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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EXODUS OF YOUNG ADULTS AFTER THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (ARCHDIOCESE OF PORT-OF-SPAIN) OVER THE LAST DECADE WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE NORTHERN VICARIATE.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the rite of confirmation as a medium for understanding and creating long term subsistence for young adults in the church, within the context of Trinidad and Tobago with the special focus on the Northern Vicariate, largely due to historical, theological, psychosocial and cultural factors. This study was prompted by the fact that no previous theological studies in the Caribbean had examined the factors that influenced long term subsistence for young adults in the church and provided solutions to combat these factors.

Data was collected from primary and secondary sources. A simple random sampling method was used to select a sample of 100 young adults between the ages of fourteen to twenty-five who responded to a questionnaire. Some adults who were directly involved in the rite of confirmation namely priests, parents, catechists and the candidates themselves were interviewed to gather more insight on the topic presented. Analysis of the collected data was done in order to answer the research question: Can the rite of confirmation be a medium for understanding and creating long term subsistence for young adults in the church, within the context of Trinidad and Tobago with the special focus on the Northern Vicariate, largely due to historical, theological, psychosocial and cultural factors. Based on the data analysis, the rite of confirmation can be a medium for understanding and creating long term subsistence for young adults in the church within the context of Trinidad and Tobago. The study concludes that, though the rite of confirmation has fulfilled its mission in the past, some elements of the curriculum needs to be revised to effectively achieve its purpose in transmitting the faith.

Keywords: Confirmation, Rites, Holy Spirit, Initiation, Sacrament, Catholic.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS-----	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT-----	5
LIST OF FIGURES-----	6
LIST OF APPENDICES-----	7
INTRODUCTION-----	8
Thesis Statement-----	9
Rationale-----	9
Parameters-----	9
Objectives of the study-----	10
Methodology-----	11
Chapter outline-----	14
CHAPTER 1-----	14
LITERATURE REVIEW-----	14
HISTORICAL FACTORS-----	17
Rituals in Religious Initiation-----	17
Anthropological Origin of Ritual-----	18
CHAPTER TWO -----	19
THEOLOGICAL FACTORS-----	19



The Rites of Initiation-----	19
How is Confirmation Revealed in the Plan of Salvation? -----	20
How was the Holy Spirit Communicated to the Whole Human Race?-----	21
PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS -----	22
Secularism-----	23
CULTURAL FACTORS -----	24
CHAPTER THREE -----	27
Final analysis and recommendations-----	27
CONCLUSION -----	29
WORKS CITED -----	31
APPENDIX A	34
Statistical Report of Confirmation Figures over the last twenty years-----	34
Questionnaire-----	35
APPENDIX B -----	39
Images and photos.....	39



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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: A Venn diagram showing the relationship between Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation -----	20
Figure 2: Graph Showing Results the Duration Period of The Confirmation Classes from the Questionnaire-----	39
Figure 3: Graph Showing how well Candidates understood the Doctrine-----	40
Figure 4: Graph Showing Group Involvement Post-Confirmation from the Questionnaire--	41
Figure 5: Graph Showing Candidates Age at Confirmation-----	42
Figure 6: Anointing of Candidate by Archbishop Jason Gordon-----	43
Figure 7: Photo of Laying of Hands-----	44



LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Statistical Report of Confirmation Figures over the last twenty years-----	34
Questionnaire-----	35
Interviewees/Respondents-----	36

APPENDIX B

Images and Photographs-----	37
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INTRODUCTION:

The Catholic Church in Trinidad and Tobago (Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain), from under the spiritual leadership of the Archbishop appointed by the universal head -Pope in Rome is part of the worldwide Catholic Church. In the Roman Catholic Church there are seven sacraments that the church considers essential. Though all of the seven sacraments play a vital role in the formation and the strengthening of one's faith; three of these sacraments are considered sacraments of initiation into the family of Christ. They are namely Baptism, Communion and Confirmation.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 'Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*) and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, and are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water and in the word' CCC, #1213 (Chapman, 276)¹.

In the sacraments of Baptism, Communion and Confirmation the candidates are nurtured under the guidance of their parents and their God parents. In the sacrament of Confirmation, though the candidates are still nurtured under the guidance of their parents, at this phase the young adults are encouraged to accept responsibility for their faith and destiny necessary for growing in the body of Christ. As a result of today's fast-paced world that offers nonstop information and entertainment through the internet and the overwhelming constant voices that provide entertainment, it has become a challenge for young adults to remain steadfast and to live according

¹ CCC-Catechism of the Catholic Church



to their faith. The number of Catholics that did the rite of Confirmation that attend church and are involved in church ministry after the sacramental rite continue to decline annually.

THESIS STATEMENT:

The rite of confirmation can be a medium for understanding and creating long term subsistence for young adults in the church, within the context of Trinidad and Tobago with the special focus on the Northern Vicariate largely due to historical, theological, psychosocial and cultural factors.

RATIONALE:

Although the average number of confirmed young adults have been consistent over the last decade, there have been a challenge to maintain their attendance and involvement in church ministry. As a result of young adults decreased attendance and involvement in ministry in the church; in light of being empowered with the Holy Spirit and with reference to particular scholarly materials on Confirmation, this research seeks to examine and discuss this sacramental rite as a medium for understanding and creating long term subsistence for young adults in the church, within the context of Trinidad and Tobago largely due to historical, theological, psychosocial and cultural factors.

PARAMETERS:

The period 2010-2019 was chosen for this study because of the significant decrease in the number of candidates who did the rite of confirmation, compared to the previous decade 2000-



2009. The total number of Catholic Confirmed candidates overall for the period 2000-2009 were 22, 585 whereas the period 2010-2019 the total number were 13, 022. ²

My area of focus is the Archdiocese of Port of Spain specifically Trinidad and Tobago which is the largest Catholic community in the English-speaking Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago is made up of two main islands and 21 smaller islands, which has an area of 5128 square km and a census population of 1, 223, 916 inhabitants (2011). The catholic community comprises of under 264, 365, which represents a percentage of 21.6 of the total population according to the 2011 census.³

On the 30th April 1850, Pope Pius IX changed the Vicariate into the Archdiocese of Port of Spain with authority over St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada and Tobago and with Roseau, Dominica as its suffrage see. The entire country is managed as the Archdiocese of Port of Spain, which is divided into six regions known as vicariates namely Northern, Southern, Central, Eastern, Suburban and Tobago. Each vicariate is headed by a regional episcopal vicar.⁴

The Archdiocese of Port of Spain- was chosen for this research since it is the main diocese in the Caribbean region. The Northern Vicariate is responsible for majority of the parishes and is particular populated with young adults. This research would highlight some of the issues that impact their survival in the Catholic church and examine some of the factors that influence their decision to remain involve in church ministry after the rite of confirmation. This study was partly

² See Appendix A,

³ catholicct.org

⁴ catholicct.org



based on the responses of (young adults, both male and female ages between 14 to 25) and interviewees who had participated in the rite of confirmation.

The target group were 50 persons who having done the rite of confirmation yet remain actively involved in attendance and church ministry and 50 persons who do not attend and or participate in church after the rite of confirmation. In the Catholic Church there is also another process known as RCIA- the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults which also bring people into full communion with the Catholic Church. Both the rite of Confirmation and RCIA is a formation process by which a person is initiated through the sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion and Confirmation; resulting in the person being formed in faith.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This work is primarily intended to identify the religious and spiritual aspects of the confirmation rite in relation to young adults in the Roman Catholic Church. It intends to examine what influences young adults to remain steadfast in their faith in relation to those who are no longer attend or are involved in church ministry. The study also intends to assess the impact of parent's involvement in church ministry and its relevance to young adult Catholics.

Another objective of this study is to explore possible solutions that may assist in rectifying the problem in the future.



METHODOLOGY:

Data was collected from primary and secondary documentary sources which include published books, and published articles from the archives of the Catholic News Newspaper, Trinidad and Tobago. Primary data collection was obtained by sources through questionnaires, personal and telephone interviews with persons from various parishes. These sources included persons affiliated with religious education and in the field of Catholic formation. The questionnaires were completed by individuals who had participated or were directly involved in the confirmation programme. The questionnaires were presented in the form of a document both via soft and hard copy, which required participants to answer questions and submit the completed forms. Interviews were engaged orally. The interviewees were catechists, members of the clergy, parents and young adults- post confirmation candidates who are all familiar with the rite of confirmation. Secondary data were obtained from online texts, statistics reports, journal articles, websites and books.

Through the probability sampling technique, the sample size was selected using the simple random sampling method. This method was opted because it is the one “ in which all members of the population has a pre-specified and an equal chance to be part of the sample,... guarantees that each and every individual off the population has an equal selection opportunity...[which] helps to reduce the probability of bias”.⁵ The sample were both male and female.

⁵ Surbhi, S. “Difference between probability and non-probability sampling”



Data collection utilization was through a literary study all the concepts on the rite of confirmation and its impact on young adults in the Roman Catholic churches. This involved reading, interpreting, examining and analyzing the already existing scholarly materials on the rite of confirmation and then discussing it using a hypothetical approach. The guiding question was: Can the rite of confirmation be a medium for understanding and creating long term subsistence for young adults in the church, within the context of Trinidad and Tobago with the special focus on the Northern Vicariate largely due to historical, theological, psychosocial, and cultural factors.

After reading and examining the existing data it was clear there was some points of agreement and disagreement in the opinions of previous authors and interviewees on the matter. The agreements were assessed and expanded on which resulted on the hypothesis: Yes, the rite of confirmation can be a medium for understanding and creating long term subsistence for young adults in the church, within the context of Trinidad and Tobago, largely not only to religious/theological factors but also to historical, psychosocial and cultural factors.

The method of data collection espoused was likely to pose a threat of bias to the validity of data obtained because some participants/ young adults pursued the rite of confirmation not of their free will but under the influence of their parents/ guardians. Some of the attendees joined the preparation classes for the sole purpose of socializing among peers while others attended because they were sent by their parent/ guardian. Others could not be completely honest about their personal sentiments about the rite of confirmation. To alleviate this, persons were encouraged to be honest in their responses. Some persons however, never responded to the questionnaire. From the questionnaires of 100 persons, only 62 responses were received.



CHAPTER OUTLINE:

This study consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 presents a review of literature on the topic study. Theories, work done by other authors, journals and online articles are discussed. The chapter assesses the meaning of confirmation and its relationship and its impact on the Christian community. The historical factors of rites in religious initiation and the anthropological origin of ritual. Chapter 2 discusses the impact of the confirmation rite on young adults. It presents theological factors in relation to the rites of initiation, how the confirmation rite is revealed in the plan of salvation and how the Holy Spirit is communicated to the whole human race with special emphasis on the spirituality of the sacraments. Psychosocial and cultural factors that influences young adults in their everyday lives are also conferred in this chapter. Chapter 3 discloses some solutions that may help curb this exodus of young adults. This will include a general analysis and conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

The etymology of the term “confirmation” is derived from the Latin word **confirmatio**, which means strengthening, consolidation (Schnonborn, 181).⁶ Confirmation, like Baptism and the Eucharist, is one of three sacraments of Christian initiation in the Roman Catholic Church. Chapman asserted that “sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and

⁶ YOUCAT



entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed” CCC#1131 (259)⁷. This etymology is the foundation for understanding the rite of confirmation and its significance in the lives of young adults; on whom this sacrament is bestowed.

“The confirmation ceremony is interpreted as a celebration of Christian maturity, both in an individual and psychological sense and in a social and moral sense: it is communal recognition that those who are confirmed have personally accepted the faith that was once accepted for them (when they were baptised) and is an ecclesiastical call for them to take up the responsibility of being adult disciples of Christ in the world (Martos, 202). According to Martos, “The earliest Christian community experienced what is believed to be the spirit of God and understood itself to be guided and empowered by that spirit (186).” The Jewish Christians also lived in expectant faith for the coming of the messiah, who would pour out God’s spirit on all the Israelite people and the Gentiles as well (Act 10: 44-48) who will in turn manifest the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Some scholars, both Catholic and Anglican have agreed that a large percentage of young adults, though having made their confirmation have not been continuous in their attendance in church and some have left altogether. In this covenantal sacrament, the candidates profess to share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ. When the candidates are anointed with chrism and hands are laid upon them during the rite of confirmation, they receive the ‘mark’ - the seal of the Holy Spirit CCC#1296 (Chapman, 292). Confirmation is meant to empower young adults and make them one in Christ; however, some also experience a decisive struggle to remain faithful.

⁷ “Catechism of the Catholic Church”



Fr. Mark R. Francis from the United States stated that many pastoral ministers have experienced many adolescents turning away from the faith after the rite of confirmation and sometimes for the rest of their lives. Fr. Francis quoted, “In September 2015 the Pew Research Center reported the sobering statistic that more than half of adults raised Catholic have left the church at some point in their lives.” He further stated that the end of the catechetical period of instructions marks the ‘graduation’ from practice of the faith.

Michael Marchal asserted that, “ Young people today have many groups and clubs at their disposals, and so confirmation seems to legitimately scare many adolescents away.” As a result, a large segment of those confirmed regard the ceremony as the liberation of religious education classes, and some may even use this opportunity to explore their other options.

Kathleen Cahalan gives a non-debatable view that for successful confirmed candidates there must be parental involvement. She is adamant that parents must be involved for any sacrament to make sense. Her goal for the complete success of the program, is to provide opportunities for sharing faith experiences between the adult and teens; so that teens can make the transition into adult faith. In other words, there must be clear visible lived experiences, for the young adults of the community providing a context in which their faith can be examined, tested and strengthened. True experiences of confirmation depend on a community of support that helps candidates to know themselves.

Fr. Martin Sirju referred to “Confirmation as the sacrament of exit”. He stated that though the world had indeed advanced through digital technology, the sacramental life of the church has



declined. He quoted that the “sacraments had little meaning to some and for some it had no meaning”. For him “the sense of sacred space and sacred moments are rapidly declining.” For him people are no longer searching for spirituality in the Church anymore.

Having examined the scholarly articles, I found them to be relevant to my topic, with some supporting data. However, the researches were done in the United States and Caribbean countries. Therefore, this study was done to examine the rite/ritual of **confirmation** within the context of Trinidad and Tobago and its impact on young adults.

HISTORICAL FACTORS

RITUALS IN RELIGIOUS INITIATION

In every society, there are distinct rituals practices and customs. Some of these rituals are sacred and others are secular. Catherine Bell quoted Asad’s concept that a “ritual is a type of practice found in all religions and even outside religion, it involves expressive symbols intrinsic it to the sense of self and workings of society (259).⁸ Ritual in any culture is a regular practice and its ceremonies are mostly in human life cycles as passage rites. Rituals mark important life events that moves a person from one stage all position two another. Bell adopted Robertson Smith notion that “ritual is the primary component of religion, and it fundamentally serves the basic function of creating and maintaining a community”(4).⁹ In religious rituals individuals participates in sacred acts. The sacredness of ritual practice is meant to draw human beings into a relationship especially

⁸ Talal Asad; an anthropologist.

⁹ William Robertson Smith (1846-1894); a gifted linguist and Old Testament scholar.



with the transcendent and with one another. In other words, ritual seeks to connect the relationship between God and also between each other. All these beliefs of ritual are shared with the rite of confirmation.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ORIGIN OF RITUAL

The origin of ritual and its related patterns can be traced back to the very existence of human beings. According to Bell, “human beings have been involved in virtual activities of some sort since the earliest hunting bands and tribal communities about which we have information. Yet it is only in the late nineteenth century that people began to perceive all such activities under the rubric of ‘ritual’ and identify them as ‘data’ against which to test theories concerning the origins of religion and civilization (1). Bell also stated that religious ritual is characterized only by a manner of acting, which clearly makes it distinct and sets it as powerful and important from other actions. According to her, “activities that explicitly appeal to supernatural beings are readily considered to be examples of ritual, even if the appeal is a bit indirect” (155, 156-159).

To maintain the conservation of cultural traditions and create a bridge between individuals and community, rituals are practiced. This in turn leads to the transformation and formation of a community. The ritual actions express and create relations of power between individuals and societies. Its principal aim is to form and express personal and communal identity. The rite of confirmation is also meant to transform individuals and their community through the transmission of cultural traditions.



CHAPTER TWO

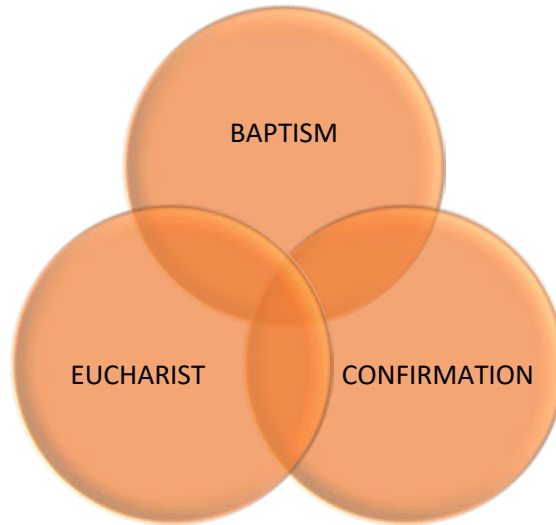
THEOLOGICAL FACTORS

THE RITES OF INITIATION

According to Chapman, “Baptism, the Eucharist and the sacrament of Confirmation together comprises- the sacraments of Christian initiation” CCC (Chapman, 289). These three sacraments are interrelated; working in unison to bring about the fullness of Christ Jesus in each baptized individual. All are symbols; these ritual signs make something else present. Confirmation symbolizes the Holy Spirit’s mission in the world, and the Christian’s participation in that mission. Placing confirmation immediately after baptism thus joins the gift of the Spirit to the mission of Jesus. Sharing the baptismal ceremony, confirmation celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit now at work in the new Christian. The confirmation of new Christians depends so much on baptism that the two are celebrated together (Turner, pg. 6). This initiation is that process by which a person comes into mature faith in the Catholic community.



A Venn diagram showing the relationship of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation



HOW IS CONFIRMATION REVEALED IN THE PLAN OF SALVATION?

Confirmation helps express the church's teaching on salvation. It celebrates the activity of the Holy Spirit in individual members, stimulating them to bear witness to the faith and foster the growth of the church. In the Old Testament, the coming of the Holy Spirit was prophesied in Isaiah 11:1-3, "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord..." (Coogan et al, 984). In the New Testament, the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Jesus at his Baptism by John the Baptist, which took place in Matthew 3:13-17, was a sign that Jesus was the Messiah the Christ, the one sent by God the Father. The son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit and his whole mission was carried out in communion with the Holy Spirit whom the Father gives 'without measure' CCC



#1286 (Chapman, 290)¹⁰. The Holy Spirit was not to remain with the Messiah but was to be communicated to the whole human race CCC#1287 (Chapman, 290).

HOW WAS THE HOLY SPIRIT COMMUNICATED TO THE WHOLE HUMAN

RACE?

Those who have been baptized have been “born again” of water and the Holy Spirit (John 3). They have received the life brought by Christ (John 6: 16, 15). And have thus become adopted children of God, members of the family of God, heirs of the kingdom of heaven, co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8). In fulfillment of Christ’s will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the spirit completes the grace of Baptism. The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church CCC#1286-128 (Chapman, 290). The anointing highlights the name ‘Christian’, which means ‘anointed’ and derives from Christ himself whom God ‘anointed with the Holy Spirit.’ The rite of anointing has continued ever since, it signifies and imprints: a spiritual seal¹¹ [CCC # 1293].

In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Bishop is the usual celebrant and the priest/s is the co-celebrant. During the celebration the Bishop extends his hand over those to be confirmed and call upon God to send his Holy Spirit. The power of the Bishop to confer the Holy Spirit was connected to his direct relationship with the apostles; since the apostles laid hands on converts in

¹⁰ John 3:33-36 (Coogan et al).

¹¹ “The Sacred Chrism, or oil, is a sign of the Holy Spirit being given to the newly baptized.”



the New Testament. Those who are baptized and confirmed receives a special strength of the Holy Spirit. The life of those baptized in faith should be a response to the self-communication of God. The life of the confirmed person is required to witness to the life of Christ in this world. It is a call to become a visible and effective witness to the coming of the reign of God.

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS

The period of transition between childhood and adulthood has been marked as adolescence (Erickson, 128). According to the work of Eric Erikson, this period is marked by the struggle between Identity vs. Role Confusion (235)¹²; during this period Confirmation students also enter their course of study. During this time, the students “primary concerns of how they appear in the eyes of others and seeking an acceptable sense of belonging” are predominant during this period (Erickson, 128). It is during this period that are discerning issues relating to fidelity and loyalty, that they delve into questions related to their future in the body of Christ. These internal exertions contest with expected outcomes of the Confirmation instructions. Erikson stated, “At this time, however, the adolescent fears a foolish, all too trusting commitment, and will, paradoxically, express his need for faith in loud and cynical mistrust” (129).¹³ As a result seeking a decisive conclusion at this stage may be premature.

For many young people, adolescence is also a time of discovering who you are as an individual person. This usually would take the form of attempting a variety of ideas, ideals and

¹²“ Childhood and Society”

¹³ “Identity: Youth and Crisis”



identities, before deciding upon one that would connect to their core being. Our modern world culture, technology, economic or ideological trend facilitates abundant opportunities to explore multiple identities thus failing to reach an authentic true self. According to Erikson, “To keep themselves together they temporarily overidentify, to the point of apparent complete loss of identity, with the heroes of cliques and crowds” (Erikson, 235) Though the rite of confirmation has imparted values and identity formation, the challenge remains that the young adult would repel any environment that may prevent their sense of identity.¹⁴

SECULARISM

Modern age has demonstrated an opposition to Christianity and have protested against the church, which has resulted in a world that is mediocre to any demonstration to Christian living (Kasper, 8). Kasper postulated that the modern age has reacted against Christianity in an attempt to attain autonomy and find his ground within himself (8). The Antilles Episcopal Conference-Bishops of the Caribbean Pastoral Letter, entitled “On the Ministry of Catechesis” quoted that “Secularization is defined as an historical process of social, cultural and political emancipation by which organized society is freed from the control/ dominance of religious institutions and symbols (2).¹⁵ This development has been referred to as the” Post-Christian Era” which displays itself in an ongoing disconnection of faith and culture (2). Reverend Kenneth Phillip in his article ”God

¹⁴ Erickson- “Identity: Youth and Crisis”

¹⁵ Definition taken from “*The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*”, ed. Peter Fink, (Collegeville, MN, 1990), pages 1156–1161.



ways or ours” also agreed that “that there is an attitude of indifference to and rejection/ exclusion of religious understanding from the affairs of the state”. He also stated “whereas Christianity does accommodate doctrinal development- the fact that, over time we humans have always wanted to set all our own criteria for determining what is true and what is morally right” (Catholic News, 8).

The process gets more complex when “God drops out of the picture, the world becomes God, without ground and without goal and everything threatens to become meaningless” (Kasper,10). In the final outcome, faith and religion are no longer measured to be significant: people live in an environment of growing unbelief and indifference (AEC Bishops).¹⁶ Kasper affirmed that “once the meaning of the whole has been lost and once the reality of God as that which ordains, governs and supports the whole has been removed, every individual reality also becomes ultimately meaningless (11). For many young adults who completed the rite of confirmation are challenged by secularisation. The sacred place where God used to occupy is no longer sacred since secularism has taken its place. As a result, God has been displaced and is no longer takes priority.

Faith is not a separate or distinct aspect of a person’s life, but it is a means of defining personal identity, purpose and meaning in life. People are searching for substance, direction and meaning in their lives.¹⁷ Our young adults are also searching for a deeper religious experience. In the Pastoral Letter “On the Ministry of Catechesis” emphasized that “some members of the

¹⁶ Pastoral Letter “On the Ministry of Catechesis”

¹⁷ Pastoral Letter “On the Ministry of Catechesis”



Catholic Church have turned to fundamentalism to satisfy their need for certainty about salvation, whilst others have joined for spiritual security. However, those who have remained members of the church are still in search of strengthening their understanding of the faith in order to guard against the Faith (4). Love and Talbot agreed that “human development incomplete without consideration of spiritual development,”(1999, 368) and by failing to address a child’s spiritual development in practice and research we are ignoring an important aspect of their development. In this light, the main aim of the rite of confirmation is to build the spiritual nature of each person.

CULTURAL FACTORS

According to anthropologist Clifford Geertz coined culture as “transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inhabited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about an attitude toward life” (Geertz, 89). Culture is communicated through symbols, content and participants of a particular belief system. Social climate and environmental elements also influence one’s experience of culture. The culture of religious institutions has a significant impact on its member’s learning and development. In his address Pope John Paul II postulated that “ a faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not faithfully lived out” 2 [16 Jan. 1982].¹⁸

¹⁸ “Address of John Paul II to participants in the National Congress of the Ecclesial Movement of Cultural Commitment”



For culture to be existent and sustained requires two essential components namely, distinguishability and inheritability (Morey et al, 32). An inheritable culture is one that conserves features that can be passed on or taught from one generation to the next whereas a distinguishable culture is one that maintains unique characteristics; “visible differences” between its own culture and that of its contenders (Morey et al, 32). For effective transmission the culture must be steady continuity and distinctness, or the next generation would be at a loss to adopt it.

According to Morey and Piderit, “A Catholic culture is comprised of the group of practices and behaviors, beliefs and understandings that form the ever-deepening context that nourishes the community of believers and energizes their commitment to Christ through the church (33). Through its sacramental nature, by the use of religious practices and rituals within the Catholic faith traditions produces opportunities for greater communal identity formation. In return giving definition to the culture and cultivating the spiritual side of life for these young adults at the same time.

For effective cultural transmission from one generation to the next it must be consistent and effective otherwise, this imparting will not be embraced. For Catholic culture to be maintained, requires the support of the believing community and it must be under the influence of God (Morey et al, 33). This culture fortifies the beliefs of the Catholic church and enlightens the understanding church teachings for those who are baptized in the faith.(33).¹⁹

¹⁹ Morey et al



The deepest challenge of this modern church is the transmission of faith/ Catholic culture to the younger generation. The growth of digital technology has also made the transmission more problematic; information could now be accessed by the touch of a finger. Parents are the “primary” teacher for the transmission of faith to their children. For the those who had the rite of confirmation, faith must be lived by their parents, and extended to the community, so that they learn the Christian way of living within the community of Christ.

CHAPTER THREE

Analysis and Recommendations

From the interviews with some young adults who have completed the rite of confirmation admitted that there appears to be a detachment/distance between their life journey and experience they have been through and what they experience in liturgy.²⁰ There are a group of young adults that do not feel connected to the church because their journey is not pertinent in the liturgy. For some they desire a deeper religious experience. In this area of experience, as in every other, they seek to “make sense” of their experience. The life of faith experience comes, in turn, from participation in a community of faith. This experience varies from one individual to the other, from one particular community to the other. For some it may be a moral struggle whereas for others it may be a mystical awareness. The liturgy must speak to the heart and the ecclesial must seek ways of stepping down into the lives of young adults who are searching for meaning

²⁰ Liturgy- the participation of the People of God in ‘ the work of God’ CCC# 1069.

In the New Testament the word “liturgy” refers not only to the celebration of divine worship but also to the proclamation of the Gospel and to active charity CCC#1070 (244-245.)



and commitment to the church community. The lived experience must build a bridge towards a journey of faith. Adolescence need to feel and hear their own life's experience in the prayer and expressions in the church. There must be a connection between their lived experience and what we are celebrating in the sacraments.

The family is the ultimate environment for teaching the faith. The Christian family thus becomes a domestic church. This transmission of faith must be taught by words and action. The Christian family is a family at prayer and a family at work. Parents are responsible for demonstrating the importance of having God at the center of their lives and not presenting him as an option for daily living. CCC# states "Parents should initiate their children at an early age into the mysteries of the faith of which they are the 'first heralds' for their children. They should associate them from their tenderest years into the life of the church. with the life of the church. A wholesome family life can foster interior dispositions that are a genuine preparation for a living faith and remain a support for it throughout one's life (480). Parents are given the vocation to teach the importance of God for salvation in the domestic church. At Baptism, we are joined into the body of Christ and commissioned to live, a life of grace. This life of grace defines who we are in Christ. This grace permeates all areas our being and is transmitted to members of our family and would then be transmitted to the church community.

In our modern world the digital way of communicating has become pivotal asset in the lives of our adolescent. To effectively transmit culture and tradition there must be dialogue that is meaningful and authentic for the sake of the church's mission. The churches recognize that though there are more information presented through social media; there is a continuous battle that takes



place in the minds of young adults; the battle of right versus wrong, good versus evil and truth versus lies. Since technology is here to make its mark on society, “the church must re-imagine how to communicate faith and to be authentic in its communication”.²¹ In the Pastoral Letter “New Ways of Being Church in a Digital Milieu”. Our communication messages must bring about joy, peace and salvation to all who listen to it. It must challenge young people to become the best version of themselves. When we speak from the heart our communication becomes authentic. Teachers of the faith and parents are called to “live the faith”. Children learn what they “witness” rather than what they “hear” (13).²² Research has also shown that parents who are involved in church ministry have impacted their offspring to also get involved and remain in church ministry.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion we may draw from this survey is that young adults having done the rite of confirmation are being deeply challenged by social, cultural and interpersonal experiences. They are in search of an authentic and meaningful experience that would have an eternal impact on their Catholic identity. Findings from this study confirm a culture which is truly effective in fulfilling its mission is one that is intentionally deliberate, wholly integrated, expressed and lived both in the home and the community and manifest in their actions. One concern is the general finding that majority of Catholic adolescent spiritual development is not well attended to. It is a call to the entire Catholic community to reconsider how the Catholic identity of the institution of family

²¹ Pastoral letter “New Ways of Being Church in a Digital Milieu”(15)

²² Pastoral letter “New Ways of Being Church in a Digital Milieu”(13)



might be more effectively defined, expressed, and experienced in the lives of these adolescents. Catholic families have an important role in the spiritual development of these adolescents, and the findings from the study also challenge Catholic communities to be more faithful in fulfilling that role by pursuing with greater attentiveness the spiritual development of these young adults. For the adolescent's advantage and the whole church.



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APPENDIX A
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF PORT OF SPAIN
The Archdiocese of Port of Spain The
Chancery | Office of the Chancellor

Monday, November 9, 2020

To: Ms. Natasha Wilkinson Dick

From: Office of the Chancellor – Chancery

RE: Email dated Wednesday 28/10/2020, Subject: Thesis Investigation

Dear Ms. Dick,

Please find the Confirmation figures submitted as part of the Archdiocese's report to the Vatican over the last twenty (20) years.

YEAR	NO. CONFIRMED	YEAR	NO. CONFIRMED
2000	2886	2010	1687
2001	2886	2011	1598
2002	2651	2012	1331
2003	2635	2013	1087
2004	2033	2014	1278
2005	2106	2015	1331
2006	2140	2016	1476
2007	1762	2017	852
2008	1674	2018	1184
2009	1812	2019	1198



CONFIRMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Data Collection Instrument This questionnaire has been prepared by Natasha Dick. I am currently a final year student at the University of the West Indies. This questionnaire is being used to investigate the involvement of confirmed candidates in the church after the rite of confirmation.

Confirmation- refers to the sacrament by which Catholics receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit which gives them the increased ability to practice their Catholic faith in every aspect of their lives and to witness Christ in every situation. Candidates were usually baptized as infants and must now accept the Catholic faith as their own and make a commitment to live it out with God's help.

Instructions: For each of the following questions, please place a (✓) in the boxes and/or respond on the lines provided.

Please answer ALL questions

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME

AGE: (15- 20) (20-25) (25-30) Other_____

SEX: Male Female



What parish do you belong to ?

1. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT RELIGION, IF ANY?

ROMAN CATHOLIC

PROTESTANT

ORTHODOX

ISLAM

HINDU

BUDDHIST

ATHEIST

OTHER

2. WHAT YEAR WERE YOU CONFIRMED?

2010-2015

2016-2019

3. DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD?

YES

NO

4. HOW LONG DID YOUR CONFIRMATION CLASS LAST?

1 YEAR

2 YEARS

OTHER_____

5. AT WHAT AGE WERE YOU CONFIRMED?

UNDER 18

18-25

6. HOW WELL DID YOU UNDERSTAND THE TEACHINGS/ DOCTRINES OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH DURING THE CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME?

A GREAT DEAL

HARDLY

A MODERATE AMOUNT

NONE AT ALL



7. WERE YOUR QUESTIONS AND QUERIES ABOUT THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH ANSWERED DURING THE CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME?

- A GREAT DEAL HARDLY
 A MODERATE AMOUNT NONE AT ALL

8. DID YOU ATTEND MASS WITH YOUR MOTHER DURING THE FORMATIVE YEARS? NB. { FORMATIVE YEARS: PERIOD FROM CHILDHOOD TO YOUNG ADULT }?

- YES NO

9. DID YOU ATTEND MASS WITH YOUR FATHER DURING THE FORMATIVE YEARS?

- YES NO

10. HOW OFTEN DO YOU ATTEND MASS? { WITHIN THIS LAST PERIOD- ONLINE MASS }

- EVERY DAY A FEW TIMES A WEEK ONCE A WEEK
 A FEW TIMES A MONTH
 ONCE A MONTH SPECIAL OCCASSIONS NOT AT ALL

11. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING GROUP/S WERE YOU INVOLVED IN DURING YOUR FORMATIVE YEARS?

- ACOLYTES (ALTER SERVER) LEGION OF MARY CHOIR
 YOUTH GROUP
 PRAYER GROUP OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS CHARISMATIC GROUP
 NONE

12. ARE YOU INVOLVED IN ANY GROUPS IN CHURCH POST- CONFIRMATION?



YES NO

IF YES, WHAT GROUP ARE YOU INVOLVED IN

13. ARE YOUR PARENTS INVOLVED IN MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH?

YES NO

IF YES, WHAT GROUP ARE THEY INVOLVED IN

14. AFTER HAVING DONE THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION DO YOU FEEL EQUIPED
TO DEFEND YOUR FAITH?

YES NO

NB: Participants were not required to put their name on the Questionnaire



APPENDIX B

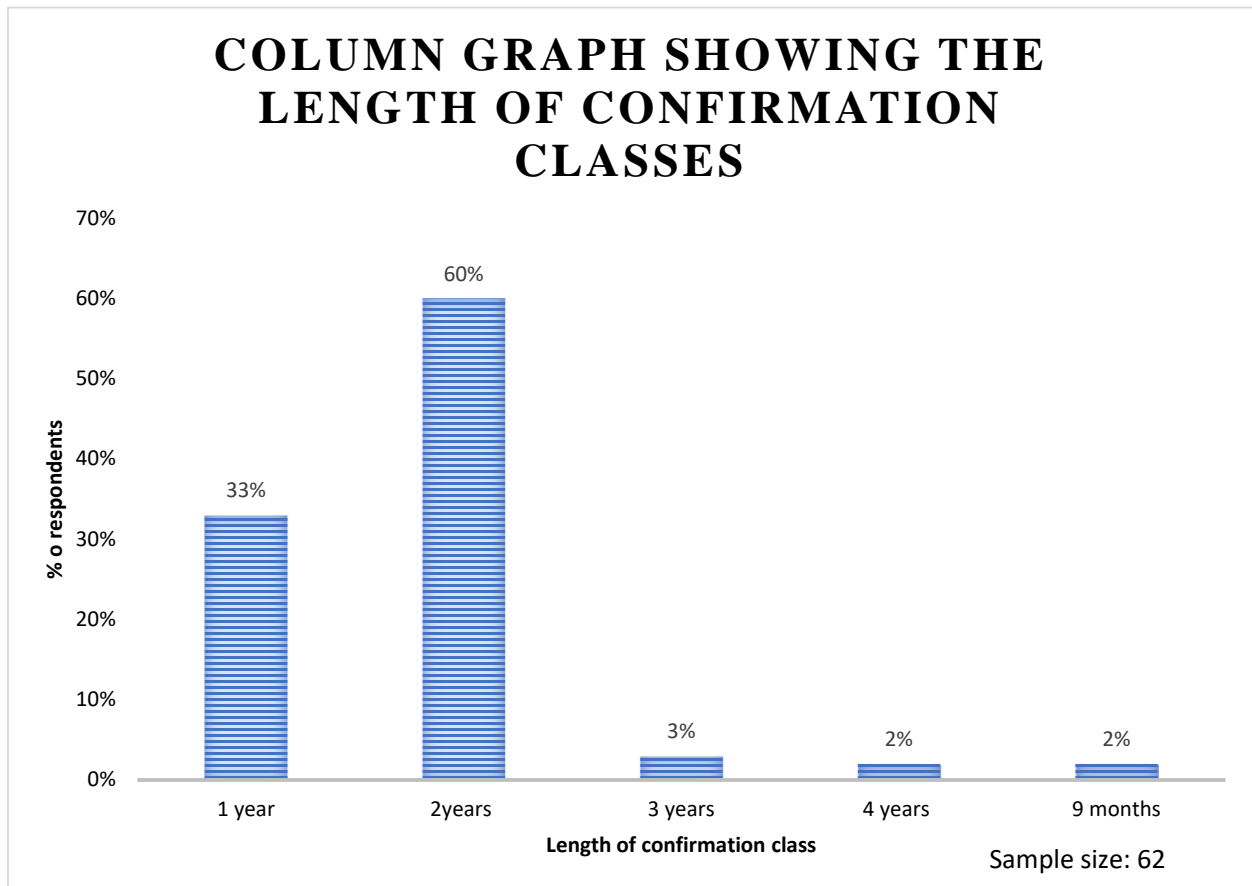


FIGURE 2: Graph Showing Results the Duration Period of The Confirmation Classes from the Questionnaire



Line Chart showing how well respondents understood the teachings/doctrines of the Catholic Church

Sample size: 62

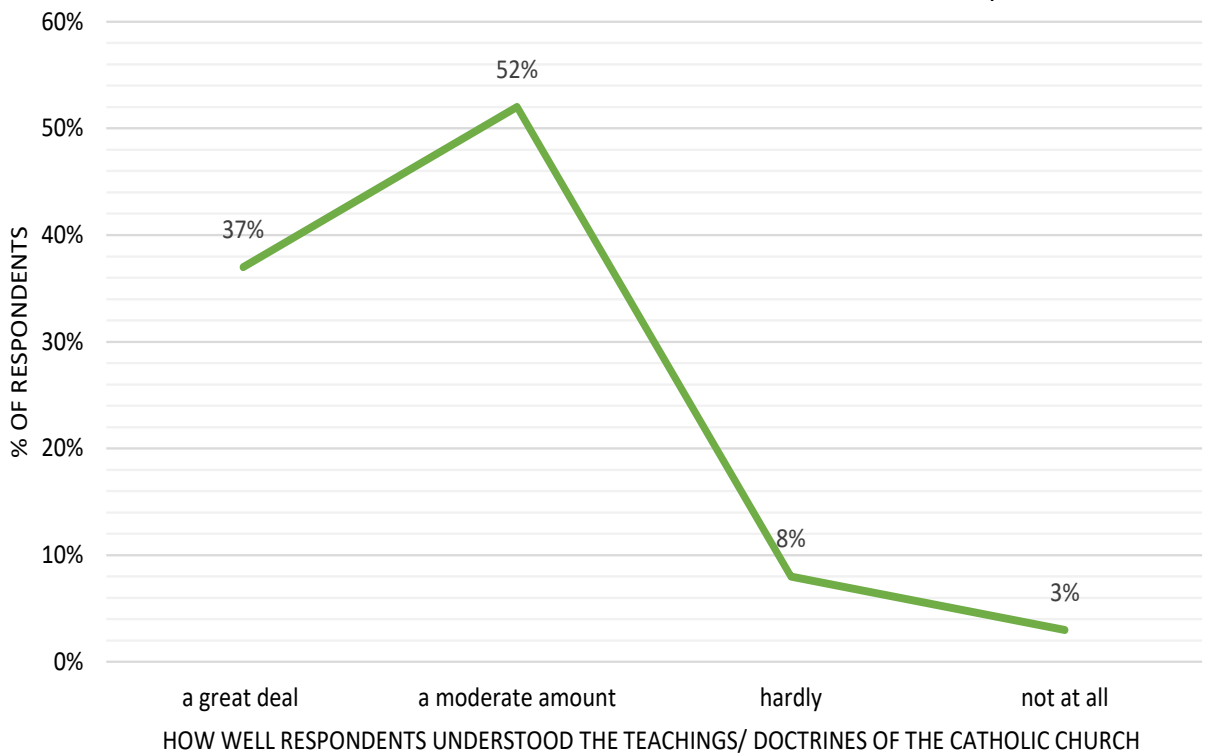
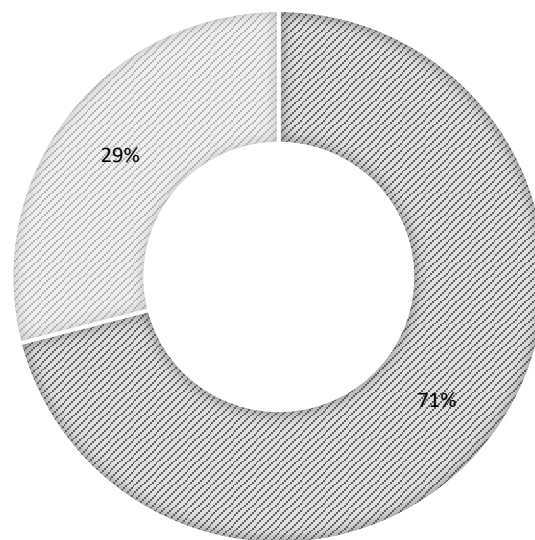


FIGURE 3: Graph Showing how well Candidates understood the Doctrine



DOUGHNUT GRAPH SHOWING WHETHER RESPONDENTS ARE INVOLVED IN ANY GROUPS IN CHURCH POST- CONFIRMATION

■ Yes ■ No



Sample size: 62

FIGURE 4: Graph Showing Group Involvement Post-Confirmation from the Questionnaire

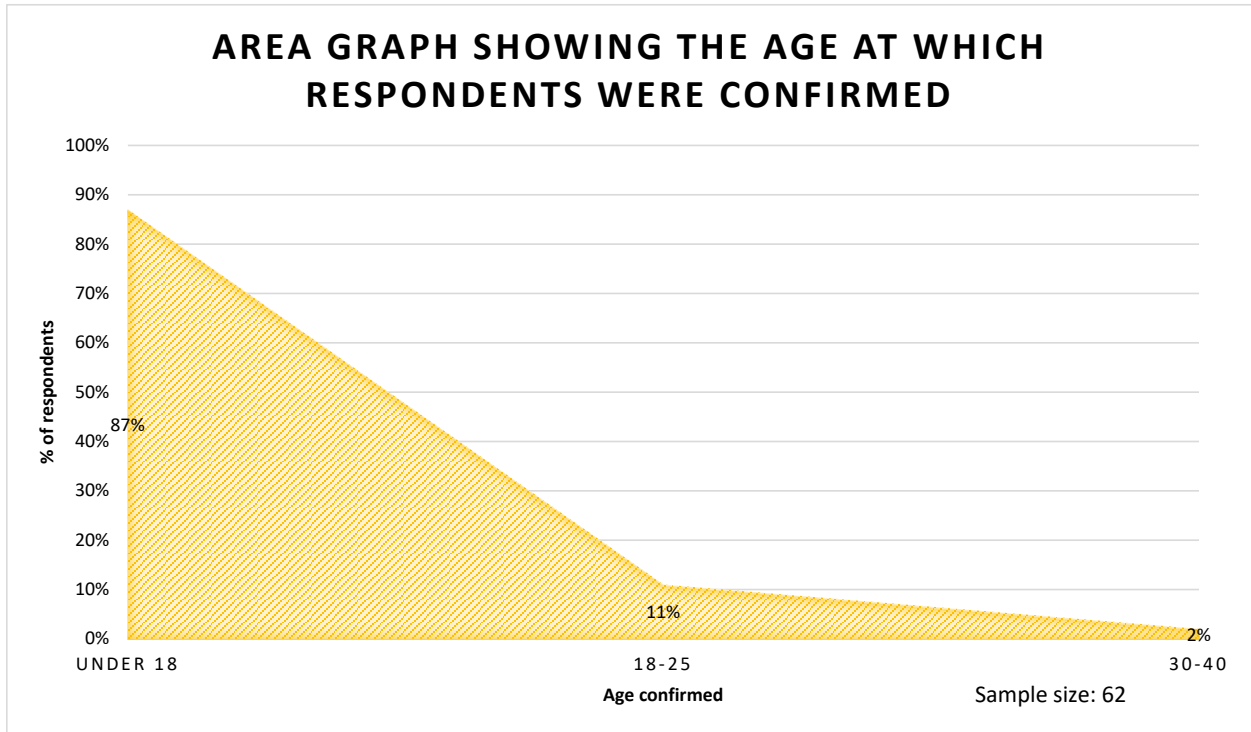


FIGURE 5: Graph Showing the Age Candidates were Confirmed from the Questionnaire



FIGURE 6: Anointing of Candidate by Archbishop Jason Gordon



An illustration from The African American Catholic Youth Bible® of 2 Timothy 1:1-7 – laying on of hands.

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<https://www.smp.org/resourcecenter/resource/12702/>

FIGURE 6: Photo of Laying of Hands