challenge the sanctity of the celebration of the Mass and the style of homilies often results in conflict between priest and the people. Some people stay away from Mass and attend on occasions while others go to other churches. People have fallen prey to the: “dictatorship of relativism” as said by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010. The Church has to seek ways to evangelize the culture of PM which is rampant in the worldview of Catholics.

APPENDIX: F

Michael Dookie interview with Eternal Light Community Co-Administrators for Tobago:

Dawn Comissiong and Yvette Phillip

Selected Extract of Unstructured Interview: 5/1/2021

⋮

1. **Question:** Is there a decline in Sunday Mass attendance in Tobago?

Response: Yes, but not very significant or noticeable. Only 3% of Tobagonians are Catholic. Eternal Light Community (ELC) assists with the Delaford Parish. The other parish is Scarborough.

2. **Question:** Are you concerned that Sunday Mass attendance could decline in large numbers as seen in Trinidad?

Response: The presence of ELC in Tobago is to work with the people of the Island in the absence of a Parish Priest to keep the faith tradition alive and the people, especially young Catholic adults aware and motivated of the importance of Church and the Mass.

3. **Question:** What are some of the problems that concern ELC and negatively affecting Sunday Mass attendance?

Response: Family in a household made up of many religions so there is a level of religious indifference to truth and traditions. Also, the example set by mothers and fathers not attending Sunday Mass are negatively influencing attendance of children at Mass. This will get worse as the children get older.

APPENDIX: G

Michal Dookie interview with Deborah De Rosia: Leader of Eternal Light Community: Selected Extract of Unstructured Interview: 7/1/2021

1. **Question:** Has Postmodernism (PM) caused a decline in Sunday Mass attendance?

Response: Yes, it has. We live in a time of choices and Church has become an option for some. Some persons are no longer symbols of truth but are agents of hypocrisy. This is seen in the lifestyle and choices of parents who no longer see the Word of God as a source of truth in their lives, but they conveniently choose what to believe. These values are passed on to children who live what they see, so attending Sunday Mass is an option.

2. **Question:** What do you believe is an influential force that is shaping the worldview of Catholics?

Response: Media and communication networks bombard with music, and information that influence, motivate, shape and reinforce a worldview that is Postmodern. Catholics are not bible people and do not reference the Bible as a source of truth. So mass media and its contents dominate the mind which is not formed and informed by Scripture. Homes no longer holy spaces, absence of traditions such as sacred heart picture, crucifix and family prayer. There is a clear dichotomy between family and Church resulting in an absence of family participation in both Church and community building activities.

NB: Deborah De Rosia has been the leader of the Eternal Light Community for the past 49 years.