Durham E-Theses

Forming Catholic Identity in Young People: Contingency, Agency and the Power of Family Life

AVRIL CHRISTINA BAIGENT

How to cite:

BAIGENT, AVRIL CHRISTINA (2025) Forming Catholic Identity in Young People: Contingency, Agency and the Power of Family Life. Doctoral thesis, Durham University.

Use policy

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike 3.0 (CC BY-NC-SA)

Academic Support Office, The Palatine Centre, Durham University, Stockton Road, Durham, DH1 3LE
e-mail: e-theses.admin@durham.ac.uk Tel: +44 0191 334 6107
https://etheses.durham.ac.uk

Forming Catholic Identity in Young People: Contingency, Agency and the Power of Family Life

Avril Baigent

Abstract

This thesis argues that the formation of Catholic identity is not exclusively an institutional nor an innate process, but is co-produced by families and young people in a complex relationship with the institutional Church. It highlights the expertise and labour of Catholic families to contextualise catholicity within specific family, social and cultural settings; the agency and persistence of participants as they seek out the relational, affective Catholicity required to maintain their identity; and the ambiguous role of the institutional Church in balancing forces of innovation and tradition. The study reveals the processes of inheriting or choosing, normalising, enacting and imagining this identity in cycles of adaptation and innovation. Drawing Pierre Bourdieu and Robert Orsi into conversation to examine the interrelationship of structuring structures and improvisation in the data, I sketch three styles of Catholic parenting: spiritual apprenticeship, enforcing, and enabling. I then outline the range of participants' responses and the surprising role of ambiguity and paradox in their religious lives. A capacious catholicity is revealed, centred around a loving relationship with God, capable of withstanding the shocks and challenges of adolescence, and more concerned with the doxa of their families and communities than the orthodoxy of the institutional Church. I argue that these daily micro-innovations contribute to Catholicism's ability to adapt across time and space, raising questions about the complex role of the Church in managing processes of change while remaining recognisably Catholic. Developing an emic, non-normative Lived Catholicism approach during the research, I have argued that Catholic identity is far more contingent, diverse and locally produced than either sociologists of religion or the Church itself usually acknowledge. This research contributes to the wider discussion about the production of religious identity in young people, the future shape of the Catholic Church, and the complex relationship between religion and secular culture.

Forming Catholic Identity in Young People: Contingency, Agency and the Power of Family Life

Submitted by Avril Baigent

For the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University
2024

Table of Contents

Note on Catholic Documents Used.....7
Statement of copyright.....7
Acknowledgements.....8
Dedication.....9
Chapter 1: Introduction.....10
- 1.1 The Research Journey.....14
  - 1.1.1 Autobiographical Note.....14
  - 1.1.2 The Surprises of the Research.....16
- 1.2 Accommodating the Ambiguities.....19
  - 1.2.1 The Development of Lived Catholicism.....19
  - 1.2.2 Lived Religion and Synodality.....20
- 1.3 The Research Tool.....22
- 1.4 The Contribution of this Thesis.....23
  - 1.4.1 The Shape of the Argument.....23
  - 1.4.2 Outline of Chapters.....25

Chapter 2: Understanding Catholic Identity in Young People.....27
- 2.1. The Origins of Religious Identity.....27
  - 2.1.1 Families and Identity Formation.....30
  - 2.1.2 Religious Socialisation – Sameness.....31
  - 2.1.3 Religious Agency – Difference.....32
- 2.2 The Changing Face of English Catholicism: Responding to Complexity.....33
- 2.3 Lessons from Elsewhere: Catholic Europe.....38
- 2.4 Lessons from Elsewhere: Catholic America.....41
  - 2.4.1 Normative Perspectives.....41
  - 2.4.2 Lived Religion Perspectives.....43
- 2.5. Global Catholicism.....45
- 2.6. Young People and the Church.....47
  - 2.6.1 The Changing Tide of Church Teaching.....48
  - 2.6.2 Journey to the Youth Synod.....50
  - 2.6.3 Young People *with* the Church.....50
  - 2.6.4 Young People Healing the Wounds of the Church.....51
- 2.7 Conclusions:.....53
- The Research Questions.....55

Chapter 3: Methodological Framework.....57
- 3.1 Challenges in Studying Lived Religion and Catholicism.....59
  - 3.1.1 The Study of Lived Religion.....60
  - 3.1.2 Challenges in Applying Lived Religion to Catholicism.....62

3.2 Applying Bourdieu: Habitus, Field, and Capital....64
3.3 Towards a Lived Catholicism Approach....67
3.4 Choosing Research Methods....68
  3.4.1 Researching with Young People....70
  3.4.2 Focus Groups....71
  3.4.3 Participatory Mapping....72
  3.4.4 Visual Methods: Photo-Voice Elicitation....72
3.5 Method Design....75
  3.5.1 Adult Interviews....75
  3.5.2 Crafting the Questions....76
  3.4.3 Construct Validity....78
  3.6.4 Ethics, Safeguarding and Consent....78
  3.5.5 The Research Tool....79
3.6 Conducting the Research....81
  3.6.1 The Sample....81
  3.6.2 Conducting the Research....82
3.7 Interpreting the Data....89
  3.7.1 Process of Coding....90
  3.7.2 Visual Analysis....91
3.8 Assessment of Method....92
  3.8.1 Why Did Lower-Religiosity Catholics Not Engage?....93
  3.8.2 Making Sense of the Complexity....94
  3.8.3 Limitations of the Fieldwork....95
3.9 Reflexivity and Representation....96
  3.9.1 Acknowledging Researcher Positionality....96
  3.9.2 Representation....98
3.10 Conclusion....100

Chapter 4 Growing up Catholic....102

4.1 Families as Foundations for Identity....103
  4.1.1 “I wouldn’t be Catholic if my parents weren’t”: Inheriting an Identity....104
  4.1.2 Normalising Catholic Identity....110
  4.1.3 Enacting Catholic Identity in Families....113
  4.1.4 Forming Worldviews....120
  4.1.5 Ethnicity....122
  4.1.6 Not-so-Catholic Families....124
4.2 External Influences: Peers....125
  4.2.1 Schools....126
4.3 External Influences: Parishes....130
  4.3.1 Community....130
  4.3.2 Significant Adults....131

4.3.3 Catholic Buildings....133
4.4 Conclusion....135
Chapter 5 Choosing to be Catholic....137
5.1 Becoming Catholic: Choosing an Identity....138
5.1.1 Moments of Choice....140
5.1.2 A Slow Process of Choosing....142
5.1.3 Choosing to Disagree....143
5.2 Choosing Community....144
5.2.1 Parish Youth Groups....145
5.2.2 Bigger gatherings....146
5.2.3 Normalising Identity at School....149
5.3 Choosing Practices....151
5.3.1 Praying and Not-Praying....151
5.3.2 Mass-going: "You shouldn't have to go to church if you want to be a Christian"....159
5.3.3 Parishes as Sites for Agency....163
5.3.4 Personalising Practices....166
5.4 Worldviews and Beliefs....167
5.4.1 Fundamental Beliefs....168
5.4.2 The Immanent Divine....169
5.4.3 Sensemaking....172
5.4.4 Non-Catholic Perspectives....174
5.4.5 Worldviews and their Relationship to Identity....176
5.5 Conclusion....178
Chapter 6: Forming Catholic Identity part 1: Families....180
6.1 Theorising Families: Sociological, Lived Religion and Theological Perspectives....182
6.1.1 Approaches to Studying Faith in Families....182
6.1.2 Families in Bourdieu and Orsi....183
6.1.3 The Family in Catholic Teaching....185
6.2 Catholic Families in the Data....188
6.2.1 Patterns in the Data....189
6.2.2 Forming the Patterns: Habitus, Doxa and Field....193
6.2.3 Combination A: Being Catholic Makes Sense....194
6.2.4 Combination B: Potential for Cleft Habitus....196
6.2.5 Combination C – a Less Visible Habitus....200
6.2.6 Outliers and Exceptions....202
6.2.7 The "Fiction" of Catholic Families in the Data....203
6.3 Conclusion....205
Chapter 7: Forming Catholic Identity part 2: Agency....209
7.1 Theorising Religious Agency....212
7.2 What Kind of Catholics are These?....214

7.3 Agency in the Institutional Church 216
7.4 Religious Agency in the Data 220
  7.4.1 Moments of Decision or Crisis 222
  7.4.2 The Process of Habitus Change 224
  7.4.3 When Change is Not Enough 232
7.5 Conclusion: Believing in Being Catholic 234
Chapter 8: Conclusion: Believing in Being Catholic 237
8.1 Lessons for the Academy 239
8.2 Lessons for the Church 244
8.3 Lived Catholicism 247
Summary 251
Appendix A: Ethical Consent 252
Appendix B: Interviews with Expert Adults 258
Appendix C: Interviews with Young People 266
Appendix D: Photos 289
Bibliography 299

Note on Catholic Documents Used

AA	*Apostolicum Actuositatum*, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Vatican II, 1965
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993
CCL	Code of Canon Law, 1988
CL	*Christifideles Laici*: Post-Synodal Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World, John Paul II, 1988
CV	*Christus Vivit:* Post-Synodal Exhortation to Young People and to the entire People of God, Francis, 2019
DC	Directory for Catechesis, 2020
EG	*Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation, Francis, 2013
GDC	General Directory of Catechesis, 1997
GE	*Gravissimum Educationis,* Declaration on Christian Education, Vatican II, 1965
LG	*Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, 1964
PD	Preparatory Document for the Synod on Synodality, Synod of Bishops, 2021
VSS	Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality, Synod of Bishops, 2021

Some of these documents exist in a number of translations from Latin. I have consistently used the versions on the Vatican website. The abbreviations are those commonly used.

Statement of copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

Acknowledgements

This project has been a long and winding journey, with several unexpected turns. I am grateful to all who have been instrumental in shaping it, from conversations with colleagues teasing out knotty problems to those who made the fieldwork possible. I am particularly grateful to my diocese for allowing me to study alongside my diocesan role.

I am indebted to my family for their remarkable patience and support, the late-night conversations with my own Catholic teenagers, and the unwavering encouragement and technical support of my husband. Even when I have wanted to give up, their faith in me has kept me putting one foot in front of the other.

I am deeply grateful to my supervisors for their wisdom and support over this long project, to Professor Pete Ward, who showed me that the empirical can and must speak to the institutional Church and to Professor Anna Rowlands for her guidance and inspiration, especially in the latter part of the project. I am also very grateful to the support of the community at the Centre for Catholic Studies in developing the notion of Lived Catholicism, and to all my fantastic colleagues on the conference teams.

Lastly, I wish to thank all the young people who have inspired, challenged, and provoked me over the years, especially those who took part in the research. Your lived experiences and willingness to engage are at the heart of this project, which speaks so much more broadly than I could have imagined.

Dedication

To my parents

Chapter 1: Introduction

> When I was younger I would just go to church…when my friends go, “No, I’m never going to be a Christian”, I’d like tell my friends, “No, I’m just going to church for now, I don’t believe any of it, I’m not going to go to church when I’m older”, but I think now that I probably will, and I think I’m a lot like stronger in my faith, but… I think, I think I will carry on going to church and I don’t think I’ll grow out of it, but it all depends what happens, we’ll see.[1]
>
> Lucy, Parish Group B

In these few phrases, Lucy outlines some of the complexities of being a Catholic teenager in the UK. Peer pressure interacts with a personal faith identity, which itself is changing over time through adolescence, with a note of uncertainty about the future. This research project grew out of many experiences of such complexities, and one contradiction. Over the past thirty years or more, the Catholic Church has been increasingly concerned about falling numbers of young Catholics, to the extent that Pope Benedict called the face of the Church disfigured without them when speaking to a million young people at the Madrid World Youth Day in 2011.[2] These concerns were repeated in the academy, with young Catholics seen as *flaneurs* (Fulton 2000), amnesiacs (Hervieu-Léger 2000) and lacking distinctiveness (Smith et al. 2014). On the other hand, as a Diocesan Youth Officer for a Catholic diocese, I had met many teenagers for whom identifying as a Catholic was not just a familial duty but a positive choice. It provided an immanent, affective relationship with God, a hopeful worldview, a toolkit of resources with which to face adolescence, and, for some, the advantages of social capital. I was fascinated by the collision of these two realities: one of decline and secularisation; the other of choice and engagement.

From these contrasting experiences arose my research puzzle: to explore why some teenagers sustained their Catholic identity through their teenage years when so many did not and to examine how the experiences of these young people challenged scholarly assumptions. Knowing the capacity of young people to surprise and challenge, I was led to approaches which prioritised their voices and individual experiences. This resulted in a research question which moved on from focusing on practice or belief, instead asking: *How can we understand and interpret the complexities of Catholic identity among Catholic teenagers?* Among the many studies directed at the declining numbers of Catholic teenagers, few ask why their identity manifests as it does. This study fills an important gap in understanding the varieties of religious identity in late modernity, the mechanisms by which Catholic identity is formed, and how Catholic young people view themselves into the future.

---

[1] Interview E, #00:16:27-4#

[2] Pope Benedict XVI, Address for the Closing Mass of World Youth Day in Madrid on August 21, 2011

The practice of youth ministry begins by listening to and accompanying young people wherever they are.[3] Over the course of ten years as a youth worker, I had often been surprised and moved by the conversations I had had with teenagers. I knew my research would be richer if I took their voices as my starting point. This influenced the whole project. It required an emic approach to the fieldwork, but more importantly, I argue, would necessitate reversing a common assumption among scholars of the study of Catholicism: that Catholicism is held and produced by the institutional Church, and is best studied according to institutional measures of doctrine and practice (Bullivant 2019; Smith et al. 2014). Drawing on the work of Robert Orsi and other scholars of lived religion, I came to realise that reversing this stance required treating Catholicism as held and co-produced by all within the Catholic sphere, in dynamic relationship with the tradition of the Magisterium and the institutional Church, but enacted on the ground according to multiple local contexts (Orsi 1997).

The results of this change of stance were exciting. Participants emerged from the data as complex beings, making sense of being Catholic across a variety of identities and contexts. Having designed a fieldwork process that used methods less likely to produce rote responses and included participants as co-researchers, it became clear that, even among the twenty-five participants, there was not one uniform expression of catholicity. Instead, Catholic identity was multiply co-produced, largely by families and communities, giving rise to catholicities that were far more contingent, diverse and locally produced than scholars and the institutional Church usually recognise (Dillon 2001).

This, then, offered possibilities for exploring the process of the co-production and ongoing creation of Catholic identity. While the generational transfer of catholicity has continued successfully for centuries, it has become less predictable in many parts of the Church since the 1950s, while possible explanations have reproached parents, Catholic schools, poor liturgy in parishes, the individualism of late modernity and the Second Vatican Council. This thesis argues that the transfer of Catholic identity is not innate or straightforward, as it is often perceived to be, but requires two distinct tasks: that of the family in creating a domestic Catholic life; and that of individuals in forming a personal Catholic identity that they carry into adulthood. Once these are understood as tasks to be undertaken and not character tests to be failed, the extent of the work becomes clear. This is seen firstly in the labour, skill and intention of parents and family members, represented by the repeated comment from participants, "I wouldn't be Catholic if my parents weren't". Applying Bourdieu's notion of doxa and habitus to Catholic families highlighted both the breadth of catholic-ness within the lives of these families, and the work required to create and maintain a domestic religious life. The most effective families offered a spiritual apprenticeship to their children, accompanying them through doubts and challenges and able to present Catholic teaching in an attractive and convincing way. The process was frequently recounted by my participants despite family only appearing as one question among many in the interview process. This suggests that both scholars and the Church have radically underplayed the importance of this domestic labour, often performed by the women of the family.

---

[3] This can be seen both in the US Catholic Bishops' document, Renewing the Vision, and in wider thinking on youth ministry, such as Kenda Creasy Dean's Practising Passion (Dean, 2004).

.

While the structuring structures of family life provided the scaffolding of catholicity into adulthood, the second task was performed by the participants themselves. This study highlighted both the contingency of Catholic identity and the agency and persistence of this group of participants, many of whom happened to be substantially more practising than most Catholic adults. Part of this labour involved the search for a relational and emotionally affective catholicity, which resulted in WhatsApp prayer groups, retreats with other young people, taking on leadership roles in parishes, looking online for Catholic content, and which also included subtle shifts in the use of Catholic terminology and new approaches to standard Catholic doctrine. Vital to this work was both a cast of peers, family members, teachers, priests, and other significant adults; and moments of decision, pinpointed by participants as key in the transition from a family to a personal Catholic identity. These highlighted the surprising role of confirmation (often known anecdotally as the sacrament of lapsation) but also included moments of crisis as these young people met the challenges of adolescence. However, agency does not happen in a vacuum, and choices are not made at random. There was a distinct sense of what was Catholic, even when this lay outside, or even contradicted Church teaching. The micro-innovations of families and individuals worked to hold the structural and contextual together, resulting in a variety of catholicities, not a single ideal.

This project also raises wider questions about the tension between tradition and innovation, sameness and difference in the Catholic Church. Within the study of Catholicism is a strand of scholarship that regards dissent and difference as placeholders for decline (examples from the UK include Fulton 2000; and Hornsby-Smith 1991). However, Mayblin et al (2017), addressing the question of what characteristics of the Catholic Church have enabled it to be successful for two millennia, rate the Church's ability to respond to, encompass and embrace difference as one of its most important attributes. For them, difference does not have to equate to rupture, but is at the heart of the Church's ability to flex over time and space.

The thesis supports that position by revealing a capacious catholicity capable of accommodating the variety of ethnic and cultural contexts represented by the participants, including those of youth culture in the UK. These catholicities are produced by mechanisms in which difference and sameness are balanced within the production of Catholic identity on an individual and domestic scale. Additionally, and somewhat surprisingly, the data revealed the institutional Church as the originator and promulgator of much of the innovation sought out by the young people in the project, whether this was the huge World Youth Day gatherings, priests posting helpful videos about Catholic teaching online, or high-quality school chaplaincy. At the same time, much of what participants described as supporting their catholicity was in contrast to parish life, which was only described by one participant as having spiritual importance. A challenge for the Church is to allow these innovative practices to spread to the ordinary life of most Catholic young people, a process that would also involve ongoing reflection about the balance between tradition and innovation in the life of the institutional Church.

Finally, the project raised questions about the wider scholarship on religiosity among young people. What is the place of religious identity in western societies (Day, 2008; Demerath, 2000; Hervieu-Léger, 1994)? Are these identities the outworking of secular late modernity, or evidence of a post-secular world (Voas and Bruce, 2007; Heelas, 2007; Drooger, 2007)? Although rarely studied before the 1990s, the religiosity of young people is now an ongoing concern more broadly (Catto, 2014; Beaudoin, 1998). My research contributes to debates over the processes of religious socialisation in families, the benefits or otherwise of being a religious young person in the UK in late modernity, the impact of immigration on the UK Catholic Church, and the wider secularisation/post secularisation debate. Most importantly, an emerging approach to studying Catholicism has developed over the course of this project, building on the work of sociologists of Catholicism and scholars of lived religion (Ammerman 2007; Greeley 2004; Spickard, Landres, and McGuire 2002; Dillon 1999), and aided by two online conferences and the processes of editing a special journal edition. Lived Catholicism is a non-normative, interdisciplinary approach which takes as its starting point individual experiences of being a Catholic in a particular time and space, and which is attentive to the role of agency in the production of religious identity, particularly improvisation and subversion. It acknowledges the complexity of power in the relationships between individuals, communities and the institutional Church, and its capacity to form and deform. This approach brings to light a multiplicity of experiences and expressions of global and local Catholicism (Baigent et al. 2022).

This chapter introduces the research, situating it both in its fieldwork context and in the wider academy. I reflect on my own positionality and its contribution to this project. I outline some of the ambiguities and paradoxes of the research and my attempts to resolve them. Next, I introduce the notion of Lived Catholicism, and finally, I summarise my argument as presented in the following chapters.

1.1 The Research Journey

1.1.1 Autobiographical Note

All research, in part, depends on the person of the researcher. Social scientific research requires a close connection between the researcher and the objects of their research, positioning the scholar as the analytical instrument and research tool (Davies 1999). The origins of this project are intimately connected with my experiences as a diocesan youth officer for ten years and my subsequent work in adult formation and as a diocesan co-lead for the global synod process being undertaken by the Catholic Church. These experiences have led me to adopt a reflexive stance to my research, which is appropriate for my chosen methodology. At the same time, this project reveals what Bourdieu calls the structuring structures of a Catholic childhood, and the ways in which they continue to influence worldviews into adulthood. Therefore, it is particularly appropriate for me to unpack my positionality and the ways in which it has shaped this project. My understanding of reflexivity is covered in more detail in Chapter Three.

I am a cradle Catholic with a positive experience of religion throughout my life. Like many of my participants, my Catholic identity comes from my mother, but as my parents divorced when I was nine, my sister and I also had a degree of choice as to when and how we practised. On leaving university, I worked in a parish for four years and then became a Diocesan Youth Officer (DYO).

The first year of this role was spent undertaking research for the diocese into the spirituality of young Catholics, involving focus group conversations with teenagers, investigations into different approaches to Catholic youth ministry, and strategic recommendations for the diocese (Baigent 2002). Subsequently, as part of a writing group producing a national document for youth ministry, I was exposed to a good deal of Church teaching on youth ministry, particularly the addresses given by the popes at World Youth Day gatherings, and other national visions for youth ministry. The more I read, the more troubled I became by the gap between the official documents of the Church and the lived experience of young people in parishes. However, as DYO, I saw how Catholicism could be a resource to the teenagers I worked with, giving them hope when times were bad, a community where they were known and appreciated, and access to leadership positions at school and in their parish. In a world where teenagers are presented as uninterested in religion, I was curious as to the impact of Catholic identity on those I worked with.

In addition to these lessons concerning Catholic teenagers, two further insights from my work were helpful. The first is the heterogeneity of Catholics. The Catholic Church presents a uniform face to the world, having official teaching on many subjects, from climate change to workers' rights. On the other hand, my experience has taught me that there is rarely a single "Catholic" view on any one subject. The disagreement of ordinary Catholics with the Church's position on birth control is well known. What is not so obvious is the variety of personal views on a whole range of subjects, including the Eucharist, Catholic Social Teaching, and even women priests.[4] This heterogeneity is complimented by the range of official Catholic experiences around the world, giving rise to catholicities that, as Pope Francis says, are universal but not uniform (EG §117).

Allied with this is the associated problem of dissent. Scholars studying Catholicism have often decoded divergence as decline (this is explored in more detail in Chapter Two). However, in my working life in the Church, I have seen disagreement with Church teaching at every level of authority, including among senior clergy and religious. Dissent is a normal practice of grappling with Church teaching in its application to a particular context. As Baggett discovered, it is possible to disagree with significant elements of Church teaching while still identifying as a Catholic (Baggett 2008). Taken together, my working experience of Catholicism led me to expect signs of vitality among young people despite dwindling numbers; a wide variety of expressions of catholicity, some of which would not represent orthodox positions; and finally, interpreting dissent as potential for engagement, and not necessarily decline.

---

[4] The Catholics in Britain website presents a range of these perspectives in the UK Church alone: https://catholicsinbritain.le.ac.uk

1.1.2 The Surprises of the Research

However, even a lifetime of working for the Church did not prepare me for the levels of ambiguity and paradox that this research would present. Across a range of factors, from religiosity levels, to the impact of individual components such as family or school, to the surprise finding of the Church as promulgator of innovation, the complexity of the data produced new possibilities for analysis as much as it challenged existing assumptions.

Normative and Non-Normative Perspectives

The Catholic Church is both a strongly normative and normatising institution, and capable of containing many perspectives (Baggett 2008, Dillon, 1991). Chapter Two discusses the implications of this paradox for ordinary Catholics and the scholars who study them. Throughout this text, I have used the terms "normative" and "non-normative" to apply to the assumptions that underlie the meaning-making of both groups. In my usage, "normative" refers to descriptions and definitions of Catholicism that originate from the official teaching of the Catholic Church (for example, in reference to who is a Catholic, and what their practices and beliefs should be). These are used both by sociologists, for example in the construction of linear scales, and by the institution, for example in the assignment of places in Catholic schools. Lived Religion approaches are attentive to "non-normative" perspectives: those which arise from the meaning-making of individuals as they live a religious identity in a particular time and context (Orsi, 2005). As I use the term in this thesis, non-normative perspectives do not expect normative answers, but do include them. This approach unlocks a series of further ambiguities.

Religiosity levels

Catholics are familiar with thinking about themselves and others in terms of levels of practice. This occasionally arose in the data when participants might say, "I'm not that religious" in response to a question, but it is also represented in a range of official documents and parish renewal programmes.[5] It is common to find religiosity scales in sociological studies of Catholicism (Smith et al. 2014; Hoge 2002). However, my attempts to replicate such scales in my research by choosing low, mid and high religiosity groups were confounded, both on a group and on an individual level. I had arranged to research at the diocesan summer youth retreat, only to find that, when at home, this group had some of the lowest levels of individual practice in the project. I also conducted a group in a school which, in previous years, had had very low levels of engaged Catholics, only to find some extremely religious young people. In addition, levels of practice of individuals did not always relate to their beliefs. One of the most active young people in the project, Becca, got up at 6am every three weeks to set up her church for Mass and was not sure if she believed in God.[6]

The Ambiguity of Individual Factors

While youth ministers, priests and parents may hope that there is a single factor that will help their Catholic young people to grow in faith through adolescence, another key theme of the study was the ambiguous nature of many of these factors. Parishes were rarely mentioned as places of spirituality, although participants often mentioned the buildings or individuals as significant. Schools (including Catholic schools) were often places where participants were bullied or felt uncomfortable about their identity,[7] but this was not the case for the two schools I researched in, one of which had a significant positive impact on their pupils' catholicity. Having even a single Catholic or Christian friend was vital for some participants, while others experienced teasing or challenge from their peers, or perhaps never spoke about religion with their friends. Even youth retreats could prove equivocal in their impact, providing some of the most significant religious experiences in the data, while often causing attendees to reject local parishes and ordinary prayer as "not actually getting anything back".[8] The lack of a single "silver bullet" factor will be dismaying to some, but throws new light on the complexity of Catholic identity.

---

[5] Two examples include the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales' document on returning to Sunday Mass after the pandemic https://www.cbcew.org.uk/spring-plenary-2022-resolution-returning-to-mass-at-pentecost/ and Sherry Wedell's Called and Gifted programme, designed to move Catholics through five levels of engagement (Weddell, 2012).

[6] Interview F, #00:05:42-0#

[7] Interview I, #00:11:04-5#

[8] Interview N, #00:06:49-4#

Church as Promulgator and Controller of Innovation

A third ambiguous factor that emerged from the data was the role of the institutional Church in offering and controlling innovation. Practically all the innovations that participants took up emanated from the Church, whether that was becoming a girl altar server or following the Pope on Instagram.[9] The Church has the practical experience within its current theological and ecclesiological models to reach young people. At the same time, it was clear that these innovations were rare, and participants were fortunate in being able to access them. One young man, Red, said that he had never had the opportunity to talk about his faith with anyone outside his family before he went to the diocesan retreat.[10] He did not know any other Catholics his own age. The Church, in all its manifestations from Vatican rulings to individual parishes and families, both initiates and controls innovation, and in doing so, is not able to encompass the very successes that it has created.

Families

In a project with many surprises, the importance of family in creating and sustaining Catholic identity was remarkable. As a DYO, I had worked with young people as individuals, not seeing them as the product of their families. At the same time, like the participants in the study, I would say that I am Catholic because my mother is. However, I was not expecting sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds repeatedly to speak about their families, not just in a past context, but as current and ongoing influences on them. Families prayed together, had Catholic material items decorating their houses, had spiritual elements to their holidays, told stories about the efficacy of prayer, and, as Sean said, "put you in the car" for Mass.[11] However, even families could have mixed impact, as will be explored in Chapter Five, with the phrase "I wouldn't be Catholic if my parents weren't" encompassing a range of nuances, including the negative.

Sample

The final sample of participants was considerably more practising and Catholic than had been hoped initially, despite running five groups in a range of places. We discussed whether it would be better to recast the whole project concentrating only on more religious young people, but decided that it would be better to reflect on why the method had not attracted less religious participants, and to retain the ghost of their presence through the project. This is explored further in Chapter Four. There also were no Traditional Latin Mass attendees or those stating that they held more traditional views on Catholic morality (for example, supporting the Church's stance on homosexuality or sex before marriage) among the attendees. There has been an upsurge in young people with this type of Catholicity since the fieldwork was carried out (Clements and Bullivant 2022a), offering suggestions for further research.

---

[9] Interview G, #00:09:29-7#; Focus Group R, #00:28:48-9#

[10] Focus Group X, #00:26:29-4#

[11] Focus Group R, #00:27:31-4#

1.2 Accommodating the Ambiguities

1.2.1 The Development of Lived Catholicism

The notion of Lived Catholicism emerged part-way through the project and was key to accounting for the diversity and divergence in my data, the complex relationships of individuals to the institutional Church, and how people made sense of their Catholic identity within their everyday lives. It emanated from a combination of three events: coding and re-coding my data to make sense of the variety; reading Norget et al's *Anthropology of Catholicism: a Reader,* and Hall's *Lived Religion in America;* and the offer of a small grant from Durham University to run a graduate conference. An early definition was:

> The study of Lived Catholicism seeks to step away from the normative forces of institutional expectations to explore Catholicism as it is found in the practices of daily life. It draws on the foundations of lived religion in recognising the importance of improvisation, negotiation, resistance and subversion in everyday religiosity. It foregrounds the voices and experiences of ordinary people to explore the places of Catholicism in their lives. (Baigent et al. 2022, 10)

Compared to lived religion, Lived Catholicism focuses on Catholicism and, therefore, has a narrower and broader sphere. It is limited to those things seen to be related to Catholicism (which is in itself contested), but is also broad enough to include all those things that are seen to be related to Catholicism. It not only foregrounds the granular experiences of Catholicism in a particular time and place (for example, the impact of Catholic identity among the Adivasis of central India (D'Souza 2022a), or the intersectional queer/Catholic identities of Radcliffe Hall (Lamontagne 2022)), but also reinserts Catholic questions into other disciplines, such as the impact of Catholic churches on historic town planning (Baigent et al. 2022). In addition, it highlights the importance of the institutional Church in forming catholicities, and is attentive to the play of power between individual, community and official bodies.

It is possible that this emerging notion might not have developed further than an interest in everyday practices and a focus on the individual without the ongoing conversations and development work that constituted two online conferences[12] and the production of a journal special edition (Baigent and Pound 2022). The original conference team included Marcus Pound, philosopher, Pat Jones, practical theologian and Katherine Ajibade, anthropologist. The journal included a roundtable article in which the keynote speakers at the conference, Marcus, Alana Harris, Robert Orsi, Tricia Bruce and Stephen Bullivant brought their disciplinary expertise in sociology, social history, anthropology and theology to bear on the concept of lived religion.

The notion of Lived Catholicism as it developed complements large-scale studies as, through its focus on the voices of individuals, it produces complex and nuanced data. Spotlighting the meaning-making of ordinary Catholics, it reveals the mechanisms by which their catholicity shapes their understanding of, and is a resource to, their daily life. It shows Catholicism to be highly diverse, accommodating to a range of global and local contexts. By exposing the complexity of power relations, it also reveals Catholicism as a force that can form and deform, as the Church is only beginning to recognise (*Christus Vivit,* § 95-101). Lived Catholicism can, in this way, be seen to be revelatory of everyday experience: at once both anomalous and, in itself, normative. However, this term is still in development, and there is much work still to be done, particularly around defining the boundaries of Lived Catholicism, how it relates to the institutional Church, and what implications there are for Catholic theology.

1.2.2 Lived Religion and Synodality

A similar turn towards valuing individual experience has happened more recently in the Catholic Church with the development of synodality. It is a way of being Church that involves engaging all the voices in "reciprocal listening, dialogue, community discernment, and creation of consensus as an expression that renders Christ present in the Holy Spirit, each taking decisions in accordance with their responsibilities."[13] Originally, the Synod of Bishops arose out of the desire to maintain the momentum of the Second Vatican Council, bringing together bishops and other experts every three years to speak about a particular topic of significance to the Church. These have included practical themes such as the vocation and mission of lay people and seminary education, but have also concentrated on theological themes such as the Eucharist and the role of Scripture.

---

[12] The archive of the conference can be found here: https://livedcatholicism.org/previous-conferences/archive/. Disciplines included anthropology, human geography, psychology, English Literature, social history as well as sociology and practical theology.

[13] XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops 2023, §1.h

The Synod process under Pope Francis pivoted from a concentration on bishops and theological advisors to engaging with a much wider range of voices. This was achieved firstly by a new understanding of the role of the lay faithful in the decision-making life of the Church: that the *sensus fidei* (the developing theological understanding of the whole Catholic people) broke down the traditional division between the *Ecclesia docens* (the teaching Church) and an *Ecclesia discens* (the learning Church), "since the flock likewise has an instinctive ability to discern the new ways that the Lord is revealing to the Church."[14] While this understanding grows out of *Lumen Gentium's* image of the pilgrim people of God, it represents a paradigmatic development of the understanding of the Church as it endeavours to understand the Gospel anew for each generation, a new iteration of the tension between tradition and innovation. Pope Francis, somewhat like Orsi, regards the Church as a dynamic entity, seeking the Holy Spirit through the experiences of ordinary people. The Synod on Youth and Vocation, held in 2018, put this into practice both through a worldwide questionnaire on the experiences of young people, but also by bringing young people into the Synod Assembly for the first time, where they were encouraged by Pope Francis to have their voices heard. The theological significance of this Synod will be discussed further in Chapter Two, but the Synod process also had an epistemological importance to my project.

In May 2021, Pope Francis announced a Synod on Synodality, in which every baptised Catholic and person of good will towards the Church was invited to have their voice heard. This offered the opportunity to put into practical terms what synodality might look like in the ordinary life of the Church. The similarities between synodality and lived religion approaches can be seen in the instructions for writing up the local listening to feed into the global process:

> The diocesan synthesis should reflect the diversity of views and opinions expressed, and pay particular attention to the lived experiences of participants, both positive and negative. The synthesis should be faithful to the people's voices and to whatever emerged from their discernment and dialogue, rather than a series of generalized or doctrinally correct statements. Points of view that are contrary to one another need not be omitted but can be acknowledged and stated as such. Views should not be

---

[14] 'Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops (17 October 2015) | Francis'. Accessed 20 January 2022. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html

> excluded simply because they were expressed by a small minority of participants. Indeed, sometimes the perspective of what we could call the "minority report" can be a prophetic witness to what God wants to say to the Church.[15]

This passage could be a manifesto for a lived religion approach to a project. Alongside the undertaking of my PhD studies, I have been the Synod co-lead for my diocese, and have co-founded a national project, the School for Synodality. Engaging in ongoing practices of conversation with many different groups has taught me the skill of close listening, bringing a new attentiveness to the different perspectives of individual voices. This has impacted my research by enabling me to hear the voices of my participants in all their diversity, sitting with ambiguity and holding in tension many different perspectives. I have gained a new appreciation for complexity, resisting collapsing discontinuities into understanding, instead focusing on how meaning flows and develops even over the course of a conversation. I have learned not to think I perfectly understand the person I am listening to, even over the use of common words such as "Catholic" and "prayer". I regard meaning-making as replete with equivocation and impressionism and yet driven by a search for purpose and significance.

1.3 The Research Tool

My response to both the lived religion and synodal approaches was to develop a research tool which allowed for multiple levels of meaning-making, and was driven by the concerns of participants. The theoretical and methodological underpinnings for the method are explored in Chapter Three, but it might be helpful to outline the process here.

The research involved self-identifying Catholics aged between fourteen and eighteen (mostly over sixteen). It used a narrative photography tool to engage young people as co-reseachers, enabling a view of their catholicity through their own framing, and building on their expertise as image makers. There were five groups drawn from one diocese in the UK and conducted in three different types of setting: two parishes without a Catholic school (groups A and B), the diocesan youth retreat (group C), and two different Catholic schools (D and E). Each group involved a series of meetings: initial focus group and participatory mapping to open up the theme "This is Catholic" and to introduce the photo element; time to take photos; individual semi-structured interviews based on the images taken; and a second focus group to look at the photos together and further explore their meaning. Finally, there was an exhibition in the diocesan cathedral to which groups were invited with the opportunity for a final conversation. The photos from the exhibition can be found in Appendix D. All the photos that feature in the research were taken by the participants. A detailed table of the research process can be found in Appendix C.

---

[15] Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality, 5.3, https://www.synod.va/en/documents/vademecum.html

1.4 The Contribution of this Thesis

1.4.1 The Shape of the Argument

Robert Orsi writes that the most difficult aspect about researching within your own tradition is maintaining a critical distance so that the familiar appears strange. His solution is

> a disciplined suspension of the impulse to locate the other (with her or his discrepant moralities, ways of knowing, and religious impulses) securely in relation to one's own cosmos… it is being willing to make one's own self-conceptions vulnerable to the radically destabilising possibilities of a genuine encounter with an unfamiliar way of life. (Orsi 2005, 198)

This research project began in the making strange of a familiar aspect of Catholic life: the ongoing commitment of some young Catholics in the face of decades of declining numbers. Why did some young people maintain a Catholic identity when so many of their peers did not? However, rather than taking the normative approach of wondering in what ways and to what extent many young Catholics were deficient, I was interested in the complexities of Catholic identity: what its origins were; its impact on daily life and in times of difficulties; and how it might manifest into the future. However, maintaining this non-normative stance would require the radical destabilisation of a series of my own, and widely held, assumptions. These destabilisations would form the core of my argument.

Firstly, there is a wide recognition that families are necessary for the transfer of faith. The Church represents this in the promises it requires parents to make at baptism; sociologists recognise this in the study of religious socialisation; and parishioners grieve the loss of their own and other families in their communities. Because faith transfer in families has happened for generations, it has seemed innate. However, if faith transfer is innate, why has the process started to fail since the 1950s, with falling numbers of people, and young people in particular, attending Sunday Mass (Smith et al. 2014)? Compounding the problem of falling numbers, parents lack confidence in their role in the transfer of religious identity through the generations, as Smith and Snell put it, not wanting to force religion down their children's throats. (Smith and Snell 2009; see also Casson 2014 for a UK perspective). Finally, because this process has seemed innate, the Church has not supported the domestic transfer of faith by teaching parents how to do it – in this country. There are hints in the data and wider literature that, in other parts of the world, this is a priority. Amongst the participants, those families from Kerala and Nigeria seemed better equipped than others.

The claim of this research is that the production of Catholic identity is not solely an institutional process, neither does it happen innately, but is co-produced by families and young people in a complex relationship with the Catholic Church. It is a two-step process that firstly requires the production of a family Catholic identity, and then, for most participants, necessitates the creation of a personal catholicity which draws on the structuring structures of their family life in addition to the micro-innovations they make for their particular context. This process enables Catholic identity to be inherited, normalised, enacted and imagined in a particular time and space. This move recognises the skill, commitment, and labour of families in creating a habitus of practice and a doxa of taken-for-granted belief. For those parents not creating an overarching domestic Catholic habitus, an alternative route of peer ministry via youth retreats and groups is shown to be effective. The ongoing re-creation of Catholic identity requires the ingenuity of both parents and young people to adapt a recognisable catholicity to the culture in the society around them. This process is more effective where parents have received their own formation (for example, the Kerala and African parents). However, family life and Sunday Mass are not sufficient to explain why some young people continue to practice when so many do not. The second step of this process for many participants was the creation of a personal Catholic identity, with associated practices and beliefs. This required further work, with many participants seeking additional faith-based activities, retreats and friendships that supported their particular relational, emotionally affective catholicity.

A further destabilisation is that being a young Catholic is a good choice for a young person. Perhaps parents and congregations do not have confidence in the benefits of being a young person of faith, but the experiences of participants revealed an immanent, relational belief in God which was positive and hopeful, a toolkit for dealing with the difficulties of life, and, in some cases, significant religious and social capital. The importance of this process for the wider Church is that this combination of family habitus and micro-innovation leads to a set of diverse catholicities which are resilient for a particular time and place. The process of adaptation involves being open to difference and able to process it as engagement rather than decline. In fact, engaging with difference appropriately within a recognisably Catholic framing is key to this process of faith transfer. The Church emerges as capable of innovation, but incapable of benefitting from it outside particular contexts. Understanding Catholic identity as contingent and requiring ongoing support and re-creation would transform formation and sacramental programmes not just for families and young people but for Catholics of all ages.

This research contributes to a number of wider conversations in the academy. Firstly, it provides a picture of rich religious lives chosen by a group of young people in the UK in late modernity. It relates to other such research within the secularisation/post-secularisation debate, such as Louise Ryan's work with young Muslims (Ryan 2014), and Guest et al's research into the religious experiences of university students in the UK (Guest 2019). Secondly, it offers an example of the power of ordinary Catholicism as a resource for life, outside any special group or doctrinal stance, such as those young people attending the Traditional Latin Mass (Clements and Bullivant 2022a). Thirdly, revealing some of the mechanisms of family life by which the balance between structuring structure and innovation are maintained helps explain the long-term existence of Catholicism, contributing to the discussion begun by Norget, Napolitano and Maybin (2017). Finally, Lived Catholicism emerges as an emic, non-normative approach, focusing on the voices and experiences of individual Catholics in particular times and places, as they seek to make meaning from their catholicity within the structuring structures of the institutional Church.

1.4.2 Outline of Chapters

This chapter has laid out the premise for the research, along with some of the paradoxes and ambiguities that became elements of the analytical framing. Chapter Two explores how Catholic identity among young people has been studied, considering the foundations of identity, particularly as formed in families through processes of religious socialisation and agency. It examines the scholarship across a variety of contexts including Europe, the USA, global studies and within the Catholic Church. Having established the gap in knowledge that this study seeks to fill, Chapter Three explores the methodological and epistemological framings for the project, working from overall theoretical framing to reviewing the suitability of particular methods to meet the constraints of the project. Chapter Four lays out the fieldwork process, recognising that, even from its beginnings, this project complexifies normative categories. Chapters Five and Six examine the data from two contrasting angles: the unexpected importance of family in participants' accounts of being Catholic and the agency required to sustain and re-create that identity. They offer a framework of inheriting/choosing, normalising, enacting and imagining

Catholic identity. Chapters Seven and Eight bring the data into conversation with the work of Bourdieu and Orsi, rejecting the taken-for-granted nature of Catholic parents, examining instead the unseen domestic labour of family catholicity through the lens of doxa, habitus and spiritual mastery. The agency of participants themselves is also examined from the perspective of the micro-innovations required to sustain a Catholic identity into adulthood. The determinism of Bourdieu's approach is held in tension by Orsi's emphasis on micro-innovation and meaning-making in the moment. The Conclusion draws together the threads of this thesis, offers some lessons to the Church and proposes an emerging notion of Lived Catholicism.

Chapter 2: Understanding Catholic Identity in Young People

Simon Coleman, in his chapter, “We’re all Catholics now”, explores the difficulties of establishing the boundaries of Catholic identity as a topic for anthropological study. Covering “ritual practice”, “global diffusion” and “temporal experience”, Coleman unpacks the slippery nature of Catholic identity, associated as it is with a range of moral and theological perspectives; religious, national and ethnic identities; and a “grammar that…plays on the complex relationships between authorised ritual centre and unauthorised if creative peripheries.” (Coleman 2017, 278). Even in this short quotation, Coleman captures the tension between the centre and the margins, between authorised and unauthorised expressions of catholicity, and between innovation and tradition. These are major themes across the study of Catholicism, with attitudes to difference and dissent shaping not only individual research findings, but entire fields. They are particularly pertinent to the study of Catholicism among young people, where difference can be read in a range of ways from rebellion through apathy to innovation. These tensions are at the heart of my study, forming the daily discourse of families raising Catholic children, and operating as a framework of meaning-making within which teenagers make sense of their religious habitus. However, they have often not formed part of the scholarly discourse on catholicity, which tends to read Catholic identity as a single, static norm. This can too easily lead to mis-reading dissent and agency as decline. In this chapter, I will survey the various approaches to understanding the origins and changing nature of Catholic identity, in order to establish the principles of a non-normative approach to the social scientific study of Catholicism which includes but does not expect, normative perspectives. Beginning with the underpinnings of identity – family, religious socialisation and agency – I will then examine the key themes arising in the study of Catholicism in the UK, Europe and America, before unpacking the Catholic Church’s changing understanding of young people’s identity and role. I argue that there are three temptations that scholars of Catholicism face: firstly, an over-dependence on propositional belief; secondly, failing to account fully for the dynamics of power within the practice of Catholicism; finally, to regard dissent and difference as decline, rather than as agency. I conclude this chapter with a more detailed articulation of my research questions.

2.1. The Origins of Religious Identity

What does it mean for a person to say they are a Catholic? Does it convey something or anything about their beliefs, actions, habits, weekly routine, family life or friendship group? Is it the same now as it was ten or twenty years ago? While appearing homogenous from the outside, the implications of identifying as Catholic in the UK are different from Kerala, China or even the US, and are different now from the 1950s or, indeed, the 1850s. This is particularly true for migrant families who may have experienced two or more different cultures in which to be Catholic. Strangely, though, many studies of Catholicism take the identity element for granted. Such approaches assess self-identifying Catholics against a single norm of practice and belief (for example, Sunday Mass attendance). This is the approach the Church itself takes, such as when assigning places at Catholic schools. Social theory understands religious identity as more broadly formed. Stuart Hall, sociologist and cultural theorist, argues that identity formation is often wrongly seen as a straightforward process, shaped by the illusory image of a fixed or single self, whereas in reality, identities are in flux, multiply produced, and were never fixed to begin with (Hall 1992). Religious identity is distinctive because it has an orientation to (or the possibility of an orientation to) the Sacred, but can include religious, familial, cultural or ethnic narratives. Day and Lee (2014) exemplify this complexity in their critique of the 2001 UK census, noting that, due to the particular order of questions on the census form, Christian identity had briefly become elided with English nationalism.

At this point, it is tempting to take up a post-modern position and say that no identity has meaning beyond that which people allow it to have from moment to moment (Bauman 1996). However, religious identity can shape the life choices people make, the votes they cast, and the way they raise their children (Appiah 2018). It has power beyond that given to it by any individual. Nancy Ammerman (2003) situates religious identity between existing rules and schemas and the dynamic nature of social interactions, as both structured and constructed. She draws on Margaret Somers' work on narrative analysis to offer an account of identity as understood in relation to personal, communal and institutional narratives, with each person making sense of their lives dynamically and relationally. Religious institutions establish narratives through rituals, mythologies and practices, offering stories of sin and redemption within which individuals can find meaning. However, most people have multiple understandings of themselves, for example as co-worker, parent, friend, and child, with which religious narratives co-exist and even make sense, depending on their salience. For Ammerman, agency exists in the possibilities of gaps between narratives, invoking patterns of understanding in "non-prescribed" ways.

Extrapolating this work to Catholic identity raises questions for my research about the part played by the institutional Church, accommodating the lived experiences of 1.2 billion Catholics across the world within a single identity, and how multiple narratives might manifest in a Catholic setting. However, the taken-for-granted nature of Catholic identity means that most research in this area has occurred in the context of schools and other Catholic institutions (McDonough 2019; Village and Francis 2016). As the number of practising Catholics diminishes across the Western world, once-full Catholic schools, universities, and hospitals are facing problems with staff, leadership and clientele.[16] The issue of what it means to be a Catholic institution becomes pressing as Catholic influence lessens (Curran 1997). Fewer studies address the complexity of Catholic identity in individuals or acknowledge that it might have more than one form, with migration being a rare exception (Garnett and Harris 2013; Trzebiatowska 2010). Michele Dillon (2018) has done the most extensive work in this area, developing the notion of "interpretive autonomy" which opens a space between the normative teachings of the Church and how they are received by individuals. In her work on attitudes to abortion, Bruce (2020) combines "interpretive autonomy" with an attention to intersectionality to examine the mechanisms that govern this process. Surprisingly, Dillon shows that interpretive autonomy preserves attachment to the Church, allowing Catholics to feel a loyalty to the Church while disagreeing with individual teachings. However, while this offers an answer to how Catholics can dissent while remaining practising, it does not explain why. Andrew Greeley (2000) takes a different approach, moving beyond propositional faith and placing Catholic identity in the realm of the imagination, allowing him to explore how experience, image and ritual form compelling Catholic imaginaries that remain even after practice and belief no longer pertain.

This thesis will hold these diverse notions of Catholic identity in conversation with the data. Exploring faith identity among Catholic young people offers the possibility to examine catholicity at a significant moment of wider identity formation. Complexifying the notion of Catholic identity beyond religious practice and belief allows for notions of contingency, diversity and agency, while preserving the influence of the institutional Church. This will require examining themes of religious socialisation, family and agency in the wider literature.

---

[16] Take, for example, the changing picture in the USA. Catholic school admissions have declined from 5.2 million in the mid 1960s to 1.8 million today (Wodon 2021). The number of Catholic hospitals has increased, but their leadership has seen significant change. In 1968, 770 of the 796 Catholic hospitals had religious sisters or priests as CEOs, reducing to 8 by 2011. Mergers and other engagements with secular medicine have left questions about the purpose of a Catholic identity (Sack 2011). While Catholic universities have not diminished in number, they have been accused of losing their distinctive Catholic character (Holz, n.d.). This has raised new questions about how to benchmark the catholicity or orthodoxy of these institutions: https://cardinalnewmansociety.org/assessing-catholic-identity-a-handbook-for-catholic-college-and-university-leaders/

2.1.1 Families and Identity Formation

Family was the surprise theme in this study which began by focussing on teenage religious identity. Seventy years of marketing to teenagers have created assumptions of late adolescence as a time of peer influence and rebellion against the values of the family. Instead, the importance of family to the religiosity of young people is clear in study after study. The impact of parental religiosity has been long studied from a variety of perspectives, including religious service attendance (Francis and Casson 2019; Storm and Voas 2012); transmission of belief between generations (Myers 1996); styles of parenting (Bengtson, Putney, and Harris 2017); the relationship between religious and ethnic identities (Inglis 2007); and types of family structure (Myers 1996). Indeed, in a wide-ranging literature search conducted by the Theos thinktank (Mark 2016) family emerged as the most important influence on young people's faith.

Why family transmission of faith, having proceeded so reliably for centuries, should become less effective in western countries in recent years is a puzzle for the sociology of religion. It has been variously ascribed to a therapeutic modern culture and failure of parenting (Smith and Denton 2005); a lack of seriousness on the part of communities in their approach to youth ministry (Dean 2004); a lack of commitment or discipline among young people (Hoge et al. 2001); the inevitable outworking of processes of secularisation (Hervieu-Léger 2000); and the Second Vatican Council (Bullivant 2019). Certainly, the last half century has seen significant social changes around the roles and understanding of women and young people, to social and sexual morality, and to communication technology. In the 1940s and 50s the doxa of Catholic families and that of wider culture, while not synonymous in significant ways (such as the notices that could be seen on boarding houses asking for "no dogs, no blacks, no Irish") were closer than they are now (Bullivant 2019).

At the same time, many of the building blocks of Catholic identity began to disappear:

> The old system of Catholic faith transmission – which relied on concentrated Catholic residential neighbourhoods, ethnic solidarity, strong Catholic schools, religious education classes designed to reinforce family and parish life, and "thickly" Catholic cultures, practices, and rituals – had drastically eroded by the time this generation...came of age. Yet no alternative approach to effective inter-generational Catholic faith transmission had been devised and instituted to replace the old system – and indeed, it is not clear that any such system has yet been put in place today. (Smith et al. 2014)

This transmission system was so imbued in Catholic life that it seemed invisible and so effective that it seemed innate. Its disappearance has left families often as the sole progenitors of Catholic identity, without, as Smith recognises, the complementary support required.

Perhaps because of this, parents themselves do not appear confident in this process. The 2008 European Values Study asked parents to rank eleven qualities that children might learn at home, including independence, hard work, religious faith and unselfishness. Of the 505 self-identified Anglicans in the survey, religious faith was the least popular quality at 11%, compared to good manners at 94%. Even of those saying that religious faith was very important in their own lives, only 36% classed faith as important to learn at home (Voas and Watt 2014). Casson's qualitative survey of Catholic primary school parents surfaced possible reasons for these results: including that parents felt it was not their job to pass on faith; and that they were concerned that their children might be adversely impacted at school or elsewhere (Casson 2014). In contrast, within Islam, families are recognised as the key to faith transmission. Muslim parents in the UK are active in promoting faith in the home and have higher levels of faith transfer through families. Activities include arranging for children to learn the Qu'ran in Arabic, engaging in religious rituals in the home, and repeating prayers and extracts from holy texts (Scourfield et al. 2013, quoted in Mark 2016).

2.1.2 Religious Socialisation – Sameness

Two sociological theories help explain the importance of family life to Catholic identity formation: religious socialisation and agency. When considering the origins of religious identity in young people, socialisation and agency provide the elements of "structure and construction" of Ammerman's theory. Growing out of sociological theories of socialisation, religious socialisation theory seeks to explain the transfer of faith across generations, regarding families as structures that help create preferences that then form commitments to organisations. Early theories treated children and young people as mere receivers of socialisation and were critiqued as overly determinist (Golo et al. 2019). Since then, the theory has become more sophisticated, recognising that individuals have considerable agency in choosing sources of influence based on trust and salience (Klingenberg and Sjö 2019). There is a growing appreciation of the degree of parental influence, which has changed focus from early childhood to the impact over a life course (Sherkat 2003). At the same time, it is now recognised that young people play an active role in co-creating a family religiosity (P. Hopkins et al. 2011). There has been some cataloguing of the activities of religious socialisation, for example, providing religious know-how; formation in relating particular bodily patterns and attitudes to specific religious identity; and encouraging young people to internalise a religious worldview (Smith and Snell 2009).

2.1.3 Religious Agency – Difference

If Catholic families were sufficient to determine their children's faith identity, the churches would be full of teenagers. There are clearly other dynamics at play here. The other half of Ammerman's theory of religious identity involves the dynamism of social interactions and realities which open possibilities for religious agency. However, the literature on religious agency has not settled on a single definition, varying as to its frequency, origin and impact. For Leming, religious agency resides in the significant decisions made to maintain or develop religious identity, sometimes in the face of crisis or challenge. Religious identities can be received from a variety of family or social entities, but "To constitute religious agency, this identity is claimed and lived as one's own, with an insistence on active ownership." (Leming 2007, 74). By separating the holding of religious identity from choosing to perform that identity, Leming brings to light the labour required to move from identity to practice. However, Leming's definition of religious agency is substantially more agentic than Swidler (2001), who sees agency functioning at a variety of levels, constrained by culturally learned skills, styles and habits, some of which are contradictory. Swidler's theory is less driven by decision and explains how an individual can act outside institutional norms while still claiming that identity. Both scholars are explicit about the part that power, and therefore resistance and dominance, play in the production of agency.

At the same time, Swidler helpfully notes that it is not clear how cultural logics work in practice. For example, what drives a brother and sister to make different choices about their religious identity? Sewell's work on a general understanding of agency is a useful clarification. In his theorising, transformation can come from within ordinary structures, not just from an external event. Agency is the capacity to transpose schemas to new contexts. Actors have a variety of schemas available to them while making new structures that are recognisable as transformations of the old. Agency differs according to the resources available to individuals and can be collective as well as individual. It is required to sustain structures just as much as transform them. Sewell (1992) imagines agency as an ongoing project of social life rather than as individual points of decision. Recognising the labour of maintaining an identity is an important building block of recognising that Catholic identity is not fixed, a notion that is key to understanding my data.

Tensions between sameness and difference, structure and agency, innovation and tradition emerge as important themes of this study, helping to destabilise normative understandings of Catholic identity. On a micro level, they throw new light on the structuring and constructing of an individual religious identity. On a macro level, the tensions shape the structuring and construction of the identity of Catholic communities in a particular time and space, as well as the larger forces influencing the institutional Church. Stuart Hall writes about the ongoing labour of identity production: "And since as a process it operates across difference, [identification] entails discursive work, the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of "frontier-effects", it requires what is left outside, its constitutive outside, to consolidate the process." (Hall 1996, 2). Turning next to the study of Catholicism reveals that not only individuals but scholars and even fields of study bind and mark symbolic boundaries.

2.2 The Changing Face of English Catholicism: Responding to Complexity

The recent study of Catholicism in the UK has concentrated on measuring decline and distance from the institutional norm. These studies include the work of Michael Hornsby-Smith and John Fulton, examining the character of English Catholicism, McGrail's focus on power plays in parishes, Casson's work on identity in Catholic schools, Harris's focus on the lived experience of Catholicism in the UK, and Bullivant and Clements' qualitative work on practices and beliefs.[17] In the tension between sameness and difference, the academic focus has been on preserving an ideal of sameness while mapping the differences from that ideal. This section explores the range of responses to difference within the Catholic community in England, from Hornsby-Smith's "customary Catholics", to Alana Harris's holistic Lourdes pilgrims.

Most of the studies of Catholicism in the UK follow a classic sociological narrative of dissent and decline. Michael Hornsby-Smith, working in the 1980s and 90s, was downcast by his findings: "It became clear that not only was there considerable variation in the patterns and beliefs of Catholics, but also the assumption that an individual's beliefs constituted a coherent system was shown to be highly problematic." (Hornsby-Smith 1991, 25). In some ways, what is surprising about Hornsby-Smith's reaction is that he expected a "coherent system" in the first place. Even among his “core Catholics” drawn from those working at diocesan and national level, there were critiques of Church teaching. In turning to the Catholics found at Mass, Hornsby-Smith was surprised by the levels of heterodoxy and, in his analysis, moved from describing them as “ordinary Catholics” to “customary Catholics”. He drew on Luckmann and Cipriani’s notions of invisible and diffuse religion, seeing in his data “a sort of ‘lay religion’ which ‘betrays’ orthodox religious values but which adapts and reinserts itself into [everyday] contingent realities” (Cipriani 1984, 38 quoted in Hornsby-Smith 1991, 39). In a rather pejorative judgement, he suggests that

---

[17] Hornsby-Smith 1991; Fulton 2000; McGrail 2007; Casson 2011; Harris 2013; Bullivant 2018; Clements and Bullivant 2022b.

> processes of trivialisation, conventionality, apathy, convenience and self-interest erode and modify the beliefs and practices prescribed by the socialising agents of official Roman Catholicism and result in current expressions of customary religion. (Hornsby-Smith 1991, 90)

Seeing the levels of heterogeneity among both sets of participants, Hornsby-Smith predicted that Catholicism would lose its collective identity and become more of a matter of personal choice. For him, the potential for agency, by its very nature, would lead to the decline of the Catholic Church from its Fortress Church position, losing its distinctiveness and beginning to converge with other mainstream churches (Hornsby-Smith 1992).

In reading Hornsby-Smith, it is important to remember that, although the critique is a familiar one today, these interviews were undertaken in the 70s and early 80s, over 40 years ago. These are the profiles of the grandparents of the young people I interviewed. In stepping back from normative expectations, some interesting questions arise. Have Catholics always been so heterogeneous, once familiar catechism questions were bypassed? If maintaining faith requires the “coherent system” that Hornsby-Smith and his researchers expected, why do we see many people in their 70s and 80s still attending church? What is it about Catholicism which enables it to embrace a degree of difference and improvisation without being catastrophically compromised?

In *Young Catholic Adults at the Turn of the Millennium,* Fulton acknowledged a shift of hegemonic power away from the institutional Church and, like Hornsby-Smith, saw religion as increasingly located in the realm of the individual. But where Hornsby-Smith expected this to result in dilution and diminution, Fulton was more positive about individual agency, using a post-modern frame to explore the extent to which his participants assembled a *bricolage* of spiritualities under a Catholic frame. However, rather than allowing for the kind of complexity that a bricolage approach might suggest, Fulton followed Hornsby Smith's typology, with "core", "practising" and "dissociated" Catholics, with an additional "super core" type emerging, due in part, he suggests, to the middle-class nature of the group (Fulton 2000). The super core were the most likely to have had significant religious experiences, but they were also the most critical of particular elements of Church teaching, a finding that Fulton does not explain. By using a linear range of practising/non-practising Catholics, Fulton smoothed over what would be more interesting complexities. In this narrative, dissent was the factor that might move people down through that range, weakening bonds with the institutional Church.

Peter McGrail was also interested in degrees of autonomy in Catholic identity, but this time among first communion families and parishioners. He examined the ways in which a particular Catholic doctrine and ritual has implications for different forms of meaning-making, power, and social capital. He did not subscribe to Hornsby-Smith's notion of "incoherence" nor of Fulton's bricolage. For him, all participants had intelligible understandings of the first communion ritual, but they were divided between parishioners, for whom this is part of the tradition of the Church; and the less-practising families, for whom first communion is freighted with other meanings about their position in the community. Here dissent is a power struggle between competing understandings, as revealed in this long but expressive, extract:

> Dressed in their elaborate costume and laden with gifts from their family, the children become the bearers of messages through which each family… stakes a claim to its desired position within the local community. By attempting to minimise the potential for external display within the ritual, parish authorities jeopardise this social function. The consequent familial resistance to attempts to restrict the field of meaning to the purely religious is, therefore, understandable. For the first communicants and their families, identity as Catholics is only one constituent element within a broader social construct of identity… It is not simply that the ritual has failed to realise the expectation of generations of Catholics who… conduct their lives in accordance with Church teaching. What the ritual event reveals is the failure of the Church to control the systems of meaning of which its members construct their identity and determine their actions. (McGrail 2007, 167)

Although in this picture of parish life, agency was restored to all actors, McGrail, like the other researchers, reached for a binary where a more complex analysis may have borne fruit. In McGrail's analysis, there was no allowance for the spirituality of the non-practising families, nor did he question why these families saw first communion celebrations as an important site of their identity-making. By pitching this familiar scene as a battle over meaning where only one side can triumph, McGrail did not allow for new understandings or practices of catholicity to emerge.

In the early 1990s, several developments upset the previously dominant secularisation narrative. Cassanova complexified notions of secularisation, seeing three different, asymmetric processes across public and private spheres; but also seeing the possibilities for the deprivatisation of religion where secular narratives had failed, particularly in politics (Cassanova, 2006). Talal Asad critiqued the use of the words "religion" and "belief" as containing significant colonising overtones, casting religion as "a modern, privatised Christian one because and to the extent that it emphasises the priority of belief as a state of mind rather than a constituting activity in the world" (Asad 1993, 225). Asad (following Foucault) proposed a genealogical approach in which the differing layers of meanings could be excavated, both as used by participants and by the academics themselves. He also reminds us of the power of naming and constructing normativity, speaking particularly of how power can distort cultural translation.

In the wider field of the study of religion in the UK, these developments resulted in a significant problematising of academic definitions of religious identity. Grace Davie explored why many people continued to express faith in God despite the fall in churchgoing (Davie 1994). Abby Day, in a reversal of this, explored Christian identity among those who had no conventional Christian beliefs or practice (Day 2009). Lois Lee investigated the complexity behind a "no religion" affiliation, including embodied practices (Lee 2015). Finally, Day and Lynch rejected propositional belief altogether as a basis for research into religion. They argued that belief is located in the social, functioning either as "markers of cultural identity", "an expression of significant social networks", or as "an organising centre for an individual's… life" (Day and Lynch 2013, 199). At the same time, the EHRC/AHRC Religion and Society programme funded a number of projects investigating religion among young people in the UK, which revealed some of the varieties of ways that religion impacted the lives of British teenagers, and also significant methodological advances in researching religion among young people (Catto 2014; Hemming and Madge 2012; Collins-Mayo and Dandelion 2010). However, despite the resurgence in interest in studying religion, Bullivant and Harris observe that Catholicism is often absent from broader sociological and historical studies. For example, Bullivant notes that few accounts of the 1960s include the Second Vatican Council (Bullivant 2019), while Harris sees a similar discrepancy in the absence of the controversial *Humanae Vitae* from studies of the changing nature of sexuality in the 1960s and 70s (Harris 2018).

The lesson from these developments is that "self-evident meanings are nothing of the sort" (Lee 2015, 28). This mantra allows for new meanings of religious/non-religious identity, practice and belief to emerge. While Bullivant and Clements continued to track changes in attitude across the

Catholic population through quantitative methods, changes to the study of religion began to impact on the study of Catholicism in the UK, particularly in the field of education. Ann Casson used Hervieu-Léger's work on chains of memory and notions of bricolage to examine the faith lives of students in Catholic schools, moving away from the linear/binary scale of practising/non-practising Catholics. She regarded the rejection of weekly Mass going among young people as not a rejection of Catholic identity per se, but of an older generation's perception of Catholic identity. Casson's typology includes "pilgrim Catholic" (annual Lourdes pilgrims but not going to Mass at home); "golden rule Catholic" (we must be nice to each other but don't have to go to Mass); "school Catholic" (supported by the Catholic environment and opportunities not available in a non-faith school); "Catholic atheist"(where "non-Catholic" was still a category of resonance); and "halfway Catholic" (Catholic identity and practice, but not holding some key teachings of the Church) (Casson, 2011). These categories illustrate the capacity of Catholic identity to flex across the variety of lives and experiences of young people, even within a strongly normative institution such as a Catholic school. They start to hint at the degree of resilience and diversity that has enabled Catholicism to exist across two millennia and around the world, a far cry from the narratives of decline and dissent seen so far.

Finally, the work of Alana Harris offers an account of the lives of Catholics lived in the round. She argues that the standard secularisation narrative has failed to capture the diversity and liveliness of lived experiences of Catholicism. For example, Callum Brown's extensive survey of the role of women in transmitting faith across generations and its subsequent collapse in the 1960s does not address the exceptionalism of the gender balance of Catholic households, including the roles of priests and fathers (Harris 2013, Brown 2009). Recapturing the sense of Greeley's "enchanted Catholic imagination", she draws on social history, ethnography, and theology to construct multi-layered analyses of the attraction of Catholicism as lived by ordinary people (Harris 2013). Her account of Lourdes pilgrimage helpers uncovered the complex ways in which traditional Catholic notions of pilgrimage, anointing and reconciliation were woven into personal narratives of embodied healing and spiritual encounter. Here Harris showed the capacity of Catholicism to encompass twenty-first century narratives of individual journey and holistic spirituality within traditional Marian devotion. As she noted, while New Age spiritualities have been critiqued for their individualism and consumerism, the Lourdes pilgrimage experience allied personal exploration with intensely communal forms of religious expression and care. Harris moves away from typologies altogether in her work, allowing individual accounts to illuminate wider themes, connecting to scholarship across disciplines. She is not much interested in the degree of

Catholicity of her participants, beyond noting that for some this is their main expression of Catholicism. Instead, her accounts allow for a nuanced picture to emerge of the ways in which Catholicism is a support for twenty-first century living.

This survey sets the context for my own research. Across each of the studies, ordinary people are revealed as making sense of their Catholic identity in their own time and place, whether in the heady days of the post-conciliar Church, or as a teenage helper on a Lourdes pilgrimage. Dissent and distinctiveness emerge as important themes for this type of catholicity, as well as the freedom to make choices within what looks like a homogenous offering. Above all, this literature reveals an English catholicity that is personal, domestic and often private, without the baggage of national or ethnic overtones, key attributes for one group of families in my study. I also draw on the methodological journey of the last thirty years, in particular, the movement from linear ranges to types and lived experiences.

2.3 Lessons from Elsewhere: Catholic Europe

Scholars of Catholicism in Europe have faced different challenges as Catholic countries have experienced contested and uneven processes of secularisation. In an inversion of the scholarship in England, in Europe, it is dissent which is taken for granted, and remaining religious practice which is the surprise. The changing nature of Catholic identity across a variety of contexts offers clues to the "stickiness" of Catholicism, the ways in which "the religious *habitus* in the west has exploded and partially infiltrated so-called secular activities". (Rivière and Piette 1990 quoted in Hervieu-Léger 2000, 47). There have been a variety of approaches. Luckmann and Cipriani's notions of "invisible" and "diffused" religion have been useful in exploring predominantly social and cultural expressions of religious identity across Catholic Europe, co-existing with formal church-based religion. Cipriani writes:

> In the immanent dimension of individual everyday experience, diffused religion, rather than bearing witness to the presence of a process of laicisation in a religiously oriented society, seems to enhance the permanence of the sacred in the secularised society. (Cipriani 2003, 317)

If Cipriani's perspective is that of wider society and cultural heritage, Hervieu-Léger focuses on individuals, exploring the ways in which "believers of all origins assert composite religious identities, in which are crystallized the successive and cumulated stages of their personal spiritual search" (Hervieu-Leger 2006, 59). For Hervieu-Léger, the explosion of the religious habitus into the secular realm is not so much represented by lasting practices of prayer and belief in God outside institutional religion (as for Cipriani), as the detachment of continuing ethical, aesthetic and political dimensions of religion from belief in God. These different interpretations reveal the range of narratives of religious identity in a post-secular reality.

In his work on young adult Catholics in Italy, Luigi Tomasi, using the same linear range as John Fulton, found that Catholicism was still meaningful for a significant number of young people as part of their individual development: “an important piece in the mosaic of personal life and self-fulfilment" (Tomasi 2000). From the traditional, highly controlling Catholicism of previous decades, this manifestation prioritised freedom of choice, helping the poor and giving everyone a decent standard of living. The Church’s sexual morality was discounted by almost every participant, even those classed as core Catholics. Roberto Cipriani saw in this change a move to a more independent kind of spirituality: one in which people make up their own minds about sex and morality, but in which praying, believing in God and Catholic affiliation are still (and in some cases, increasingly) important (Cipriani 2003). Cipriani did not dismiss this notion as corrupted or banalised religion, instead finding the growth of individualism and the maintenance of belief and practice in the Italian context to be compatible.

The abuse scandals in Ireland have led to a more contested environment, with rates of Mass attendance rapidly falling from late 1990s onwards (Inglis 2007). How people identify as Catholic and what that means has changed just as rapidly. One research project reported the repeated phrase “I’m Catholic but not religious”, where “religious” described a range of practices and cultural references, including praying regularly and believing in God and the saints without regular Mass attendance (Landy). Karen Anderson drew on Bordieu’s concept of *habitus* to capture these complexities among Irish young people. In some ways, her findings were the same as those of Cipriani and Tomasi. Young people had taken a step away from the institutional church, choosing their own morality and their own way of being religious. Mass attendance was falling. However, among these young Irish Catholics, the frequency of prayer was also falling, and other, non-Catholic, forms of spirituality were not replacing the Catholic ones. Anderson wrote:

> A new Catholic habitus is evident. Young Irish Catholics prefer Catholic teachings, beliefs and rituals to extra-church spirituality, but they reject religious authority. They want to hold onto their Catholic identity, but on their own terms. Perhaps the data is indicative of a search for a new way to combine the Catholic identity with other social and personal identities and moral liberalism. (Andersen 2010, 35)

Kieran and Mullally, researching a decade later, found even more variety and less conventional catholicity among the student teachers in a Catholic teaching college. Despite nearly all having made their first communion and confirmation, they discovered "seemingly incompatible, paradoxical and binary beliefs revealing a complex fluidity that defies neat categorisation and resists orthodox classification" (Kieran and Mullally 2022, 65).

The situation in Poland is different again. The pivotal part played by the Catholic Church in defeating communism during the 1980s, along with the election of a Polish pope, meant that Catholicism was associated with revolution against state-imposed atheism. After the move to democracy, the restored hierarchy used this association to bring back traditional Catholic morality. To be against Catholic values was to be not fully Polish (Mandes and Rogaczewska 2013). In examining the faith world of young Polish Catholics, Mandes and Rogaczewska were interested, like Anderson, not so much in the division between young people and the institutional Church but in the fact of their remaining Catholic. What, in these circumstances, does Catholic identity mean to them? The authors found that, for young people having grown up in a communist and post-communist era and often forced to move away from home communities to study and find work, Catholicism provided much-needed religious "capital". Here, they are using the word in the sense developed by Christian Smith and Patricia Snell:

> Religion provides teenagers with moral directives, confirming spiritual experiences, role models, community and leadership skills… all of which, solid social scientific reasoning indicates, can be expected to enhance their life experiences. (Smith and Snell 2009, 277–78 quoted in Mandes and Rogaczewska 2013, 262)

The researchers found that in Poland, this religious capital was being used at crisis points in young people's lives – falling in love, birth, death, marriage, disease – and to make sense of the challenges of life. Qualitative research revealed many paradoxes in these young people, including their unwillingness to discuss religious matters with their parents, but on the other hand, keeping the Catholic Church as one of their most important reference points. Across their lives as a whole, the researchers found that

> many young adults prefer to live in the ambiguity between the intellectual rejection of propositional belief and the emotional acceptance of embodied belief, rather than choose the clear-cut position of a non-believer. Thus the relationship between believing and belonging is becoming more subtle and paradoxical than it was in the generation of their parents. (Mandes and Rogaczewska 2013, 272)

In exploring Catholicism in these late-modern, post-secular settings, key words are ambiguity, paradox, and experience. These scholars find religiosity in unusual places (such as sitting outside a church) and do not jump to conclusions about the value of what look like highly organised, institutional events such as religious festivals (see especially Hervieu-Léger (1994b) for the ways in which young people negotiate World Youth Day according to their own world view). As societal ties to organised religion loosen, people are improvising what Catholicism means for them into a personalised form of religiosity. The desire to identify as Catholic may come from being baptised, growing up in a Catholic milieu, having a political or cultural affiliation, or just feeling that, fundamentally, that's who you are. Danielle Hervieu-Léger, herself writing in a Catholic/post-Catholic context, reflects that the challenge for scholars is to

> grasp the reality of the shift that is taking place in the modern world from traditional religions towards spheres outside conventional religion that have become autonomous and invested with a new kind of religion, and not to associate this shift with the inevitable disappearance of religion in modernity; it represents instead a complete recasting of the substance of religion, and leads to traditional religions themselves being transformed and remodelled. (Hervieu-Léger 2000, 69)

2.4 Lessons from Elsewhere: Catholic America

The study of Catholicism in the UK and Europe has been shaped by both the local social and political circumstances and the outlook of particular scholars. The same can be said of America. Catholicism is the biggest individual religious institution in the US (around 20% of the population), but without the political burden of being the established Church. It is large, wealthy and powerful, politically and economically as well as religiously. In this section, I will compare two different approaches to the study of Catholicism: a largely sociological perspective tracking Catholicism against the wider narrative of secularisation; and a lived religion approach which is more interested in individual experience.

2.4.1 Normative Perspectives

The normative perspective in the UK of mapping decline and dissent from the institution is widespread in the US, but in much more muscular and high-profile form.[18] This includes the work of scholars such as John Portmann, Christian Smith and Dean Hoges. Portmann (2009) analyses the "stickiness" of Catholic identity from the perspectives of the benefits of belonging to a group; managing the terror of death; and a Freudian theory of "family romance". However, as Portmann's starting point is that cultural Catholics are lazy or dissenting, his analysis lacks the nuance to explore why people continue to describe themselves as Catholic. Christian Smith et al. (2014) use a linear range in their study of young Catholic adults with titles such as apostates, switchers, estranged, nominal, engaged and devout. Smith replicates Fulton's lack of curiosity about dissent in the most practising categories. Of the 41 young adults interviewed, only one comes close to meeting the criteria for the "devout" category: Tommy. "He attends Mass regularly, loves his Church and thinks seriously about Church doctrine. However, he disagrees with the Church on abortion, premarital sex, priestly celibacy, and homosexuality. And that, as we have defined it, keeps him in the category of engaged." (Smith et al, 2014, 112). Smith does not explore why young people might be dissenting from Catholic teaching, and neither does he question the degree to which young people of previous generations would have met the devout criteria.

---

[18] One example is the Society of Catholic Social Scientists, based at Steubenville Franciscan University, which states in its aims: “The SCSS boldly challenges this secularlized approach to the social sciences by combining objective scholarly analysis with fidelity to the Magisterium.” Recent articles include

However, this research provides helpful insights for my study, particularly in the area of the transmission of faith. Smith rejects the usual narrative of continuous decline by showing that practice and belief have not changed since the 1970s (the beginning of statistics in these areas), and that, more than likely, any step change happened in the 50s and 60s. He also shows the significance of family and non-family adults in faith transmission, including the impact of Catholic schools on those without highly practising families. His work on the role that parents play in forming faith identity (Smith and Snell 2009) is offset by a disconcertingly determinist position at the end of his study on young Catholics, where participants seem only the subject of their family life and not co-producers (Smith et al. 2014). The power of the normative position can be seen in Smith's question, "Does calling oneself a Catholic while hardly or never acting like one make one, in fact, a Catholic?" (Smith 2009, 130). Smith does not question why someone would want to claim Catholicism as an identity, even if as part of sideline or multiple identities. Applying Hall and Ammerman's notions of identity, an alternative approach is to explore how Catholic identity functions in the wider context of American youth culture, but also to allow a grass-roots description of the ways in which young people are Catholic (Ammerman 2003; Hall, 1992).

"Bishops' Conferences in the Wake of Humanae Vitae: Commentaries that Missed the Mark" and "Time For a Non-Feminist Reappraisal of the Role of Women".

Dean Hoge et al.'s work with young Catholic adults explored the difference that the culture of choice made to religiosity in America. They explored the "stickiness" of various kinds of Catholic teaching, and fundamental Catholic identity. They also used a linear range, writing that "[participants] arrange themselves in a spectrum from being active in parish life at one end to having left Catholicism at the other end." (Hoge et al. 2001, 111). This is despite the quotations from the interviews revealing quite a complex approach to Catholic belief and practice.[19] Hoge et al found that young adult Catholics attach social and cultural salience to their identity despite low levels of practice. They did not explain this beyond saying, "For many young adults, Catholicism is not so much a binding community of discipleship as a cultural tool kit of symbolic religion/spiritual wares from which it is possible to construct a personal religious identity." (Hoge et al. 2001, 226). This approach enables us to know what young people were doing, but not necessarily why. One must question, however, the extent to which Catholicism was ever a "binding community of discipleship" and whether this is a fair category of measurement for young people. The other deficiency of this study is that, while Latino participants are grouped statistically, no attention is paid to their particular beliefs and practices. Catholicism is seen as monochrome, to be judged according to one standard.

2.4.2 Lived Religion Perspectives

The scholarly work emerging under the title of lived religion was a reaction to increasingly sterile debates within the sociology of religion as to the degree and role of secularisation in the modern world, which sometimes pivoted on the categorisations of individual scholars as to whether a practice was religious or not (Ammerman 2016, Voas and Bruce 2007). Instead, lived religion focussed on the meaning-making of individuals, offering a more grounded, emic picture of religiosity in particular contexts and settings (Orsi 1997). It offered a credible response to colonialist critiques of the anthropology of religion (Clifford and Marcus, 1985), and to similar challenges within the social scientific study of religion (Asad 1993). Arising from notions of popular history, the social anthropology of Geertz, and the ritual studies of Turner and Douglas, together with Ammerman's work in Congregational studies, lived religion revealed a more granular, more individualised picture of the many workings of religion in people's lives (Hall 1997). Foregrounding individual meaning-making and agency, it focused on ground-up questions such as "What does it mean for you to be Catholic?". The result, as noted by Thomas Tweed, was a different perspective on religiosity:

---

[19] For example, "Joe: I don't know how to become un-Catholic. So I don't know if I'm a non-practising Catholic or what." (Hoge et al. 2001, 103).

> that meaning is constructed (not given), multiple (not univocal), contested (not shared), and fluid (not static). And most important, that meaning is inscribed by readers, listeners, participants or viewers. (Tweed 2002, 65)

Robert Orsi, over a life-time of work, has demonstrated that complexity, ambiguity and hybridisation lie at the heart of the lived nature of Catholicism. In his chapter in David Hall's book on lived religion, Orsi wrote that key words were "tensile, hybridity, ambivalence, irony" and that "the central methodological commitment is to avoid conclusions that impose univocality on practices that are multifarious." (Orsi 1997, 11). Rather than avoiding difference, for Orsi, difference is the analytical starting point. He also points to the many ways power is implicated in religiosity, from a perspective of both transmission and resistance. For him, religiosity is always what individual women and men make of it, in the moment, in response to a particular happening in their lives. In his manifesto, *Is the Study of Lived Religion Irrelevant to the World We Live in?*, he laid out the distinctiveness of a lived approach; treating research subjects as experts and co-researchers in their lives, and situating lived religion firmly within a cultural frame, recognising the work of world-creation and meaning-making that is done by individuals with or without reference to a religious institution. Finally, Orsi rejects notions of objectivity, arguing that the person of the researcher is implicated in the very questions asked, let alone the framing of the answers (Orsi 2003).

Jerome Baggett, in his study of six parishes in the Bay Area of San Francisco, evidenced the benefits of "radical empiricism", as Orsi calls it (Baggett 2008). Suggesting that individual choice might help people to maintain their religious identity, he challenged the disparaging notion of "cafeteria Catholics". Instead, his participants negotiated with, reframed and innovated the tradition of the Church in order to fit their experience of church to their own sense of self. For Baggett, American Catholics are adaptable, creative and work at maintaining their faith through changing circumstances of their lives. Duggan and Owens foregrounded individual experiences of Catholic childhood in their book, *From the Pews in the Back: Young Women and Catholicism.* Like Orsi, these young women are interested in Catholicism as a powerful forming and deforming force, reflecting on the ways their Catholic upbringing impacted their sense of self. A long way from linear ranges and typologies, these accounts are situated in ambivalence and uncertainty:

> I'm a cradle Catholic; for better or worse, my religion so deeply permeates who I am that I can never entirely be free of it. That includes living in the ambiguity and messiness of it all, stuck somewhere between what the church is, and what the church could be. (Duggan and Owens 2009, 94)

It is interesting to wonder where Christian Smith would have placed this participant in his typology.

A final influence on my study in this area has been some of the developments in Catholic practical theology; approaching the perspective of the lived with a different frame of reference. Tom Beaudoin and Patrick Hornbeck applied ordinary theology to a specifically American Catholic context. In examining why so many American Catholics were deconverting, they acknowledged the need for academic theology to draw closer to the experience of ordinary Catholics, and to recognise the gap between official teaching and religion-as-lived. Beaudoin and Hornbeck criticised academic theology for a lack of curiosity as to what an "ordinary Catholic theology" might look like. They concluded: "To appreciate this rich ordinary theological landscape will require the development of practice-based theological attention to the lives of baptised Catholics, whether they are "practising" or "non-practising"." (Beaudoin and Hornbeck II 2013, 40).

This brief comparison of the two schools of research offers useful lessons for my research. The normative perspective tends to involve large-scale surveys and typologies determined by Church teaching. It is beneficial for measuring the degree of distance between the institutional church and the reality of people's lives as lived, but it cannot tell us on a granular level why people maintain their Catholic identity in the face of this difference. The lived religion perspective tends to the granular, foregrounding individual experience. This has the advantage of allowing the unknown, and un-sought-after to surface. Lived religion is not without its critics (explored further in Chapter 3, which specifically focus on the difficulty of generalising from small or highly particular accounts of religion. There is also a question of its conceptual underpinnings (Knibbe 2020). Nevertheless, as seen, it is able to produce complex and nuanced accounts of religiosity that correspond with the complex times of late modernity.

2.5. Global Catholicism

This survey of the study of Catholic young people has concentrated on studies of Catholicism in the West because my fieldwork took place in a UK context. However, it is also necessary to acknowledge both the global nature of my participants, and also the contribution of the anthropology of Catholicism to this project. Over the course of a PhD it was not possible to undertake a formal survey of the study of young Catholics in a global context, so instead I will outline the key learnings for this project. Firstly, the anthropology of Catholicism is a rare sub-field of the study of Catholicism where difference is not only tolerated, but welcomed. Because of the granular nature of fieldwork, attention tends to be paid to that which is distinctive, including how Catholic identity is expressed in a particular time and place. This can be seen both in the broad scope of the Catholics and Cultures website, showcasing the variety of catholicities around the world (McFarland SJ), but also in individual anthropological studies (D'Souza 2022; Gross 2012; Mayblin 2010).

Secondly, the anthropology of Catholicism as expressed by Norget et al in their *Handbook* has a different starting place from the usual sociological concerns. Rejecting grand narratives of decline and secularism, it reflects instead on its two thousand year "endurance and continuity" and asks, "To what should we attribute this remarkable resilience"? (Mayblin, Norget, and Napolitano 2017, 5). The authors argue that Catholicism's resilience derives from its ongoing balance of sameness and difference, where difference is not rupture but tolerance of locality and diversity, and where sameness is its "continually crystallising system of patterns, replete with infrastructures, dogmas, and 'official positions' that must be made and responded to in differing ways." (Mayblin, Norget, and Napolitano 2017, 11). Here Ammerman"s tension between structure and construction can be found in a Catholic context and on an institutional level. These tensions have become an important analytical key for my research.

Finally, it is important to recognise the contribution of non-Western scholars to the study of Catholicism in young people. The literature is small but growing, adding to the methodological and epistemological advances in this area. A key text is Serrano Javeel Cornelio"s study of young Catholics in the Philippines (Cornelio 2016). The Church in the Philippines is not declining as in many parts of the West, but Cornellio is interested in the diversity of teenage catholicities under the appearance of a uniform Church. Seeking the self-understanding of his participants, Cornelio"s starting point is to ask, "What does being Catholic mean to you?" His subsequent findings of a more experiential relationship with God, an approach to morality which diverges from Church teaching, and a critical view of the local Catholic hierarchy lead Cornelio not to despair of their heterodoxy but to embrace this hybridising approach as "future-proofing" the Church. Nicolette Manglos's study of Catholic and Pentecostal notions of being "born again" in Malawi takes as her starting point that religious identity is not fixed but a repertoire of practices, shaped by and shaping local actors. Her research raises questions about notions of conversion in highly religious societies, how non-Pentecostals interpret notions of being born again, and most interestingly, how African scholars can resist colonial definitions and create their own categories of religion (Manglos 2010).

Norget et al's conceptualising of the roles of sameness and difference in the longevity of the Catholic Church provides one of the main themes for my study. It reverses the notion of difference as decline and rupture, opening a space for the agency of families and young people. The global Church examples then show how these tensions manifest on the ground in very different circumstances. My study applies this learning to ordinary families in the UK, revealing the same mechanisms of sameness and difference in a domestic setting.

2.6. Young People and the Church

Themes of difference and innovation do not just run through the study of Catholicism, but through the history and identity of the Church itself. It is worth surveying the Church's response to its changing circumstances over the past sixty years, especially as envisaged through the role of young people. The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) was a response to dissent and innovation among Catholics. Conceived as a new Pentecost by Pope John XXIII, its priority was *aggiornamento*, bringing the Church up to date and moving away from the triumphalist and exclusionary models of the past (Mannion 2020). An intrinsic part of this was a new appreciation for the laity as active participants in the Church.[20] Developed across succeeding documents, Church teaching re-positioned lay people as key to the mission of the church, with their own sphere in the temporal world. I have noted a similar change in attitude to young people. They appear mostly as objects of education and missionary impulse in the Second Vatican documents. *Christifideles Laici*, published in the mid-90s, acknowledges young people's contribution to changing the world, but it is only in *Christus Vivit*, 2019, that young people are recognised to have the ability to change the church.

---

[20] Some of this development can be traced through *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 4; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*; *Christifideles Laici:* Benedict XVI. 'Address: Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome on the Theme: "Church Membership and Pastoral Co-Responsibility"', 26 May 2009; and *Christus Vivit*.

2.6.1 The Changing Tide of Church Teaching

Before the Second Vatican Council the ideal of the Church was a "perfect society", manifested in a hierarchical clerical structure with perfect control (Dulles 2002). In one of the four Constitutions of the Council, *Lumen Gentium*, this vertical model was replaced by an emphasis on the equality and unity of the Church as the "People of God". This was developed in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, a Decree of the Council solely devoted to the vocation of the laity:

> But the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world. (AA, §5)

On the other hand, young people generally only appeared two-dimensionally in these documents, objects of concern and at risk from a dangerous world. Only with the proper education and formation for life can they be active on behalf of the Church:

> Thus the Catholic school... prepares its pupils to contribute effectively to the welfare of men and to work for the extension of the kingdom of God, so that by living an exemplary and apostolic life they may be, as it were, a saving leaven in the community. (*Gravisimum Educationis* §8)

Twenty years later, *Christifidelis Laici* represented a more nuanced approach to lay vocation. It moved from a negative definition of lay people – as not clergy – to possessing vocation in their own right, "asserting the full belonging of the lay faithful to the Church and to its mystery." (CL, §9). The position on young people had developed substantially from Vatican II, due no doubt in part to wider societal changes in understanding adolescence. *Christifidelis Laici* states that "Youth must not simply be considered as an object of pastoral concern for the Church" (CL, §46), representing a move in the document to describe mutual dialogue as a source of richness, together with a recognition of the agency of young people themselves:

> The Church has so much to talk about with youth, and youth have so much to share with the Church. This mutual dialogue, by taking place with great cordiality, clarity and courage, will provide a favourable setting for the meeting and exchange between generations, and will be a source of richness and youthfulness for the Church and civil society. (CL, §46)

However, there is no suggestion here that young people might contribute to the spiritual life of the Catholic community, let alone reflecting the variety of ways in which young people experience Catholicism around the world. Although there are mentions of the need for ecclesial renewal from the Second Vatican Council onwards,[21] the Church is largely seen as an ideal, and a source from which all identity and agency is derived (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §899). Young people's experiences were only recognised in all their complexity once the Church reflected on the ways in which it is inadequate for their needs, in the papacy of Pope Francis.

As the Church has seen the number of young people attending Mass drop dramatically, there have been increasing attempts to engage them. World Youth Days, gatherings of usually over a million young people for a week of celebration and teaching, were founded by Pope John Paul II. They are a great source of international exchange, of communal gathering, and an affective high point for those involved. However, as Hervieu-Leger"s work shows, their effectiveness at outreach to less practising young people and the long-term formation of young people as orthodox Catholics is questionable (Hervieu-Leger 1994a). A plethora of national documents on Catholic Youth Ministry appeared, inspired by the US bishops" document *A Vision for Youth Ministry*. These documents reframed engagement with adolescents as a central project of the institution, as it became clear that the usual transmission routes of family and Catholic school were breaking down in the West in late modernity. The call came from Pope John Paul II at World Youth Day in 1995:

> What is needed today is a Church which knows how to respond to the expectations of young people. Jesus wants to enter into dialogue with them and, through his body which is the Church, to propose the possibility of a choice which will require a commitment of their lives. As Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus, so the Church must become today the traveling companion of young people. (John Paul II 1995)

In the UK, increasing concern gave rise to a number of reports and research projects. The *Y Church Report*, which I wrote for the Diocese of Northampton in 2001, was a rare example of research into parish-based ministry in the UK (Baigent 2002). This was followed by a national survey in 2009, and the *Complex Catholicism* report in 2018, both of which revealed a surprising diversity of practice and belief among young Catholics often lumped together under the title of "youth" (van Duyvenbode 2018). The response to these findings is patchy. Despite the publication of a national document for youth ministry in 2012, the National Youth Advisor post was made redundant (Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis 2012). The setting up of the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation (CYMFed) has enabled large-scale events such as Flame, with 8,000 young people at Wembley Arena. For most young people, however, local provision is dependent on diocesan and parish resources, which can vary from a dedicated team and retreat centre (such as Birmingham, and Hexham and Newcastle Dioceses) to a single youth advisor (most smaller dioceses). Parish youth workers are rare. Some of the national social action agencies have been more pro-active, developing dedicated programmes to engage young people in local projects (Saint Vincent de Paul Society with their Mini-Vinnies, Youth SVP and 18-30 programmes) or fundraising and campaigning (Cafod schools groups and internships). Parishes can also engage their young people through altar serving (the Guild of St Stephen can provide a diocesan focus), or music. However, for most Catholics, passing on their faith to young people remains a serious and intractable problem.

---

[21] Second Ecumenical Vatican Council, Decree on Ecumenism Unitatis Redintegratio, 6.

2.6.2 Journey to the Youth Synod

In 2016, Pope Francis announced that the next meeting of the Synod of Bishops would concentrate on "Youth, vocation and faith". The Synod on Youth was the first held under the new Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis Communio*, exemplifying the reforms which opened the synodal process to more voices (Kießig 2019). In order for pastoral experience to inform the Synod, a world-wide consultation process and questionnaire was developed, and unusually, there was a pre-synodal gathering of young people in Rome. Their reflections helped form the *Intrumentum Laboris*, the document framing the formal Synod meeting. Even during the Synod itself, the young people who attended as auditors were able to give four-minute speeches, and were encouraged by Pope Francis to make a noise when they heard something profound. Afterwards, participants spoke of the "shock of reality": "Often debates in the synod can become abstract and idealistic, and wishful. But this is much more realistic." (Lamb 2018). The "shock of reality" translated into new metaphors and ideas for thinking about young people in the Church in both the *Final Document of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment (FDS)* and Pope Francis' response, *Christus Vivit*.

2.6.3 Young People *with* the Church

The synod process allowed for the voices of young people to impact Church teaching in an innovative way, as the *FDS* acknowledged:

> The Synod tried to look at the young with the attitude of Jesus, to discern in their lives the signs of the Spirit"s activity... With them we can read our era more prophetically and recognize the signs of the times. (FDS §64)

Rather than recipients of Church teaching as in previous documents, I argue that here young people are co-opted as partners in the theological reading of the world; indeed, with them, that reading is "more prophetic". This phrase "with them" is repeated seventeen times throughout the document, exemplified in the story of the journey to Emmaus. This is a marked change of tone and practice from earlier teaching. Hand in hand with this development (and indeed, necessary to it) is a clearer conception of the Church itself. In a long passage addressing the impact of the sex abuse crisis, there is a key admission: "Nor is this the only sin of the members of the Church; her long history is not without its shadows." (FDS §101). The document then details the many reasons why young people may reject the Church, including the lack of homily preparation and the Church's inability to explain its doctrinal and ethical positions in the modern world. This is a Synod document, not papal teaching, but even so, this is a far more penitent and humble tone than previously heard. The Synod was also able to reflect on the ways that the Church fell short of its broader ministry with young people: "all too often, there is a tendency to provide prepackaged answers and ready-made solutions, without allowing their real questions to emerge and facing the challenges they pose" (FDS §8).

In this passage, the key to resolving these failures is the relationship with young people themselves. These words are then taken up in *Christus Vivit*, with young people tasked with preventing the Church from "becoming corrupt; they can keep her moving forward, prevent her from being proud and sectarian, help her to be poorer and to bear better witness" (CV §37).

2.6.4 Young People Healing the Wounds of the Church

Part of the pre-synodal data gathering was to enquire into the contexts of young people: listening to the lived situations of young people, the main challenges and opportunities for them, as well as details about their encounter with Catholic structures. In response much of the Synod was taken up describing the variety of lives lived by young people around the world. Special focus was given to themes of education, migration, work and the digital world. The cross-over between pastoral realities and theological reflection gave rise to a striking new image of church: Migrants "remind us of a basic aspect of our faith, that we are 'strangers and exiles on the earth' (Heb 11:13)"' (CV §91).

At the same time, the synod listened to young people's experiences of everyday Catholic life. The Synod document exposes the widening gap between young people and parish life, noting that

"Despite various attempts at innovation, the life and activities of the young often flow past the community, without really encountering it." (FDS §18). The same critique is made of schools. In *Gravissimum Educationis*, Catholic schools were depicted as key to creating young Catholics who could be active in the world. In *Christus Vivit*, schools have the potential to be "bunkers": creating "an insurmountable disconnect between what they were taught and the world in which they live" (CV 221). In fact, all forms of ministry with young people that do not connect with their lived reality come under heavy fire:

> At times, in the attempt to develop a pure and perfect youth ministry, marked by abstract ideas, protected from the world and free of every flaw, we can turn the Gospel into a dull, meaningless and unattractive proposition. Such a youth ministry ends up completely removed from the world of young people and suited only to an elite Christian youth that sees itself as different, while living in an empty and unproductive isolation. (CV §232)

Instead, the Catholic community is urged to foster ministry that connects 'with the concrete experience of every day', including bodiliness, sexuality, music, art and the digital world.

Throughout the *FDS*, and *Christus Vivit,* which draws heavily on it, young people are seen as necessary disrupters of the institutional church. Instead of rebuilding the *status quo ante*, these documents want young people to run ahead to new ways of being Church, and not to be too polite to the adults. The movement of the Spirit can be discerned in their lives. At the same time, young people are recognised as marginalised, and at risk in many parts of the world. The conclusion of the *FDS* gives us the final word on the journey Church teaching has been on since the publication of *Apostolicam Actuositatem* in 1965. From static objects of pastoral concern, young people have become a wellspring of renewal:

> Through the holiness of the young, the Church can renew her spiritual ardour and her apostolic vigour. The balsam of holiness generated by the good lives of so many young people can heal the wounds of the Church and of the world, bringing us back to that fullness of love to which we have always been called: the young saints inspire us to return to our first love. (CV §50)

Rather than young people being saved through the holiness of the Church, here it is the holiness of young people that has agency and possibility for the Church.

Finally, it is necessary to note that the Youth Synod and *Christus Vivit* have had little discernible impact on the Catholic Church in England and Wales. The Archdiocese of Birmingham undertook a listening exercise, and there has been some interest in developing skills of accompanying young people. However, there is no sense of the prophetic mission of young people to the Church, and few extra resources are being given to youth ministry. This is in stark contrast to the Church of England Church Commissioners which has made doubling its numbers of children and young people a key target, backed by substaintial funding.[22] The Catholic Church does not count the number of under-eighteens at Mass, and has no data on how these numbers are changing. It seems impervious, both to its current reality and to the developments in Church teaching. In the diocese in which I undertook my research, there are currently no paid parish youth workers, with most parishes having no specific provision for children, families or young people. Youth ministry is offered at diocesan level, providing diocesan events such as retreats, and advice to parishes. The most effective youth engagement is offered by specific ethnic ministries, such as *Jesus Youth* which has come from Kerala. Youth ministry appears on every list of priorities, but the means and methods to engage young people seem out of the reach of most parishes.

2.7 Conclusions:

This chapter has demonstrated the variety of approaches to studying identity and practice in Catholic young people. Research in the UK and US has largely charted the degree of difference from official practice and belief, seeing divergence as evidence of decline. Other approaches, especially those drawing on anthropological and lived religion epistemologies, track difference as evidence of Catholicism's resilience in response to a changing world. Catholic practices in Europe survive at a level less indicative of decline than, as Cipriani puts it, "the permanence of the sacred in the secularised society" (Cipriani, 2003, 317). There is a social and religious capital associated with Catholicity. Most interestingly of all, dissent and improvisation seem to be associated with the highest levels of religiosity in addition to being correlated with reducing commitment. Strangely, the institutional Church, through the Synod on Youth at least, demonstrates far more openness to difference than some sociological accounts. Here it is seen as having possibilities for innovation and healing, rather than as a cause for lament. Ammerman's analytical binary of structure and construction is found elsewhere in the literature, in descriptions of family socialisation and agency, and most strikingly, in Norget et al's competing tensions of sameness and difference across the history of the Catholic Church. Across the literature, Catholicism is revealed as more diverse, resilient and locally grounded than many scholarly accounts might admit. Drawing on this survey, I propose three temptations of studying Catholicism along with their accompanying virtues.

---

[22] https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/churchs-2023-strategic-investment-focuses-doubling-number-children-and-young

Firstly, propositional belief is not the starting point for most Catholics. From Hornsby-Smith to Smith and Denton, it is clear that Catholics tend not to be able to provide a coherent account of their faith. Bullivant's work on dense social networks reminds us that, for many, Catholicism is a communal affair, including families, peers and parishes (Bullivant 2019). Asad would remind us that measuring propositions has a Protestant origin and Neo-colonial outcomes. Day and Lynch reject propositional belief altogether as a way of studying religion. This gives rise to a startling thought: perhaps Catholics can continue to be Catholics even if they cannot entirely account for their beliefs? This would explain why there are still so many people in their 70s and 80s going to Mass every week, despite Hornsby-Smith's findings. Allowing the data to speak in this way requires a non-normative approach that foregrounds people's lived experience and meaning-making.

Secondly, power is rarely accounted for in these studies. The strong normative force of Catholicism suggests that power is held at the centre. However, from Peter McBride's account of first communion families, to Orsi's accounts of Italian-American home-life, to Duggan and Owen's stories of young women negotiating their way into Catholic adulthood, it is clear that power is held and exercised in many different ways, especially around religious identity. These accounts also show the potential for Catholicism to be a deforming as well as a forming force. Making power overt makes it clear that asking, "To what degree are people really Catholic?" is a question from the perspective of the institution. Recognising an individual's power to make complex choices requires a different question: "Why do people continue to identify as Catholic when they do not agree with Catholic teaching?" It is not only the institutional Church but scholars who have power to shape the narrative, and therefore recognising flows of power in the Church also involves decentralising the power of the researcher. For example, over the course of this survey it has become clear that linear ranges do not capture the totality of the picture. Where would we place Harris's Lourdes helpers, who give up their paid leave each year to give the most basic help to disabled pilgrims, attend Mass, adoration and confession while in Lourdes, but then do not go to church for the rest of the year? How would we arrange Casson's typologies of "pilgrim Catholic", "golden rule Catholic", "school Catholic" and "halfway Catholic" onto a range? Which of Baggett's three kinds of parish are the most Catholic? These seemingly contradictory accounts make sense only when we hand power back to participants.

Thirdly, these studies do not always recognise the agency of individuals and communities. This allows for improvisation, negotiation and subversion in their religiosity, which appears to contribute to the Catholic Church's ability to flex over time. Intrinsic to this is a requirement to stop regarding dissent as problematic. In just about every study surveyed, the most religious group contained some element of significant disagreement with Church teaching. Both sociologists and the Church have considered disagreement as indicative of growing detachment, and no doubt it has often been. However, for some groups, dissent is the opposite, a sign of caring for and wanting to change the institution for the better. We have seen how Pope Francis has sought to harness this among young people. In this context, dissent equals engagement.

Finally, a methodological caution. Studying Catholicism in the UK is not straightforward. A generational gap in scholars has left the picture patchy. Analyses and models can only be borrowed from the US and Europe with care. This discontinuity is also an opportunity. New questions can be asked, and developments in the sociology of religion and lived religion can be brought to bear on the data. As predicted by Hornsby-Smith (1992) and Woodhead (2014), some elements of Catholic life have disappeared in the UK. Catholic moral and cultural precepts have very little purchase. At the same time, something distinctly Catholic is flourishing. Some elements of late modernity are receptive to individual Catholic practices, and people can tap into more "spiritual" practices via retreat houses, pilgrimages, and prayer groups. Streams of immigration from Catholic countries are refreshing declining communities. As Harris shows, Lourdes pilgrims are able to integrate orthodox notions of healing and communal celebration into a worldview concerned with individual wellbeing (Harris, 2010). By applying these lessons to my research with Catholic teenagers, I hope to open up new understandings of the complexities of religious identity in late modernity.

The Research Questions

In light of all that has been explored, I seek to answer the following question in my thesis: *How can we understand and interpret the complexities of Catholic identity among Catholic teenagers?*

With the associated sub-question “To what extent is Catholic identity among Catholic teenagers articulated:

1. as part of their sense of self, their worldview,
2. connecting with family and the wider community.
3. as lived through everyday practices,
4. as experienced at peak moments of stress or transcendence?”

By focusing on the Lived Catholicism of a group of teenagers, I hoped to gain a new understanding of what their religious identity meant to them, steering away from the usual propositional concerns and leaving open questions of dissent, improvisation and agency. In what ways are young people able to craft their Catholic identity to meet the particular challenges of twenty-first century life? However, using such a broad definition of Catholicity presents significant epistemological and methodological challenges, including finding methods to find ways of researching with young people that places their normativity, rather than that of the institution, front and centre.

Chapter 3: Methodological Framework

Researching religion and identity is fraught with difficulty: it is a sensitive topic and not one that people are necessarily comfortable speaking about. Even the underlying question of what precisely scholars study to understand religion better is contentious: religion is implicitly non-empirical (being based on faith and hope) and yet attracts rationalist assumptions (Coleman 2002). It is not clear what aspects of belief are most productive to study (Orsi 2003), and how to manage the balance between studying individuals or specific groups and being able to generalise to a wider theory (Davies 1999). When studying religion among young people, there are further concerns. As with all vulnerable groups, issues of power and access are multiplied (Matthews, 2001; Robson, 2001; Valentine et al., 2001). Standard ethics procedures regard those aged under eighteen as inherently vulnerable, and not able to consent completely to participating in research. Religion and identity are sensitive issues, requiring care in constructing and carrying out the fieldwork, and particular data protection practices in storing and analysing the data. Pragmatically, researching with young people requires the design of a research instrument that both delivers high quality data while being attractive and straightforward to deliver.

At the same time, the research must locate itself within a wider academic discipline, taking on its theoretical framework while assessing its underlying assumptions. At stake here is a framing for my project which will avoid the three temptations of studying Catholicism outlined at the end of Chapter Two, and will instead prioritise the breadth of non-normative understandings of Catholicism, de-centre the power of the researcher, and reassert the importance of agency in the production of religious identity. My research question asks, “How can we understand and interpret the complexities of Catholic identity among Catholic teenagers?” In order to answer this question, I have situated my research in the study of lived religion, which takes as its starting point individual experience and meaning-making, and makes space for subversion, irony and hybridity (Orsi 1997). Lived religion also forces questions of the study of Catholicism, including how to account for a complex relationship with the institutional Church, not only in the design of the research and in the lives of participants but also the position of the researcher themselves. I draw on Bourdieu’s work to throw new light on the relationship between the structural and the lived. The notion of Lived Catholicism is offered as a solution to some of these challenges, maintaining the lived religion approach while recognising the essential role of agency, difference and dissent as essential drivers within the institutional Church.

Moving from theoretical framing to research design requires recognising the methodological and practical difficulties of researching with young people. Attempting to carry out this research within the bounds of an institutional Church with a strong normative force adds additional complexity. In seeking to answer my research questions, I drew on the work of Abby Day (2011) whose research asks questions about religiosity and belief without predetermining what these might be, and Alana Harris's studies of Divine Mercy and the Lourdes Pilgrimage, which conceives of catholicity far more broadly than confined to religious times and spaces. From Ammerman's research, I knew that I needed a method which would allow for the slipperiness of lived religion, without however, the multiple researchers that she could draw on. Following Bell, Cahill and Christenson, I knew that I also needed to engage the young people as co-researchers to allow them to develop lines of enquiry exploring the ways in which their religious identity was key to them (Bell, 2008; Cahill, 2007; Christenson, 2004). The study that influenced this project the most was that of Dunlop and Ward (2014) with young Polish migrants, which used a photo-elicitation method to draw out notions of Catholic identity that included family, food, mobile phones and unexpected religious places. Making use of the breadth of literature on empirical methods, I combined focus groups, participatory mapping, photo-elicitation interviews and an exhibition in a narrated photography approach to create a research instrument that would centre the voices and worldview of young Catholics.

This research aimed to fill a gap in the current understanding of the elements involved in the production of Catholic identity. Drawing on my experiences as a diocesan youth worker, I hoped to answer important questions about the function of religious identity in late modernity as seen in a particular group of young Catholics. I planned to open new lines of inquiry into the role of difference and dissent in forming identity, how a Catholic identity might act as a resource during adolescence, and what factors helped maintain that identity. Despite careful planning, at each stage of the research process, I was reminded of the complexities of the lives of participants who would not fit into neat categories. This raised questions about the place of complexity in research about such strongly normative institutions as the Catholic Church.

In this chapter, I will outline the epistemological and methodological framing for my project. Lived religion is difficult to research as it does not rely on doctrinal beliefs or easily measurable religious practices but instead on a broader and more slippery range of habits and attitudes. I review best practice examples of fieldwork with young people from across sociological and ethnographical research. Sarah Pink's visual ethnography was a helpful guide to the visual elements of this research. I will detail the steps of my method design, starting with the adult interviews required to establish the boundaries of the project. I will assess the effectiveness of the fieldwork, outlining how the surprises of this phase provided one of the main analytical tools of the project. I look beyond the research phase to take into account the needs of coding and analysis, and reflect on why, among the diversity of the participants, I was not able to engage a particular group of young Catholics. Finally, I will review the role of reflexivity in my project, including my own positionality and questions of representation.

3.1 Challenges in Studying Lived Religion and Catholicism

Having explored a range of epistemologies and methodological approaches in Chapter 2, this chapter will establish the theoretical and practical underpinnings of my study. The conclusion from the literature search was that, in order to answer my research questions, I would need to adopt a non-normative approach to exploring Catholic identity which would include, but not expect, institutional perspectives. This would require finding alternatives to propositional belief, being attentive to the plays of power through relationships, and looking for agency in a multitude of expected and unexpected places. Across the studies I have examined, those from a lived religion perspective best meet my criteria. Originating from, and developing out of, notions of popular religion developed by early modern historians, the study of lived religion draws on cultural sociology, congregational studies and ritual studies to focus on the everyday realities of religiosity (Spickard, Landres, and McGuire 2002; Orsi 1997; Hall 1997). Turning its back on an emphasis on Sunday practice and official encounters, it focuses instead on previously neglected topics such as births and deaths, domestic practices, food and drink, embodiment, and gender (Ammerman 2016).

These methods are in contrast to two other approaches to studying religion. Sociological research relates religion to sociological theory and grand narratives (such as the secularisation debate). It draws on the functionalist and structuralist understandings of Durkheim and Weber, although now also incorporating a multitude of definitions of the ways in which religion is constructed (Beckford 2003). Practical theology regards people's lived experiences as "embodiments of faith seeking understanding", reading practices as embodied theology (Watkins 2015, 35). My research questions required an emic approach to data collection, with a theoretical framework that would stand outside grand narratives, generate complex data and locate meaning-making within the lives of participants. On this basis, I chose to situate my research within the field of lived religion, within the study of religion. This then requires an assessment of the shortcomings as well as the strengths of the study of lived religion as they apply to the study of Catholicism.

3.1.1 The Study of Lived Religion

Robert Orsi, in a key text at the outset of the study of lived religion, dismantles the Durkhiemian dichotomy of sacred and profane (Orsi 1997). Instead of making distinctions between religious and secular parts of life, Orsi advocated seeking the traces of religiosity as embedded in the whole of life, as widespread as moral codes, bodily postures, social relations and notions of transgression. This requires identifying religiosity in everyday practices and experiences rather than in the official praxis of institutional religion, being attentive to the meaning-making of individuals, and accounting for the plays of power in forming religious identity.

Taking this stance enables non-normative understandings of religious practice. Meredith McGuire developed a lived religion epistemology by realising that "none of my interviewees expressed a pattern of religious belief and practice that fit standard sociological assumptions about individuals' religious worlds" (McGuire 2008, 3). Rather than assuming that her interviewees were poor specimens of the religion she was researching, McGuire was led into new epistemological territory, rejecting sociological and institutional norms in favour of individual meaning-making. Thomas Tweed captures this tension between normative and non-normative understandings of religiosity:

> Interpretation, in this view, does not involve excavating fixed meanings imbedded in artefacts, narratives or practices. By extension then, the meaning of a religious artefact is not exhausted by the artist's intentions; the meaning of a religious ritual is not exhausted by the clergy's prescriptions. Ordinary followers, lay elites and religious leaders continually negotiate among themselves about the significance of gestures, stories and things. And to ignore the viewers of religious artefacts and participants in religious rituals is to miss much. (Tweed 2002, 65)

I do not think it stretches Tweed's meaning too far to add that the meaning of a religious ritual is not exhausted by the scholar's interpretations. From Luckmann's *Invisible Religion* onwards, scholars have recognised that not all religious practices are recognised by official religion, and not all interpretations of practices fit with official teaching. This suggests that there is a facet to religious belief and practice that, while drawing on community experience, is created and interpreted individually. The first theoretical move in my study was to acknowledge that a single catholicity could not capture the fullness of the experiences of my participants. Once Polish, Italian, Nigerian and Keralan catholicities started to emerge, it was also possible to recognise other expressions of Catholic identity.

Such multiple understandings of religion arise from being attentive to individual acts of meaning-making. McGuire noted that people not only draw religious practices from a range of different sources, including their own tradition and preaching, TV and the internet, shops, and religions around the world, but also that "people often use their religion-prescribed practices in ways completely unforeseen by the official religion. We must remember that human beings are creative agents, not merely oversocialised automatons." (McGuire 2008, 98). Certainly a key factor of my study was the slippery nature of the religious language used by my participants. Adopting a lived religion stance warned me not to expect that the participants would share with me an identical understanding of prayer, Catholic identity, or the Eucharist. Capturing the individual meaning-making via the photo project allowed for many different understandings of elements of catholicity to emerge. Recognising the power of individual meaning-making places the agency of participants at the fore-front of the project.

Individuals do not express religiosity in a vacuum, however. Schielke and Debevec (2012), drawing on de Certeau's notion of the practices of everyday life, develop a notion of everyday religion which may subvert, divert or support grand schemes (official religion) but always exist in relation to them. Ammerman argues that lived religion has more often been defined by what it is not – institutions, doctrine, communal experiences – and that the danger in this is that the influence of institutional religion on individuals may go unrecognised (Ammerman 2016). Hervieu-Léger goes further than Ammerman, stating, "There is no religion without the authority of a tradition being invoked (whether explicitly, half-explicitly or implicitly) in support of the act of believing" (Hervieu-Léger 2000, 76). Re-centring institutions requires being attentive to the dance of power between Church and individual. Orsi's *Thank You St Jude* is a study of the complexities of institutional power in a religious context, emanating from a variety of sources, including American TV and homilies to stories told at home, and prayer letters written to a semi-official religious cult (Orsi 1996). Power, in its different manifestations, is used both to oppress and to escape, to conform and to rebel. Such reflections do not only arise from the data, but impact the research process as well: including the power of the researcher to shape the form and meaning of the research, the power of the institution and of individuals in co-producing religiosity, and the power of the academy to specify the normative expectations of such research. The power plays in my own study range from family authority to teenage rebellion to institutional norms. Finding the methods to expose these dynamics contributed to the complex data of the project.

3.1.2 Challenges in Applying Lived Religion to Catholicism

Applying a lived religion epistemology to the study of Catholicism raises interesting questions. Firstly, in a highly normative institution, how is difference and individual experience accounted for? Secondly, if a project moves away from measuring only official Catholic practices, what should it be concerned with? As was seen in Chapter Two, social-scientific studies of Catholicism often categorise dissent and difference as heterodoxy and decline. As Hornsby Smith wrote:

> It became apparent that our implicit assumptions regarding the coherence and consistency of the religious world-view of Catholics were not valid… there was… evidence both of a considerable degree of heterogeneity of belief and practice… The analysis and interpretation of the accounts given by Catholics were clearly shown to be more problematic than had originally been assumed. (Hornsby-Smith 1991, 26)

Where studies are concerned with the orthodoxy of a certain group, the study will largely focus on measuring doctrinal belief and practice (Smith et al. 2014; Hoge 2002). Ammerman's focus on the everyday is a key correction (Ammerman 2016). Those studies that broaden the focus of catholicity will include activities such as sitting on a bench outside a church (Mandes and Rogaczewska 2013) or the inclusion of crystals among a description of beliefs (Kieran and Mullally 2022). Rather than focusing on moments of institutional encounter which have their official meaning fixed, broadening the range of everyday practices examined allows for a diversity of response and provides an understanding that Catholicism has as much to do with bodies, food, birth and death, families, gender and community as going to church on Sunday. This move involves flipping researcher preconceptions from Catholicism as owned and defined by the institutional Church, to Catholicism as co-produced and lived by ordinary people. It also restores the agency of participants and places them at the fore-front of the project. In my particular case, asking young people only about their beliefs and practices from the perspective of a Catholic norm would mainly have resulted in the answers they learned in their Catholic schools and produced a much duller, flattened perspective on their lives.

Once this move has been made, the next step is to establish what should be studied, if not just Sunday Mass attendance. A critique of lived religion is the difficulty of establishing the boundaries of the project. Everyday habits and practices are more slippery to research than weekly church attendance. However, there is also an opportunity when moving away from such official practices to examine people's religious lives as they live them, in my case, starting from their own descriptions of their catholicity. From the early stages of the project, I decided to engage my participants as co-researchers. The theme of the photo-exhibition was "This is Catholic", and participants were free to take whatever photos they wanted to on that theme. Interestingly, their meaning-making was always done in reference to the institutional Church, even if at one remove (for example, recalling stories grandparents had told about prayer). This will be explored further in Chapters Seven and Eight. Conducting research into the lived religion of Catholics is less problematic if the researcher accepts that whatever the participants count as Catholic can be included.

Accounting for power within the study of Catholicism is also problematic. Lived religion approaches are interested in how power is held and exercised, but few Catholic studies include this dimension (exceptions being Bruce (2017) and Dillon (2018)). This is partly because the power dynamics are not straightforward. One of the clearest examples of this underpins a very basic question: who is Catholic? From the outside, the Catholic Church looks like a highly controlled, homogenous organisation. The Catechism and Canon Law are clear that baptism is the basic attribute of membership of the Catholic Church and that Catholics are obliged to go to confession and to receive communion at least annually. Catholics are also required to believe in the Magisterium (official teaching) of the Church (CCC §1272, CCL § 750). In practice, the Church tends to be more interested in what people do than what they believe in (the one being presumed to flow from the other). Parents wanting their child to attend a Catholic school often have to fill in a supplementary form when they apply to the school. These can include whether the family are regular attenders at Mass and are known to the priest. There is no doctrinal element to the form; no tick boxes for beliefs or morals. The power is entirely with the priest to sign the form or not, gatekeeping access to the local Catholic schools.

At the same time, individual Catholics have the power to choose how to express their religious identity. Surveys highlight those who would describe themselves as Catholic, but who may not go to Mass, or even believe in God. In Stephen Bullivant's research, 39% of those self-defining as Catholic never, or practically never go to church (Bullivant 2016). This causes definitional difficulties for researchers. As Hoge et al put it:

> The criteria surrounding Catholic identity - what is "core" and obligatory to the faith, what is and what is not legitimate in belief and practice, who does and does not belong – have become more problematic in the last four decades… As the lines of Catholic identity become more blurred and diffuse, confusion and disputes as to the limits of that identity arise. (Hoge et al. 2001, 6)

The question is further complicated because Catholicism can also be felt as a cultural or a national identity. Polish Catholics might feel their identity is influenced by a historical sense of rejecting atheism under the Communists (Mandes and Rogaczewska 2013). Italian Catholics might have grown up in a culture which expects them to be baptised, confirmed and married in a church, no matter what they believe (Tomasi 2000). Researchers exploring Catholic identity must consider these national and ethnic differences, which cause the power of the institution and the family and local community to manifest differently according to context. The breadth of national origins among the participants in my study brought these questions to the fore.

Studying the complexities of Catholic identity is not straightforward, encompassing questions of the boundaries of the project, decentering power and restoring agency. Lived religion approaches are aimed at producing the kind of complex, emic data required to answer these questions. Applying the methodology to the study of Catholicism raised further questions about power, identity and categorising dissent. This then emphasised the care required to choose the fieldwork methods. However, holding together the emphasis on individual experience with the powerful force of the institutional Church remained problematic. To find the methodological framework to hold these tensions together, I turned to the work of Pierre Bourdieu.

3.2 Applying Bourdieu: Habitus, Field, and Capital

Lived religion has at its heart an examination of practices, understanding practice to carry social and religious meaning (Bender 2012; Orsi 1997). To answer my research questions, I must balance the focus on individual experience from the study of lived religion with the obvious presence of the institutional Catholic Church in my data. Bender draws on the work of Bourdieu to understand the mechanisms by which practices become freighted with meaning. Bourdieu explores social structures and cultural transfer by re-centring institutional and relational power. He wrote only occasionally about religion, concentrating his studies on the arts, education, class lifestyles, science and language. However, his work is increasingly taken up by scholars of religion looking for a theoretical framework which is neither over-agentic, nor overly deterministic (Costa, Burke, and Murphy 2019). In relation to my particular focus on identity, Appiah (2018) uses Bourdieu's notion of habitus in a broader discussion of compound and complex identities to explore posture, speech, manners and dispositions.

Bourdieu's theory centres on three key building blocks of doxa/habitus, field and capital. A field is a competitive arena in which various forms of capital are traded, "spaces of objective relations that are the site of a logic and a necessity that are specific and irreducible to those that regulate other fields." (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 97). Habitus is the mechanism by which cultural transfer happens within the field: "Habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's energy…" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 127). Formed by our histories, it structures expectations about now and the future by providing the context within which such expectations are created. In Atkinson's work on the production of family culture (2016), habitus is both producer of conditions of production as well as the product, while doxa is the taken-for-granted toolkit of family life. At the same time, aware that habitus could be interpreted in an over-deterministic manner, Bourdieu wrote that it does not rule out conscious thought and decision-making, and that habitus "is durable, not eternal!". (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 133). Finally, in Bourdieu's framework, capital is power over the field, and over "the materialised or embodied instruments of production or reproduction whose distribution constitutes the very structure of the field." (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 101). Together, doxa/habitus, field and capital provide the mechanisms by which cultural reproduction happens, both at scale within society and individual institutions (large companies, academic institutions) but also domestically within families.

Bourdieu was often criticised for being "too Catholic", but that is precisely the advantage for my project (Verter 2003). Bourdieu understands religion as domestic, institutional and implicated with power. For Bourdieu, a religious field is one in which religious knowledge is controlled by specialists, and where a symbolic mastery of "a corpus of norms and explicit knowledges" is matched by a practical mastery available to all of "a body of schemes of thinking and objectively systematic action, acquired in the implicit state by simple familiarisation" (Bourdieu 1991, 10). In Bourdieu's framing of the religious field, religious specialists hold the capital of symbolic knowledge, which translates into practical mastery among the laity. The *habitus* of religious practices, sayings, seasons and beliefs produces a *doxa* in which the presence of God becomes taken-for-granted. From a Catholic perspective, habitus provides both the impetus to pray in difficult times, and the worldview to explain the outcome of those prayers.

To address my particular research context, I argue that combining the religious and family fields to create a new field of the religious family offers an attractive theoretical framing for my project, throwing light on the catholicity of family life, and reproducing themes of habitus, domination and production of capital on a domestic scale (Bourdieu 1996). In this model, the religious specialists are parents, and even grandparents, with associated mechanisms of power and the ability to trade capital. The family operates within its doxa – the taken-for-granted self-understanding of "this is who we are" which takes in notions of the wider social construction of the family (parental roles, patterns of family life, expectations of behaviour) (Atkinson 2016), and also particular notions of the Catholic family (which, as can be seen in this study, draw on inherited practices in addition to or instead of a concern for the orthodox). The family expresses this doxa through practices, attitudes, and understandings – a structuring structure which forms expectations of what is likely, what is useful and what is possible. Within the wider family habitus there are distinctly Catholic elements which can be cultural, ethnic, and religious.

In bringing together the religious and family fields, however, problems arise. Dillon critiques Bourdieu's notion of the religious field as having an excessively passive laity (Dillon 2001). The notion of a field of religious family, however, would require parents to have dual status as both dominating and dominated: religious specialists in the home; mere laity at church. Orsi recognises that there can be multiple different understandings of expertise, pointing to the religious mastery of teachers, nuns, lay staff in Catholic institutions, parents and even saints (Orsi 2005). Applying Bourdieu's theory to a Catholic context, it is possible to see symbolic mastery as both multiply and contextually produced: a canon lawyer will have greater symbolic mastery than a parish priest; a parent would have less than a priest but more than most teenagers. A significant contribution that Bourdieu's theory brings to my research is a new understanding of the role of parents: seen by their children as possessing both symbolic and practical mastery, parents (and grandparents and other family members) are both sources of theological knowledge and advice for daily life.

In addition, Bourdieu's theory has potential to answer some of the other questions arising from my study: exploring the ways in which the specific habitus of different families produce different catholicities; and examining parishes, schools and other Catholic organisations as co-producers of catholicity in their own right, as well as in relation to the institution. However, is the use of what could be considered sociological grand theory appropriate for a lived religion study? Robert Orsi's work also examines the taken-for-granted, but from a lived religion (non-grand theory) perspective. However, it is possible to see parallels between his work and that of Bourdieu. These include a sense of possibility and limitation within culture (doxa); the embodied nature of religion (habitus); the importance of social structures (capital); a sense of the tensions within these particular structures (field) (Orsi 1997). At the same time, in comparison to Bourdieu, Orsi gives more improvisatory power to individuals, who for him make religious meaning out of whatever is to hand in the moment. Vásquez, bringing Bourdieu and Orsi into conversation, critiques Bourdieu's theory of religious change as too static, restricted only to moments of breakthrough rather than in the everyday improvisations and subversions championed by Orsi (Vásquez 2011). On the other hand, he sees the broader lived religion movement as too focused on the contingent, not recognising national and transnational structures of power. I argue that holding these two approaches in conversation not only helps mitigate the restrictions of each method, but throws new light on the domestic tensions of producing and maintaining a Catholic identity.

3.3 Towards a Lived Catholicism Approach

Lived Catholicism is an approach to studying everyday experiences of Catholicism which has emerged over the course of this research project. As recounted in Chapter One, the notion began to surface in my work during the data analysis process, inspired both by Norget et al's *An Anthropology of Catholicism* (2017) and the work of Robert Orsi. It was subsequently developed by two online conferences and a special journal edition. Lived Catholicism takes as its starting point the experiences of ordinary Catholics as they seek to make meaning of their identity in a particular time and place. Centering around catholicity, it explores notions of identity and transmission, examines complex relationships with institutional religion, and above all, looks to the agency of participants in the way they shape, negotiate, improvise and subvert their Catholic identity. It is open to the paradoxical, as well as new notions of catholicity conceived by young people in response to the lives they live. It recognises the complex relationships that Catholics have with the institutional Church and reveals the force of Catholic normativity, operating with the potential to form and deform. It assumes that self-identifying as a Catholic is in itself a meaningful act, even if that identity may not fit with official descriptions. Dissent is restored as potential for engagement. Catholicity can flow into and out of unlikely places: rosary pots, stories of family history, holidays, and encounters. Recognising the agency of other players restores parents and grandparents (dead and alive) as central to the transmission of faith, together with a cast of friends, teachers, parishioners and priests.

Individual meaning-making can bring a different perspective to central doctrine. It can become apparent that the institution is failing to communicate even its basic truths. Stopping asking "why aren't people better Catholics?" and finding out "in what ways is being Catholic meaningful to you?" broadens the focus from religiosity to catholicity – in whatever ways that manifests. At this point, the complexities of Catholic identity arise: how is it transmitted, how is it manifested, and what is the balance between tradition and innovation? What is the place of difference and dissent in the life of the Catholic community? Who gets to say who or what is Catholic?

Although it seems to be novel to use the description "Lived Catholicism" to describe a field of study, many scholars have preceded me on this path. Andrew Greeley, writing on the *Catholic Imagination*, speaks of a particularly Catholic sensibility, one attuned to family, to ritual and to story, "which influence[s] Catholic behaviour beyond the walls of the church." (Greeley, 2000, 16). Dunlop and Ward encountered this in their research with young Polish Catholics, and we have seen it in some of the studies of Catholicism across Europe too. Tricia Bruce's study of "personal parishes" details the delicate dance of power between bishop and migrant communities, and the complex and interwoven motives behind what look like straightforward decisions (Bruce, 2017). The final influence on this study comes from Alana Harris's research into Catholicism as lived, both historically, and in the everyday complexities of contemporary Catholics. In her wide-ranging and inter-disciplinary work (drawing on social history, anthropology, theology and sociology) Harris models a way forward for capturing the reality of Catholicism as lived (Harris 2013; 2010; Garnett and Harris, 2013).

3.4 Choosing Research Methods

The complex and slippery nature of my research topic – Catholic identity – required some thought in choosing research methods, particularly building on the epistemological and methodological insights that arise from applying the lived religion lens to a Catholic context. There were a number of additional constraints. Firstly, as reported in Chapter Two, while young Catholics in the USA have been the subjects of extensive research, in the UK, there have not been the equivalent number of studies. This pointed to an exploratory design for my research. Secondly, eager to draw on best practices in research with young people in both religious and secular contexts, I looked for methods that would be engaging and interesting for them while recognising that I was the only researcher in the project, with the usual time constraints of a PhD study. Thirdly, I knew that my methods had to work across a range of educational abilities and class and ethnic backgrounds. Finally, I was looking for methods that would allow young people to speak about their catholicity without testing their doctrinal positions as I was aware that many of them would have done or would be doing Religious Education GCSE[23] and so would be likely to present "correct" answers that might not represent their realities. At the same time, the methods had to work whatever their level of practice and be culturally relevant without requiring any specific knowledge.

I returned to my research question to look for appropriate methods: "How can we understand and interpret the complexities of Catholic identity among Catholic teenagers?" with the associated subquestion "To what extent is Catholic identity among Catholic teenagers articulated:

- as part of their sense of self, their worldview,
- connecting with family and the wider community,
- as lived through everyday practices,
- as experienced at peak moments of stress or transcendence?"

Answering these questions would require particular methodological approaches. *Identity* is not just to be found in religious practices and beliefs, but across a variety of areas of life; *complexities* imply research methods producing multilayered data*;* and methods used would have to be attractive to *teenagers*, allowing for participants to explore their own meaning-making. In addition to these requirements, another significant factor was the logistical problem of researching young people in the Catholic Church, not least of which was accessing the young people in the first place. Few Catholic parishes have groups with older teenagers as members. Schools are busy places, and to get access to students, I would have to prove that the method would be beneficial to them as well as me. The research method would have to work within a school timetable, and be replicable in several different settings. Finally, as I would be looking for volunteers (rather than, for example, asking whole school classes to participate), the method had to be easy to explain and appealing to participants. Because of the variety of potential sites, the research would also have to be attractive to a range of gatekeepers, including priests, youth workers, parents and teachers. Participant observation and other traditional ethnographic practices would have been the obvious methods to meet these requirements. However, with such a diffuse and scattered group of young people, there were no obvious sites where ethnographic research could be done. Bearing in mind these constraints and the examples in previous research, I explored a range of other options.

---

[23] UK schoolgoers take a suite of exams aged 16. In Catholic schools, the exam in Religious Education (RE) is mandatory.

3.4.1 Researching with Young People

The first step of creating a research tool was to look for methods that would be effective within the particular constraints of researching with young people. In recent years, researchers have become concerned to treat children and young people as agents and experts in their lives (Cahill 2007). Drawing on the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, researchers have increasingly recognised the importance of young people's right to have their voice heard (Bell 2008). This is not straightforward and involves many complex factors such as location, choice of sample (who are the gatekeepers, and who are they choosing?), research methodology chosen, and the person of the researcher themself (Hopkins and Bell 2008). Ethical issues abound in this kind of research, ranging from power inequalities to issues of consent and participation. When, as in this case, the project involves discussing sensitive issues with vulnerable participants, the choice of method is key.

Taking up Nancy Bell's challenge to design research from the perspective of the young participant is both empowering and challenging. As P.H. Christensen notes, researchers rarely ask questions that participants really want answered; instead, projects are driven by the needs of the researcher and, frequently, of the funders behind them (Christensen 2004). To turn this model on its head is to consider what the project would look like if the participants were to design it themselves (Aitken 2001). Baker and Hinton noted that young people were not very interested in "having a chat", and so they developed a range of mixed methods that would engage their participants (Baker and Hinton 1999). Taking this a step further, Anna Bagnoli explored the ways in which mixed methods positively empowered her participants: by allowing them to choose the methods they wanted to use, and the topics that were meaningful to them, the young people were able to become co-researchers in her project (Bagnoli and Clark 2010; Bagnoli 2004). Helpfully, these are broadly the same approaches taken by scholars researching lived religion: using a range of materials and methods and allowing participants to follow their own interests.

Vincett and Olson bring together many of these strands in a study of young people living in deprived areas. Being keen to avoid adult perceptions of young people's religiosity (and the power relations therein), they set broad parameters for their study "not simply to cover what religion and spirituality *do* in the everyday and in the extraordinary, but what they are *imagined* to represent." (Vincett and Olson 2012, 198). In the course of their research they uncovered religious practices such as taking rosary beads to the grave of a friend, and feeling God's presence sitting outside a church. These are not elements that would be picked up by large-scale surveys, but instead by painstaking fieldwork that drew on the young people themselves to create the framework for the research. Louise Ryan used focus group methods with young Muslims to explore individual narratives, especially around the construction of Muslim identity as personal identity. The conversations between the young people in the focus groups revealed a nuanced and more diverse form of Islamic identity than had previously been presumed (Ryan 2014). In their study of young Polish immigrants, Dunlop and Ward used photo elicitation and narrated photography methods as part of their focus groups (Dunlop and Ward 2014). Participants were asked to take photos of where they saw the sacred in their lives. Images produced not only included statues of Mary which were scattered around Plymouth (some of which were unknown to the researchers) but also ruined churches, mobile phones and food.

3.4.2 Focus Groups

Drawing on these these studies, I particularly sought out methods that would disrupt the power balance between researcher and participant, prioritise the participants' own understanding of their world, and attract young people to the project. Focus groups were an obvious place to start. Unlike in an interview situation, participants outnumber the researcher and can use their own language and concepts. The group can raise unexpected topics and approaches, which allows the researcher to hear a range of voices (Bagnoli and Clark 2010). Goss and Leinbach (1996) note the transformative power of focus groups, the liminality and reflexivity of the group session itself, and how participants can come to a new understanding of themselves and the world around them. This was certainly the case with my participants, who sometimes told me they had continued thinking or talking about the topics raised. Focus groups also work well in combination with other methods, especially interviews, where topics mentioned in the larger group can be teased out on an individual basis (Linhorst 2002).

There has been much discussion about exploring sensitive issues in focus groups (Robson 2001; Farquhar and Das 1999). However, as Kitzinger and Farquhar have discovered, people can be more open about sensitive issues in a group setting, are able to frame issues in their own language, and can establish a sense of shared experience (Kitzinger and Farquhar 1999). I was aware that there could be other problems with focus groups. They can be dominated by individuals or mainstream views, with lower-status voices suppressed (Michell 1999). There can be issues of confidentiality, especially in school settings, where participants will continue to see each other after the session. Participants may feel stressed in the group, especially when discussing sensitive topics. Finally, the research process may create unreasonably high expectations among participants about the amount of change that can be brought about (Robson 2001; Baker and Hinton 1999).

Despite these challenges, it was clear that focus groups would be useful to my project. Carefully balancing power in favour of participants would create opportunities to challenge my normative expectations. As a tool for exploring lived religion, the ability of focus groups to deliver "a polyvocal production, a multiplicity of voices speaking from a variety of subject positions" would be particularly helpful (Goss and Leinbach 1996, 118). However, given the slippery nature of lived religion, it seemed likely that focus groups would form a significant, but not sufficient, element of my project. Following the example of others in the field, I built in a mixed methods approach to my research, to engage the participants and broaden the data collected (Bagnoli and Clark 2010; Baker and Hinton 1999).

3.4.3 Participatory Mapping

Because my project required being attentive to non-normative expressions of Catholicism, I included an activity at the beginning of the focus group session to signal that I was not interested in "right" answers. Mapping exercises ask participants to sketch responses to an agreed question. They are often used as an additional method to elicit different types of data. Kesby (2000) was one of the first to describe the technique rigorously, having used it in action research in Zimbabwe. He found that it was a way of allowing participants to use their own language and concepts, and that the finished product was not only in itself useful data but became the starting point for analysis by the group of the issue under discussion. The inevitable critique (Pain and Francis 2003) warned against seeing the method as a panacea, in particular being concerned that as an action research tool it may not deliver the change it promised.

3.4.4 Visual Methods: Photo-Voice Elicitation

Image-making would form a central part of my project. As David Morgan and others have noted, Catholicism is a highly visual religion with a long history of engagement with the arts (Morgan 1999). Young Catholics are surrounded by a visual Catholicity: not only crucifixes, images and religious architecture at church; but prayer books, bibles, photos of religious events and other religious decorations at home; and photos of the Pope and the local Bishop, religious displays and Scripture quotations if they were in a Catholic school. Furthermore, young people of all religions and none are skilled in using images to convey ideas due to the combination of excellent cameras on phones, built-in editing software and a highly visual social media environment. It is no surprise, then, that visual methods are often used as part of research with young people (Dunlop and Ward 2014; Olson et al. 2013; Bagnoli 2009).

Visual methods have other benefits in addition to being attractive to young people. Informed by art theory, spatial theory and phenomenological anthropology, they enhance research design by engaging with non-verbal forms of experience and representation. Tim Ingold challenges the notion of "a final image to be inspected and interpreted, as is conventional in studies of visual culture", suggesting instead that "the very notion of the image that has to be rethought, away from the idea that images represent, on another plane, the forms of things in the world to the idea that they are place-holders for these things... Could it be that images do not stand for things, but rather help you find them?" (Ingold 2010, 16). In the conversations about the photos my participants took, images became placeholders for dead grandparents, for memories of intense religious experiences and answered prayers, and for family and community bonds. As Pink notes, visual methods are "concerned with the production of knowledge and ways of knowing rather than with the collection of data" (Pink 2013, 35).

Photo-voice interviews (PVI) draw on the photos taken by participants as the starting point for the conversation. They respect the interviewee as an expert in their lives and allow for a range of responses. At the same time, the process of creating meaning together often elicits new thoughts in the participant, who may reflect for the first time on the topic under discussion (Dunlop and Ward 2014). Photo-voice interviews, using photos taken by participants, engage with young people in the way they take photos ordinarily and place the participant and their meaning-making at the centre of the project. They allow participants to highlight themes that are important to them and which may not have been considered by the researcher. This is a useful method for researching with marginalized groups, for example homeless people (Radley, Hodgetts, and Cullen 2005) or street kids (Young and Barrett 2001). In Radley et al., photo-voice methods elicited strata of meanings, including being homeless, routes into and out of homelessness, and the relationships of the participants with both homeless and domiciled people. The researchers constantly asked: "Why these pictures, and none of those? Why this detail? Why are none of these other types of pictures represented?" (Radley, Hodgetts, and Cullen 2005, 278).

Narrated Photography Method

Dunlop and Ward (2014) have developed PVI methods specifically for research into religion. Narrated Photography is a method of collective meaning-making prompted by images taken by participants, with several moments of interpretation at interview, focus group and exhibition stage. It is a participatory research method, treating participants as co-researchers as their images form the starting point for interviews and focus groups and frame the wider project. It brings together images and textual responses. It is a particularly appropriate method for young people, who are not just consumers of images, but creators of them. Instagram and Snapchat are widespread among teenagers, with many young people also taking art or photography at GCSE. They have a good understanding of the ethics of taking and sharing photos (Clark 2012). This method also offers some practical advantages:

> Using images within an interview avoids the traditional question and answer format of interviews or questionnaires that can feel confrontational, thus avoiding embarrassment about limited religious knowledge or about a religiosity that is not mainstream. Looking at the photographs together relaxes the interviewee - the spotlight is on the pictures, not the person. Less eye contact needs to be maintained as both interviewer and interviewee gaze at the images, and handling the pictures can fill gaps in the conversation. (Dunlop and Ward 2014, 35)

Drawing on these experiences, I felt that a narrated photography approach would produce a number of benefits for my research. A concern of the project had been to minimise the usual doctrinal focus of studies of Catholicism. Combining image and participant commentary in the interviews and final focus groups would allow participants to explore how their catholicity is constructed. In addition, I could, to some extent, subvert my own normative focus and engage them as co-researchers. Participants were free to take any photos they wanted on the theme "This is Catholic". Furthermore, as an alternative ethnographical method, narrated photography gave unexpected glimpses of my participants' lives – their bedroom walls, relationships with families, and worldview – which even participant observation would not allow.

Exhibiting the Photos

It is becoming more common for photo voice projects to end with an exhibition (Dunlop and Ward 2014; Gubrium and Harper 2013a; Clark 2012). It gives proper weight to the work of the participants, making their worldview visible. It may also be an incentive for participants to join the project in the first place, and for funders to see tangible results. It is a powerful way of raising awareness of local groups, such as Pink's work among the Roma in Hungary (Pink 2013). For Dunlop and Ward, it offers an opportunity to engage participants in the early stages of data analysis. The set of images taken in a project offers a vivid window into a different life (for example, the homeless in London or street children in Kampala). I received funding to mount an exhibition of photos from the project in the Catholic Cathedral in the diocese I did the research in, engaging the thousand regular Mass attendees, together with other visitors.

3.5 Method Design

3.5.1 Adult Interviews

The next step in designing the fieldwork process was to hone it for the particular circumstances of my study: establish the topics, craft the questions, and ensure construct validity and ethical safeguards. As I had moved on from youth work five years previously, I decided to begin with interviews of key adults in youth ministry to sensitise me to recent developments. I interviewed two school chaplains, three diocesan youth workers (we did not have any paid parish youth workers) and three priests who had long been involved with youth ministry. Five of the six initial interviewees turned out to be "unapologetic" Catholics: a cohort of people in their 20s and 30s who often had their formation in LifeTeen, Youth 200 or similar movements.[24] They promote a more traditional form of Catholicism originating from America but do not represent the norm within parish communities. In looking for alternative perspectives I also interviewed two school chaplains. The findings from the interviews, together with those from the literature search, were the foundation for the topic guide for the focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The adults also proved to be important gatekeepers, with access to three out of five research groups originating from these adults.

One of the surprise results of the adult interviews was the ambiguous impact of individual factors. For example, family was seen as essential for developing a faith identity in young people, transporting them to events, and supporting them. However, family or cultural background could be a barrier for young people when associated with strictness or inauthenticity. Social media could be a source of secular values and peer pressure, but it could connect young Catholics with like-minded peers. Parishes were vital for some young people, but for those with friends online, they were almost seen as irrelevant. These findings foreshadowed a series of ambivalent positions from the young people themselves, and was present in many aspects of the project, including the choice of cases.

---

[24] This term can be found in podcasts and YouTube channels but has not made its way into academic study as far as I can ascertain.

These adult interviews were fundamental to creating my topic schedule. They highlighted the intrinsically complex and interwoven nature of Catholicism as lived by young people and foregrounded the importance of the meaning-making of the participants. Two substantial themes were particularly helpful. Firstly, the search for credible and authentic forms of Catholicism among young people, which included how young people scrutinise the adult Catholic community; sharing notions of catholicity with peers; and even collecting souvenirs of particular religious high points. In the view of the adult experts, this helped to build a distinctively Catholic worldview that could withstand the secularising forces of mainstream youth culture. A second theme emphasised the social capital of being a young Catholic, whether countering loneliness through prayer WhatsApp groups, or providing contact with other adults through volunteering at church. When paired with a Lived Catholicism approach that privileged individual meaning-making and regarded improvisation and negotiation as strengths, these themes became key to the triangulation and interpretation of the data.

3.5.2 Crafting the Questions

Recognising that answering my research questions would require intentionally de-coupling participants' lived experience of Catholicism from normative expectations, I knew I had to be attentive to the form of the questions that would be asked. As Melissa Wilcox writes, reflecting on researching religion with the LGBTQ community: "we determine in part what is said simply by choosing which questions to ask." (Wilcox 2002, 58). The language of questions can convey boundaries, acceptable vocabulary, and the underlying purpose of the project. Aware of the particular challenges of asking questions in such a strongly normative setting, I turned to the work of Abby Day, whose research asked subtle questions about religion and ethnicity arising from the 2001 UK Census. Day could not find a model to research the sociology of religion among the general public without asking overtly religious questions, so created her own set of questions that focused on belief, morality, meaning and transcendence and only mentioned religion in the last question. The results were striking. Her participants did not presume that belief was necessarily religious belief, although they often needed to check this with her first. A good proportion went on to talk about non-religious worldviews and she was able to show that many people held other aspects of their life as sacred without connecting that to religious belief. Lois Lee (2015), researching the ways in which practices and worldview were important for secular meaning making, looked for significance in unusual places – coffee mugs, posters and books among others – prizing the stories attributed to them by participants.

I recognised that adopting this approach for my research would allow definitions of Catholicism to surface from the young people I interviewed, but would require care in creating my topic guide. Asking questions such as "How often do you go to Mass?" (almost always included in surveys) would not only create the presumption that the quantity of Mass going is important, but creates expectations when answering other questions. I was keen to avoid assumptions of "correct" answers, recognising that those who attended a Catholic school would have a fluency in religious language that may not represent their own lived experience. Drawing on Day, when constructing my questions, I decided to use the word "Catholic" as a descriptor, but without qualification (for example, not using the terms "practising Catholic" or "distant Catholic"). The fieldwork project was called "This is Catholic", which was also the theme for the participants' photos. The participatory mapping exercise exploded the word "Catholic" into multiple meanings and associations, following which, I could use the word "Catholic" in a neutral manner throughout the interview process. For example, instead of asking about particular practices such as Mass going, I asked, "Would there be a routine for Catholic stuff in an average week for you?" In addition to responses about prayer or going to Mass, I also received the reply, "Not really". Participants seemed able to frame their responses according to their interpretation of Catholicism and with less concern for institutional norms than expected.

My interview questions did not examine doctrinal beliefs, and attitudes to prayer, Mass-going and other key factors were teased out through the stories told rather than by direct inquiry. At the same time, there was enough specificity in them to allow me to code each participant according to prayer, Mass-going, family origin and other factors. It is rare for a Catholic to probe why they are Catholic beyond saying, "It's my family". Reflecting later, and having read further, I might have included more "how" questions to probe into some of the issues that were raised. But generally, participants seemed to enjoy the process and did not very often require clarification of the questions.[25]

---

[25] For topic guide and questions, see Appendix C.

3.4.3 Construct Validity

Ensuring construct validity was a concern because of the exploratory nature of the project. Yin (2013) suggests that using multiple sources of evidence is key to this so I decided to build several steps into my data collection method. The first step was the sensitising set of interviews with key adults from around the diocese. As Yin suggests, these interviews foregrounded the main themes and enabled me to establish key research areas before choosing cases. In order to create possibilities for triangulation, there were multiple activities and levels of contact throughout the research process, including participatory mapping, the focus group, the photo-taking process, individual interviews and bringing the group back together to discuss the photos. Although, sadly, all the steps could not be completed for each group, my hope was that there were enough points of reconnection throughout the research process to allow for data triangulation. Triangulation also took place across the groups where there was a consistency of response (for example, the absence of mentions of the Eucharist across virtually all participants). Finally, I was then able to triangulate the data against reference to the wider literature. Concerned that not speaking about the Eucharist might be a finding only of this group of participants, I was relieved to find it in research among Australian high school students, and across all age groups in America (Smith, 2019; Hatchman 2013).

3.6.4 Ethics, Safeguarding and Consent

As a former youth worker, I was used to working within safeguarding best practice, but in researching with young people there were particular ethical and safeguarding implications of each stage of the research process which included ensuring confidentiality and planning for disclosures. Young people have the right to be fully informed about the research they will be taking part in and the ways in which the results will be used in the future. I was clear that they had the right to leave the research at any point and to refuse to answer a question without having to say why. I was mindful of any harm that may come to them as a result of the research: for example, revelations in group sessions which may not be kept confidential by other participants. Sometimes participants may only become aware of something important about themselves in the course of a project, in which case they may need further support or information. Working with groups across three different settings, the process had to work with three safeguarding protocols. Before starting my research process, I gained the Disclosure and Barring Service safeguarding check required for going into schools and parishes. I also gained ethical consent for the project from the university ethics committee, a process which forced useful questions about the project to be asked. My greatest concern was to generate a sense of confidentiality and responsibility among participants, particularly in a school setting where they would continue to see each other daily. I ensured that structures were in place for any potential disclosure and considered my responsibility to all stakeholders, including the young person and the school or parish.

Including a photo element in the project required additional ethical consideration. Andrew Clark's schema includes the difficulties surrounding obtaining consent for photos taken in public places, the ways in which images can be re-labelled and therefore re-interpreted, and the difficulties (indeed, the impossibility) for the researcher to control the image once it is released (Clark 2012). Claudia Mitchell builds in time to discuss this with her groups, including giving them a set of "tricky" photos to raise awareness, and practising scenarios around obtaining consent from strangers (discussed in 2013b)). However, it is not easy to obtain full consent from participants as it is difficult to know in advance how an image might be used. Both Pink and Clark recommend repeatedly seeking consent from participants as the project develops and images are used in different ways (for example, from participant photos to interview prompts to exhibition pieces to book cover). Therefore, I followed Clark and Mitchell's example to seek staged consent, making it clear that some images can be used for interviews alone and do not have to be exhibited. I put together a booklet on taking photos, which included the ethical issues concerned with taking photos of people and how the photos may be used in the future. This allowed a free conversation on ethics at the end of the focus group session and also gave the young people written notes to take away. A second stage of consent was gained at the second focus group, and I occasionally emailed participants (where I had their contact details) regarding their images.

Overall, my chief ethical concerns were twofold: first, that the young people in the project did not reveal any more of themselves than they were comfortable with, and second, that concerns for confidentiality did not diminish the young people's agency and desire to make change. Maintaining this balance required ongoing attention throughout the project.

3.5.5 The Research Tool

Drawing the research together, I decided to study the complexities of the identity of older Catholic teenagers through participatory methods, engaging them as co-researchers to destabilise my own power as researcher, recognising their agency and expertise. Given how few older teenagers attend Sunday Mass, the questions and method would need to be attractive and genuinely interesting to participants, being careful to avoid implied judgment or technical theological language. Across all the research I looked at, Dunlop and Ward's narrated photo project with young Polish migrants in Plymouth had the most parallels for my own research (Dunlop and Ward 2014). Although their participants had a reserve of theological language that they drew on, their photos covered a wide range of subjects, including food, phones, nature, family members or friends and churches. I felt this method would draw out a similar breadth of themes from my own participants. Bearing in mind that the process also had to fit into a school timetable, I developed the following sequence:

- speaking at school assembly or parish Mass to recruit volunteers
- initial focus group with participatory mapping on the theme of "What is Catholic"?
- discussion on taking good photos, along with discussion of consent and further use of images
- a week's gap for participants to take photos on the theme "This is Catholic"
- semi-structured interviews using the photos taken as an initial prompt
- a focus group to look at all the photos taken
- exhibition of chosen photos from all the groups
- final focus groups to gain impressions from the exhibition.

The questions for the focus group and interview would cover four main areas:

- expressions of Catholic identity and the difference that being a Catholic made to them
- their own lived experiences of being Catholic and how that was expressed in their lives
- the importance of family, friends and other significant people to their Catholic identity
- experiences of transcendence, including what they might do in difficult circumstances.

Using visual methods would broaden the range of response beyond typical religious language. Exhibiting the images in a significant space would demonstrate to participants the importance of their perspective, and would share their worldview in an immediate and accessible way.

3.6 Conducting the Research

3.6.1 The Sample

Choosing participants in a project researching religious identity is problematic. The literature review raised the difficulty of deciding what counted as Catholic, including belief and levels of practice. Years of experience as a Diocesan Youth Officer had shown me that the numbers of teenagers involved in any form of Catholic life was small. Indeed, I had been involved in commissioning research from NFPSynergy, who, even with their extensive databases, had struggled to find 1,000 Catholic young people. Therefore, I decided to use a self-identifying approach and not require any other threshold. I then had to find these young people. Having received permission for the research from the Bishop and Episcopal Vicar for Education in the diocese where I worked and lived, I had a range of three counties to look for potential participants.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) are pragmatic in acknowledging that negotiating access to research sites is a balance between practicalities, ethics, and politics. The Catholic Church lacks the parish youth ministry or festival network of other denominations. My experience showed that even young Catholics in a Catholic school did not know which other young people went to Mass regularly, as practising young people would be spread across several churches and Mass times in the school catchment area, meaning that even snowball recruitment would be difficult. Therefore, I needed locations where young Catholics were already present, where gatekeepers would be supportive and where it would be relatively easy to run a group. This pointed to parishes, schools and the diocesan youth retreat as possibilities.

Yin speaks of the dangers of trying to apply sampling logic to cases. Because I knew that I could only take relatively small numbers in my groups and would depend on young people coming forward to participate, the numbers could never be statistically representative. Instead, I hoped that validity would come from replication logic, designing in replicability with known differences predicting variations in results. Looking at my research question and knowing that Catholic schools are key to the lived experience of young Catholics (Francis 2002), I developed the following variables:

- at a Catholic school: yes/no
- Mass-goer: regular/infrequent

- Degree of conventional practice: self-identifying Catholic with little practice/highly engaged Catholic involved practices beyond Sunday Mass-going

There are many different combinations of these factors, but in terms of the empirical contexts of the project, three groups emerged:

- Catholic school – the group would likely comprise of low-middle religiosity young people. This expectation came both from the literature (Francis 2002) and my experience of running groups in schools.
- Parish group, no Catholic school. I expected these would be mid-high religiosity groups: regular Mass-goers but with a range of practices. This group would also help to control for the religious language and experience of being in a Catholic school.
- Diocesan youth retreat: high religiosity young people with a variety of schooling.

Theoretically, these three settings would have given me three cases: roughly low, middle and high religiosity (according to Fulton's typology), or school, parish and retreat. Pragmatically I knew that getting access to the young people would heavily depend on the gatekeepers I could recruit. Therefore, I drew on the adult interviewees who had already shown their interest in the project to open doors into the various schools and parishes I visited.

In terms of age range, I wanted to research with teenagers who were old enough to have made their own decision about carrying on with their Catholic identity. Recognising that many young people move on from parishes and schools aged eighteen, I decided to look for young people aged fifteen to eighteen (UK school years eleven to thirteen). However, exams in school years eleven and thirteen made access more complicated, both because schools did not want to disrupt their students' learning and because parents were not keen on their young people taking on extra activities.

3.6.2 Conducting the Research

Over the course of 2018, I conducted the research in five groups with twenty-five young people in a project called *This is Catholic*, with the first group, A, as a pilot. Participants were largely aged 16–18, with two 15-year-olds and one 14-year-old. Twenty-one self-identified as Catholic, and the others were in either a Catholic school (three) or parish (one). Fifteen attended Catholic schools.

Eight were males, and the rest females (the gender balance was partly caused by an incident at one of the schools where the boys were held back after the Assembly to be reprimanded for some bad behaviour). Because of the difficulties of recruiting, I did not attempt to control for gender, religiosity, class, parental practice, or ethnicity. Most of the participants were aged sixteen to eighteen: this was due to recruiting within the sixth form of the two schools I visited and because I worked with the oldest group at the Diocesan Youth Retreat.

Only ten participants had white English/Irish ethnicity, with the rest being first or second-generation immigrants from countries as diverse as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Poland, Ukraine, Italy, India and Dubai. Fifteen went to Mass regularly, and seven prayed daily, although there was not as much crossover between these groups as might be thought (see Table 1, below). There were no traditional or "unapologetic" Catholics amongst the group. The complexity of the data is illuminated when laid out in table form, where it is possible to see that the three participants who rarely prayed and rarely went to Mass attended the Diocesan Youth Retreat. Levels of religiosity present in this study are generally much higher than among the general Catholic population. They might be judged to be atypical in terms of their lived religiosity compared to other young people, to Catholics of any age, and to other Catholic young people.[26] All names have been changed.

Because participant observation was not an option for this disparate group, I combined participatory mapping, focus groups, narrated photography, and semi-structured interview methods into a single research tool. The hook for participants was the photo element, which intrigued them, as did the thought of having their photos exhibited in the Cathedral. Participants were asked to take as many pictures as they liked on the theme "This is Catholic". Showing and describing the photos formed the opening of the semi-structured interviews, creating the opportunity for a free-flowing conversation before picking up any unanswered questions in the second half. Participants were then asked to share their photos in the focus group which enabled communal meaning-making around the images, but also allowed for some triangulation of the meaning ascribed to the photos in the interview. Using a narrated photography element also signalled to potential participants that the project was not about correct answers, and that I was actively interested in their perspective. The average length of the focus group sessions was 35–45 minutes plus photo-taking conversation and exercise, and the interviews varied between 15 and 30 minutes (they often had to be fitted into the school timetable). All focus group sessions and interviews were conducted in person.

---

[26] There are few sources for the religiosity of Catholic teenagers in the UK as most research engages over 18s (e.g. Bullivant, 2018). What there is tends to be concentrated in research in Catholic education, for example the work of Francis and Casson (2002; 2019). A rare example is the *Complex Catholicism* research carried out by Camino House (van Duyvenbode, 2018).

I piloted the method with Group A, which resulted in some significant learning. Firstly, despite speaking to about 1,000 people at local churches, there were only five possible candidates attending Mass, of whom two joined the project. There really are very few older teenagers going to Catholic churches in that part of the UK. Secondly, these young people were extremely busy with school and family commitments. Arranging sessions that were not already in their diary (like school or an existing group) proved nearly impossible, and in fact, led only to the first meeting being completed. This resulted in some useful learning: both in choosing settings for the remaining groups, and making the process more streamlined. Finally, despite these difficulties, the session was a success. The participants were interested in the questions, and they had a wide-ranging conversation in which they spoke freely of their experiences, so I was able to include it in the wider data.

Name	**Gender**	**Age**	**Group**	**Catholic school**	**Immigration status**	**Mass attendance**	**Frequency of prayer**	**Catholic or Non-Cath**
Leon	Male	15	Pilot Group A	No	First generation immigrant	Regularly (weekly)	Unassigned	Yes
Red	Male	15	Pilot Group A	No	First generation immigrant	Regularly (weekly)	Daily or more often	Yes
Becca	Female	16	Parish Group B	No	White English/Irish	Regularly (weekly)	Rarely	Yes
Sean	Male	16	Parish Group B	No	White English/Irish	Regularly (weekly)	Rarely	Yes
Lucy	Female	15	Parish Group B	No	White English/Irish	Regularly (weekly)	Rarely	Yes
Beth	Female	17	Parish Group B	No	White English/Irish	Regularly (weekly)	Sometimes	Yes
Connie	Female	14	Parish Group B	No	White English/Irish	Regularly (weekly)	Sometimes	Yes
Marco	Male	17	Diocesan Retreat Group C	No	First generation immigrant	Rarely	Rarely	Yes
Tom	Male	18	Diocesan Retreat Group C	Yes	White English/Irish	Rarely	Rarely	Yes
Michael	Male	18	Diocesan Retreat Group C	Yes	2nd/3rd generation immigrant	Regularly (weekly)	Rarely	Yes
Patrick	Male	18	Diocesan Retreat Group C	No	White English/Irish	Regularly (weekly)	Only if asked	Yes
Pete	Male	16	Diocesan Retreat Group C	Yes	White English/Irish	Sometimes	Sometimes	Yes
Laura	Female	17	Diocesan Retreat Group C	No	2nd/3rd generation immigrant	Rarely	Rarely	Unsure
Natasha	Female	16	School Group D	Yes	First generation immigrant	Regularly (weekly)	Daily or more often	Yes
Lena	Female	16	School Group D	Yes	First generation immigrant	Regularly (weekly)	Regularly (several times a week)	Yes
Barbara	Female	16	School Group D	Yes	First generation immigrant	Regularly (weekly)	Daily or more often	Yes

Nancy	Female	16	School Group D	Yes	First generation immigrant	Sometimes	Daily or more often	Yes
Teresa	Female	16	School Group D	Yes	First generation immigrant	Sometimes	Sometimes	Yes
Sarah	Female	16	School Group D	Yes	First generation immigrant	Regularly (weekly)	Sometimes	Yes
Marzena	Female	16	School Group D	Yes	First generation immigrant	Regularly (weekly)	Daily or more often	Yes
Marianna	Female	16	School Group D	Yes	First generation immigrant	Regularly (weekly)	Daily or more often	Yes
Kasha	Female	16	School Group D	Yes	First generation immigrant	Rarely	Daily or more often	Yes
Hanna	Female	18	School Group E	Yes	First generation immigrant	Sometimes	Daily or more often	No
Rhianna	Female	17	School Group E	Yes	White English/Irish	Not Applicable	Rarely	No
Macie	Female	17	School Group E	Yes	White English/Irish	Not Applicable	Never	No

Table 1 – Classification of participants by group, practice, gender and immigration status

The requirements of the research tool were considerable. Firstly, it needed to meet the requirements of rigorous and ethically conducted research within the field of lived religion. Secondly, it had to be replicable across two schools, two parishes and a busy diocesan retreat. Thirdly, and most importantly, it had to be attractive to the young people taking part, raising interesting questions without causing them harm. Recruiting the participants as co-researchers placed a responsibility on them to obtain signed consent forms, take their photos, and remember to email them to me via methods that did not compromise the safeguarding restrictions on sharing contact information. Despite this, all the participants were interested and engaged in the process, and the data obtained was nuanced and complex. Throughout the process, I maintained a fieldwork journal, logging my impressions of each of the sessions.

The combination of participatory mapping and focus group worked well as an introduction to each group. The process of conversation encouraged storytelling and collective meaning-making, while the more challenging questions (such as “Does being a Catholic help you in your life?”)

often resulted in thoughtful pauses. While the maps my participants produced were more lists of words than anything more complex, they did function as Kesby (2000) noted, drawing out conversation and morphing into the main focus group session very naturally. The mapping exercise meant that I was on the young people's territory from the beginning, as they took control of the conversation. As a technique which hands power to the group, and enables discussion and analysis of previously taken-for-granted notions, participatory mapping proved a powerful starting point to my planned focus groups.

The narrated photography method engaged the young people and was a key element in recruiting participants. It was easy to explain, attractive for the young people themselves, and produced a quality of conversation through the interviews that I was not expecting. To help participants resist the impulse for normative or expected answers, I added an extra step to the process, asking the participants to do an exercise taking photos on the theme "red" at the end of the first session. They could see that everyone had taken different photos on the theme, and there were no "right" and "wrong" answers. They were then asked to take photos on the theme "This is Catholic". While unable to make a causal link, I am hopeful that this additional step contributed to the variety of photos taken, rather than just standard crucifixes and other Catholic tropes. I was delighted to find image making was regarded as a normal activity among my participants, who all had the technology to do this on their phones, together with some quite sophisticated editing software.

After the initial focus group session, I gave participants a few days to take their photos and revisited them to conduct individual interviews. Participants produced high-quality photos, although the number of photos taken varied widely. Often they had made considerable effort to stage or edit their photos to achieve the desired effect. Apart from the pilot project, only one participant did not take any at all. I was surprised that the photos were not more traditionally Catholic: there were a few photos of rosary beads, but most of the images were nature-based, occasionally with family members. Radley's questions resonate: "Why are none of these other types of pictures represented?" (Radley, Hodgetts, and Cullen 2005). The interview process used a semi-structured approach and was guided by the participant's response to the photos they had taken. This allowed them to take control of the interview process, once again reducing the power of the researcher. I always finished with a final question asking if there was anything they would like to add, and this was often when the young people talked most passionately about the Church, their families or other issues. The most difficult part of this method was trying to get copies of the photos after the interviews, as most of the interviewees showed me the photos on their phones. Promises to email photos to me were often disrupted by participants rushing to their next activity. In the end, I received photos from 16 out of 25 participants.

The *This Is Catholic* exhibition was held on 15–29th November 2019 in the diocesan cathedral (see photos in Appendix D). Using an Impact grant from my university, I was able to hire art panels, which allowed an effective presentation of the participants' work. Each participant had chosen one of their photos to be displayed. The exhibition worked on several levels, although not how I had intended it. It had played an important part in attracting the young people to the project and meant that the photos produced by participants were carefully framed and thought-through, providing an excellent basis for interview conversation. However, it was also supposed to provide an extra point of contact with the participants for triangulation purposes, exposing the young people to the range of images across all the groups. I invited the different groups to the exhibition, but in the end, it was only possible for two of the participants to attend. This was partly due to a major building project in the Cathedral which delayed the exhibition until the following autumn. By that time, many of my participants were either in university or work, or in their final year of school with university application and exam pressures. It was also partly because I had to depend on the gatekeepers to organise the groups as their safeguarding regulations did not allow me to hold contact information for the young people directly.

On the other hand, one of the project's aims was to allow young people's voices to be heard, which certainly happened. The exhibition was seen by over a thousand regular attendees at the Cathedral and attracted much positive comment. Other visitors included the Canons of the Cathedral, whose regular meeting was held about that time, and the chaplaincy group from a local Catholic secondary school. The school group filled in comment cards and discussed the photos afterwards in an informal focus group. They were so enthused by the project, they planned to do something similar in their school. Although the exhibition only fulfilled half its purpose in the project, the fact that the participants' photos were widely seen including by the school group, was an added bonus.

3.7 Interpreting the Data

As my project was driven by a commitment to hearing a range of voices and collecting complex data, I considered both grounded theory and reflexive thematic analysis approaches to gain insights into how young people constructed and expressed Catholic identity. Grounded theory recommends that researchers code their early data set as it is collected and adjust their questions in order to fill gaps or explore new findings (Charmaz 2014). However, because I was already researching in three different contexts, I was concerned that changing the questions would cause extra complexity and endanger internal validity. This was even more the case when the final group contained only non-Catholics, where following the same outline questions allowed for their different experiences to be analysed within the same theoretical framework.

Reflexive thematic analysis (TA) allows for the whole dataset to be coded at one time (Braun and Clarke 2019). This can be undertaken within a variety of epistemological approaches and suited my inductive, constructivist methodology. It entails looking for patterns of shared meaning across the complete data set. In the reflexive TA model, the researcher – their knowledge, life experience and skill – becomes the tool of the analysis. The "knowingness" is part of the research method, with a continual returning back to oneself to question the assumptions underlying the coding decisions taken. The codes and themes thus generated were creative *outputs*, not waiting to be discovered within the data, but "produced at the intersection of the researcher's theoretical assumptions, their analytic resources and skill, and the data themselves." (Braun and Clarke 2019, 594).

My research questions and methodological stance required meaning-making to originate from participants. The concern was then for rigour. Reflexive TA requires the researcher to explore their own subjectivities and bring this as an analytical tool to their project. Treating each piece of data as having potential significance allowed new and unexpected themes to emerge. Inductive coding allowed for more nuance: there were nine initial codes concerning Mass-going, which included not just positive and negative attitudes but also the discipline of Mass-going, family practices and attitudes, being too busy to go to Mass, and Mass-going not being important. The TA approach also allowed for the emergence of one of the key themes of the study: the family. As a youth worker who engaged with young people as individuals, this was one of the key surprises of the research, and one enabled by the TA coding method.

3.7.1 Process of Coding

The complexities of my data required that I follow the stages laid out in the reflexive TA process, as detailed further by Carol Rivas (Braun and Clarke 2019; 2018). I transcribed the interviews and focus groups myself using F5 transcribing software, immersing myself in the recordings and listening to the flow of the interviews, the tone of voice, pauses and other data. I then brought all the data together in NVIVO, which allowed me to view the parts of the focus groups, the interviews and the images of each participant in one place, as well as the interviews and focus groups as discrete elements.

My first stage was open coding, which involved reading the transcripts and field notes several times and noting any significant points. This generated a list of 137 codes, which I grouped into rough thematic areas. I entered the node structure into NVIVO, chose five transcripts at random, and started to code using the "line-by-line" method, which ensures that each piece of data is treated on its own terms, and as potentially generative of new ideas (Charmaz 2014). From the first five transcripts, I established an initial set of codes, and in coding the remaining interviews and focus groups, I checked back with the initial data to refine, rename and even delete codes for clarity. I used a combination of semantic and in vivo codes at this point to capture the voice of participants (for example, "I wouldn't be a Catholic if my parents weren't" which was said repeatedly). Using the TA method, I then grouped codes together in themes, maintaining the breadth of meaning within the themes to preserve the ambivalence of the original context (as will be seen in the next chapter, the phrase "I wouldn't be Catholic if my parents weren't" was highly ambiguous). Word queries allowed me to test for frequency and context, for example, "Easter" and "baptism". Where these were significant, they became extra codes. Sometimes, what was striking was what was not said. For example, the word "Eucharist" hardly features across the data, despite both this being a central tenet of the Catholic faith and many participants having the Catholic RE GCSE. This was to become a major theme of my research. Finally, I returned to my research questions and re-ordered the themes specifically in relation to Catholic identity.

I wrote memos as I coded, capturing some of my initial impressions. NVIVO also allowed me to group participants in different ways, for example, their frequency of Mass going or prayer (as it appeared in conversation); whether the participant was an immigrant or child of an immigrant; whether or not they went to Catholic school. Sifting the data in these different ways allowed for a variety of themes to emerge: for example, categorising participants by their different practices showed that Mass attendance did not map onto immigrant status, but frequency of prayer did.

Startlingly, Mass attendance did not map onto frequency of prayer. Throughout the coding, I started to see what was suggested by my research groups: that it just was not possible to describe levels of religiosity in any recognisable way. If I had started with a priori categories, I am not sure this would have been so clear.

3.7.2 Visual Analysis

The visual element of the research project was essential, not only as an attractive method to engage participants, but also to bring to light non-verbal understandings of catholicity. This leaves the researcher with the problem of how to use the images so painstakingly collected. In the past social scientists have wrestled with critiques of using images as data as too subjective and unsystematic (Gauntlett and Holzwarth 2006). The development of visual ethnography has led to a different use of images in research: forming part of a wider dataset that allows multiple and contradictory meanings to emerge (Barley and Russell 2019, 25).

Once it is accepted that the meaning of any one image is created between the participant and the researcher, the issue of rigour becomes apparent. How can the researcher use visual data to apply the same notion of "trustworthiness" as to the other material in the project? (Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba 2018). Sarah Pink suggests a three-fold process. The first step is to examine all the research materials, each of which is a different strand offering different ways of knowing. Taken together, they help build a more complete picture of the everyday experiences that are the focus of the project. Once this starts to come together, it is possible to identify patterns and examine the ways in which they recur, including through visual materials. Sarah Pink calls this the "ethnographic hunch" (Pink 2021, 157), which she describes as "the surfacing of not immediately obvious ways of doing, knowing and experiencing the world, through photography and video, considering their everyday, theoretical and other implications, and holding on to these as we proceed through fieldwork or materials." (Ibid., 158). In separating out the steps of analysis in this way, Pink allows for several stages of knowingness, enabling a higher level of transparency and traceability.

Drawing on Pink, I was able to be intentional about the analysis of the images in my project. The first step was guided by the young person themselves as they talked about the pictures they had taken and the meaning that they generated. Sometimes these were photos taken especially for the project, but sometimes they wanted to speak about old holiday photos, snaps they had taken in their daily life, or images which had particular resonance for them, giving the photos new meaning in the context of the interview. One example of this would be the two photos taken out of the window of an airplane, showing the clouds and the ground far below. These had been taken for fun, but were repurposed by the participants to express something about their worldview and feelings about God.

The second step occurred with the creation of the exhibition, which raised a number of questions. For Gubrium and Harper (2013b), this stage is "producer knowledge". The very process of printing the photos, assembling the quotations and staging the exhibition itself led to thoughts about the particular photos the young people had taken. It became clear to me that captioning was a moment of power for the researcher, and I tried very hard not to fix the meaning of the photos, instead searching out quotations from the interviews. This process revealed that, even for the young people themselves, any meaning they attributed to the images was often contingent and elliptical, giving a range of impressions of what Catholicism meant to them. It showed considerable sophistication on the part of the participants who are used to using images in this way, for example, on their social media feeds.

Having connected individual images with particular moments in the interviews and focus groups, I then moved to the third stage of analysis, which involved looking at the materials as a whole to see where patterns were arising. Allowing the images and interviews to interact added nuance, and in some cases, provided entirely new readings of the photos. There were several images of conventionally Catholic pious objects, which might have led one to imagine that these were taken by traditionally Catholic young people. However, putting these images in conversation with the interviews made it clear that these objects were placeholders for relationships and significant events (see Chapter Four). This pattern of re-purposing traditional catholicity was repeated consistently across the data and became a major theme of the project. Using the images as part of the data set helped triangulate the findings of the transcripts, offering a conversation between the two types of data, for example when one participant tried to describe an image of a credence table set up for Mass while not able to use the correct technical theological language to explain what she saw. These findings were then analysed by group, ethnic origin, and frequency of practice, which again produced surprising results. Finally, I looked for the major themes in the wider literature.

3.8 Assessment of Method

3.8.1 Why Did Lower-Religiosity Catholics Not Engage?

Although I found the research process rich and very enjoyable, the final sample of participants had less diversity of practice than I had originally hoped. They were mostly within a set which included a form of regular practice, whether going to Mass or praying, and did not include any "non-practising" Catholics. This was despite running five groups in a range of places. In an emergency meeting with my supervisors, we discussed whether it would be better to recast the whole project concentrating only on more religious young people. In the end, we decided it would be better to reflect on why the method had not attracted less-religious participants and retain the ghost of their presence through the project.

There are several reasons why the project might not have attracted low-religiosity young Catholics. First, it might be due to the method itself: that it biased participation towards more articulate, more engaged young people. However, I had deliberately chosen methods that worked across a variety of experiences and contexts, with participatory mapping and photo-voice both having a wide literature of use, including with homeless people and street kids in Kampala (Kesby 2000; Radley, Hodgetts, and Cullen 2005; Young and Barrett 2001). Second, it could be a researcher blind spot: in communicating the project perhaps I had used language or images that would not be of interest to low-religiosity Catholics. However, after advice from the Head of Sixth Form at one of the schools, I had pitched the project as being sociological rather than theological, exploring "why some people are interested in religion?" and letting them know that they could add it to their UCAS forms if they were applying to university. The fact that one of the schools produced three non-Catholic participants also suggests that this was not the reason why low-religiosity young people did not take part. Finally, perhaps there was a social pressure involved in engaging with the project which meant that it attracted young people who were "out" to their friends as religious, but would positively put off young people who were not. This pressure was to be found in the data in some of the other schools attended by participants, but students at the participating schools were emphatic that peer pressure of this type was not a problem at their school.

Having drawn a blank with these possible explanations, I wondered if low-religiosity Catholics did not feel that their Catholic identity was significant enough for this project to be of interest. Hout and Fischer (2014) have shown how young people in America decreasingly identify as religious. Perhaps one can speculate whether one of the practices of being a low-religiosity Catholic in the UK in 2020s is not talking about being Catholic. The young people in my groups were unusual in that they were used to talking about religion, whether in their parish Alpha group, the diocesan retreat, or among their friendship groups or family. However, they often said how rare it was to have such conversations, except perhaps after a stimulating RE lesson. For the vast majority of young people in the UK, religion is not something they think about very often (Hancock 2016). The conclusion to this speculation was that researching with low-religiosity young Catholics would require a separate research design altogether.

The voices of low-religiosity young people are not completely absent from this research. They appear in the Diocesan Retreat Group, among those who come on the retreat but do not go to Mass or pray for the rest of the year. Some of the participants in School Group D did not have a particularly regular rate of practice. On the other hand, the non-Catholic group at School E had strong beliefs and practices. In the end, this method brought together young people who were used to talking about religion for one reason or another. Whether they only went to Mass occasionally, or never prayed, does not seem to have impacted on their participation.

One final note on absences from the groups. Although four of the adults I interviewed were from the "unapologetic Catholic" group, often seen as a place of growth for the Western Catholic Church, none of the young people fell into this group. None of them attended a Latin Mass, or had the enthusiasm for traditional Catholic morality which can be a feature of this group (Hoge 2002). This may be because traditional Catholics, like some of the ethnic groups of Catholics, tend to gather away from mainstream groups. While I did not specifically seek out this type of young Catholic, it is perhaps surprising not to have found them across any of the groups I held.

3.8.2 Making Sense of the Complexity

As my examples show, the reality of fieldwork can be very different from its theoretical basis. Firstly, it was impossible to manage predictable differentiation of research groups, even with extensive planning and past knowledge of some of the sites I researched in. In the literature, much of the previous research into religiosity depended on being able to predict that behaviour, belief and identity would correlate in particular ways. A reduction in churchgoing was related to a lessening in religious practice, which in turn was related to a distancing of religious identity. It seems that Catholics do not fit neatly into low-mid-high categories of religiosity, a finding that became a key analytical tool of the project. Even regular practice did not ensure orthodox Catholicism or spirituality: one of the young people most committed to their parish community in service was only half convinced about the existence of God.

In order to reflect on the complexities of my fieldwork, I turned to an interpretive approach. Antonio Diàz Andrade (2009) brought Yin's work in case study research together with a grounded theory approach, highlighting where Yin's positivist assumptions might cause problems for constructivist researchers. Building on Glaser and Straus (2006), he theorised a form of research design that would be inductive, contextual and process-based. This begins with major theoretical questions rather than a more precise theoretical framework, selects cases according to local recommendation rather than theoretical replication, and applies a rigorous grounded theory approach to Yin's explanation building. Seeking to generalise from his results, Diàz-Andrade looked for constructivist "corroboration" and "theoretical sufficiency" instead of a more positivist "triangulation". He recognised that another researcher may come to other conclusions even when following the same chain of evidence, according to their own experience and mental processes, but that the researcher could be expected to provide sufficient corroborating evidence for an external eye not to disagree with the process followed. Andrade's work seemed to offer a rigorous approach to the emic, reflexive study that would serve the research questions best.

3.8.3 Limitations of the Fieldwork

In addition to the limitations already highlighted about the lack of low-religiosity Catholics in the research groups and the difficulty of creating predictable differentiation across the groups, there were three other drawbacks to the fieldwork. Firstly, because I did not choose to add a short demographic survey to my process, data on ethnic origin, levels of practice and other useful information had to be gleaned from the interviews. It would have been helpful to have included some sort of quantitative element to ensure the evenness of this kind of data. On the other hand, asking too much information in this way would counter the careful steps I had taken to ensure a non-normative approach. Secondly, because I had not realised in advance that families would be so significant a theme, all the data about family life comes from participants themselves. Any further iteration of this method might include building in some interviews with family members to hear alternative perspectives, possibly using the intergenerational methodology of Hopkins et al (2011). Again, however, given how difficult it was to attract participants to the project, adding in family interviews might be a step too far. Finally, safeguarding and data protection best practice required that I did not hold contact information for the young people themselves. This caused a lot of work where young people did not send their photos in, did not return their consent forms, or where I was not able to invite them to the exhibition. In future I would work with the gatekeepers to ensure some form of direct contact with participants, even if deleted once the project was over.

3.9 Reflexivity and Representation

3.9.1 Acknowledging Researcher Positionality

Both case study method and reflexive thematic analysis require the researcher to use their life experience as an active research tool (Moschella 2008). This compels the researcher to undertake an examination of their own biases and assumptions (Orsi 2005), recognising that their experience and life are fundamental to the construction of the project and the understanding of the data (Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba 2018). In my case, this necessitated a thorough unpacking of my own positionality on subjects as broad as the purpose of the Catholic Church, the benefit of being Catholic to young people, and my own upbringing.

Avoiding theological reflection and taking a social sciences approach felt like a neutral, value-free stance. However, exploring my expectations about the project, I uncovered a series of assumptions:

- that being a Catholic is good for young people
- that young people are necessary for the Catholic Church
- that Catholicism for most people is a lived experience rather than a series of doctrinal propositions, and that what people believe does not necessarily match what they practice
- that the range of Catholic opinions on any topic is vast
- that young people are often a disruptive force
- that they are makers and crafters of religion in their own way, as well as receivers of it.

I realised that these assumptions come from my own lived experience but at the same time I felt that they must be questioned. Does identifying as a Catholic help navigate adolescence? Are young people necessary for the Church (in a broader sense than demographics)? To what extent do young people craft their own Catholicism, or do they receive it and practice it as it was given to them? Uncovering these assumptions has been fundamental to creating this project, driving an early decision to take an ethnographic/study of religion rather than a practical theology approach.

I also had to consider my own motivation for the research. To what extent was I invested in maintaining the status quo? I am employed by the Catholic Church, and difficult findings could be awkward for my career. When I drill down into my own motivation, however, I find that the opposite is true. The numbers of priests and Catholic laity are falling and have been for years. In both my work and my research, I am looking for insights to address this decline. Therefore, I am open to the opposite danger: that I over-read the commitment and energy of the participants, and turn a PhD project into a polemic. Indeed, is it possible for a person of belief to research their own religion clear-sightedly? As Matthew Engelke writes, "If an anthropologist holds the same religious beliefs as "the natives" – or even, some might say, any at all – the implicit concern of the discipline is that he or she might be surrendering too much anthropological authority." (Engelke 2002, 3).

Scholars have taken a number of approaches to this thorny question. Brian Howell (2007), tracing the implications of thinking of himself as "the repugnant other" – which is to say, a conservative Christian studying conservative Christians – outlines the ramifications of his positionality. Rejecting a positivist objectivity, he argues that being a Christian should be treated as any other subject position (eg feminist or queer) and recounts the various ways in which a "native" perspective can be helpful. However, Howell does not question how his academic status and religious status together might change his relationship with his participants: as "an educated visitor with some experience working in Christian churches" he was regularly asked to lead Bible studies and speak at retreats. He suggests that this had a positive impact in terms of access to the field, but does not question how it may have affected the power balance between his participants and himself.

Wilcox (2002), on the other hand, lays out her varied strands of identity as academic, gay, and Christian, and examines the impact of each on her research community (Wilcox, 2002). Researching a gay Christian community, she felt that, as a gay Christian herself, the problem may have been her insider status. However, because the gay community had often been studied in the past, sometimes with adverse consequences, it was Wilcox's academic identity that came to the fore, and positioned her as an outsider which then created difficulties of access due to suspicion and fear. By problematising her own status, she was able to critique previous positions as seeking a false objectivity. Instead, she suggests that researchers examine their own biases, triangulate findings with participants, engage with both insider and outsider critiques, and freely acknowledge their blind spots.

I have to recognise a similarly complex set of insider/outsider positions. I have the advantages and blind spots of being a committed Catholic who has long worked with young people. I grew up in similar circumstances to some of my participants and have heard many faith stories from the teenagers I have worked with. Yet I must be careful not to collapse my experience with that of my participants (Moschella 2008). I did not grow up in such a polarised world as they are living in. I did not have the immigrant experience that many of them have had. I have not lived as a teenager in the twenty-first century. The outsider position is as important to my research as the inside knowledge I possess. Orsi, researching Catholicism as a cradle Catholic, reflects that academics researching their own communities bring a set of conceptual categories that lie outside those that participants use to think about their lives (Orsi 2005). A reflexive approach demands that one brings the self squarely into the frame of research. Indeed, one almost researches oneself – one's reactions, impulses and framework – in contrast to the other. This research process impacted my own preconceptions about Catholicism, causing me to reflect on the manifold ways in which people become Catholic and express it in their lives.

3.9.2 Representation

The epistemology of a lived religion approach extends beyond research design and fieldwork into the analysis and representation of a project. For Orsi, this is a moment of maximum potential but also maximum danger:

> The challenge, then, becomes to set one's own world… in relation to this other reality and to learn how to view the two in relation to each other… The point is not to make the other world radically and irrevocably other, but to render one's own world other to oneself as prelude to a new understanding of the two worlds in relationship to one another. (Orsi 2005, 201–2)

The question of representation is one that has dogged ethnography since the 1980s as scholars have uncovered many different reasons why an account may be partial (Crapanzano 2010). Sometimes this is in the crafting of the text for literary or aesthetic purposes (Moschella 2008). Sometimes it is for political purposes which then become normalised within the academy. Susan Harding's account of the "repugnant other" calls attention to the othering of Christian fundamentalists, regarded as antithetical to modernity, and implicitly backward, uneducated and unscientific (Harding 1991). Sarah Pink uncovers the long history of ethnographic photography used for colonial political purposes (Pink 2013). In these two examples, those being "othered" may not have had access to the academic results of this research in order to critique it. However, in Mary Jo Neitz's fieldwork on Wicca, one of the participants, herself a poet and scholar, complained that books on women's spirituality were always written by outsiders. Neitz comments that academic authors do not seem to "acknowledge the possibility that the boundaries between 'witches' and 'writers' might be permeable. Witches in these books are locked into position as the 'they' that is studied." Her approach is different:

> I cannot write a book where I, the expert, tell an audience about the curious customs of some far away others, in part because I cannot assume that the subjects and the audiences for my book are distinct from each other…
>
> There is a sense that I write for and with the witches, in a conversation together, as well as about them. They write books themselves. We read each others' books. We sometimes write for different purposes. I learn from what they write. I hope that they recognise themselves in what I write – even when it is not what they would say themselves or how they would say it. Some of them tell me that they learn from me, from my reports of practices, from my interpretations. (Neitz 2002, 44)

The task of this study has been to represent young people in all their multi-layered complexity, in conversation with the norms and tradition of the Catholic church. I have attempted to portray Orsi's "other reality" through extended quotations from the data and the use of participants' photos. The extended quotations can provide a jolt of misrecognition, revealing meanings that are not quite shared or multiple understandings in one paragraph. When paired with their images a catholicity is presented that sits at a slight tangent to my own, rendering both worlds othered. Orsi's gift to lived religion is to hold both worlds as consequential, resisting the urge to condemn one as insufficient. Failure to address these questions can lead to disconnect between the academy and the field. For my own subject, Catholicism, this has meant insufficient unpicking of the gap between the thing, lived Catholicism; and the conceptual maps or assumptions carried by researchers about what lived Catholicism is. As Tom Beaudoin writes: "It seems to us that Catholic theology has not been curious enough about what sorts of people those who are baptised Catholic are becoming through their ordinary practices, through what they regularly desire to receive." (Beaudoin and Hornbeck II 2013, 36).

3.10 Conclusion

I concluded the literature search process in Chapter Two by outlining three commitments for my research: to move beyond propositional faith to a more embodied understanding of Catholicism; to de-centre the power of the researcher and the normative pull of the institutional Church; and to understand the role of agency and difference in creating and maintaining Catholic identity. The challenge was then to find a methodological framework that would support these commitments in answering my research questions. The field of lived religion and the work of Bourdieu combined to offer a non-normative approach to studying Catholicism which also recognised the power of the structuring structures of family life and the institutional Church. My research questions focussed on three key words: complexity, teenage and identity.

The project posed questions as basic as what precisely scholars study in order to understand religion better, and how to generalise from individual cases to wider theory. It drew on a range of projects to explore epistemology and research design. Researching religion with young people raised a secondary series of questions around safeguarding, power and access, requiring care in constructing and carrying out the fieldwork. Finally, a lived religion approach raised further questions as to how best to explore slippery notions such as habits, worldviews and attitudes. There were additional constraints imposed on the project because of the subjects I wanted to reach. Participants were scattered across the diocese, often had a scholarly knowledge of Catholicism which did not relate to their own beliefs, and had many other calls on their time. Drawing on best practice both within and outside the study of religion, I designed a research process that included participatory mapping, focus groups, photo voice interviews and an exhibition. This process de-powered my role as a researcher and made space for the agency of my participants to express themselves through their images, thereby meeting the research commitments I had made.

The research process that I followed fulfilled most of these criteria. The participatory approach allowed the young people to raise subjects such as struggles with identity, sinfulness, encounters with dead ancestors, hopes for the future, and a whole range of views about the Catholic Church, including critiquing its stance on abortion and women priests. Although the first focus group was stilted to begin with, the process did seem to engage the young people. After the pilot group there was only one participant who did not complete the steps, which with such a busy group of young people was a sign of their engagement. They were at home in a visual medium, with a good number of them having art or photography at GCSE. This helped to address the power imbalance implicit in a research project. Even within the process of research design and implementation, questions were raised about the usual categories of high-, medium- and low-religiosity. Groups did not comply with the kind of typology worked out by Michael Hornsby-Smith and John Fulton, instead being considerably more diverse. This only foreshadowed what was to arise from the data.

Fieldwork in social sciences is always the art of the possible, and having worked with young people for years, I knew that not everything would go to plan. There were several learning points for future research and potential issues for the data analysis. Overall, however, the process was very rich and productive, and the photos the young people took were inspiring and thought-provoking.

Chapter 4 Growing up Catholic

> I: What about your friends, do you have Catholic friends at school? [...]
>
> Becca: I don't have any at school, not practising Catholics… yeah, they're like, a lot of them, they're confirmed and stuff, but they're not actually, they're really closed to it
>
> Lucy: Harry sometimes
>
> Immie: If you went to ask him if he's a Catholic he'd say yes
>
> Beth: Oh my friend, yeah, we've had this whole debate, one of my friends, she's like, no, he's not Catholic, he can't be, he doesn't go to church. And I'm like, but technically he is because he's been confirmed and everything, it's just that he's, he's not a *practising* Catholic
>
> Parish Group B, Focus Group R

My research question asks: "How can we understand and interpret the complexities of Catholic identity among Catholic teenagers?" As the opening conversation demonstrates, even among Catholics there are questions as to what Catholic identity looks like enacted in daily life. This chapter is part one of a pair that explores the two-step process of the production of an adolescent Catholic identity arising from the data. In this chapter, I will scrutinise families as foundational but complex sites of the production of catholicity by surveying the variety of responses of participants to their identity. They were not all pleased to have been born into a Catholic family, and the ambivalence that forms such a large part of this project can be seen here too. Family roles included passing on Catholic identity, normalising it, enacting it in practices, and shaping a Catholic worldview. Then, I will widen the investigation to survey the complex ways in which these processes of normalisation and enactment are continued and challenged in other spaces, among peers, and in school and parish communities. In addition to ambivalence, a key theme is relationality. Chapter Five will show young people making choices based on a desire for an emotionally affective, relational catholicity, but relationships are also a powerful driving force in forming Catholic identity, whether in families, among peers or in other settings. What is revealed in the data is a deeply domestic catholicity. More than "just" affiliation, belief or practice, the findings of my research show that for these young people, being Catholic is a rich combination of family and ethnic identity, played out in other social environments such as school and parish, supported by friends, significant adults, and the habits they have learned since childhood. In Chapter Five I will examine the second step of the process: the agency and micro-innovation often required to develop from this domestic catholicity into a personal identity that will continue into adulthood.

As has been seen in the literature survey, measuring Catholicity can be fraught with issues of normativity and is often framed by positivist approaches. The Lived Catholicism approach adopted by this thesis foregrounds the voices of the young people themselves through extended quotations, drawing the reader into their lives so that a more nuanced and subtle picture emerges (Dunn 2016). Examining these complexities requires holding two forces in tension. Firstly, the participants in this study are among the most highly religious young people to be found in everyday situations (that is, not in specialist communities). Their experiences are recognisable but not necessarily common. Secondly, these participants are also ordinary young Catholics for whom identifying and practising as Catholics is part of their identity. They do not regard themselves as special, but they somehow buck the trend of rapidly reducing numbers of young people identifying as religious. The mechanisms by which this happens are not well understood and are worth exploring carefully.

4.1 Families as Foundations for Identity

Families were the foundation of Catholic identity in this study, producing and supporting it in a variety of ways. Firstly, they passed on the sense of being a Catholic to their children. "I wouldn't be Catholic if my parents weren't" was one of the most telling phrases of the study. The responses of participants repay close study. Secondly, families normalised Catholic identity: they made time for being Catholic, they told stories about it, and through their own behaviour, they demonstrated that it was of value to them. Thirdly, families enacted Catholic identity through the practice of it: whether that was the shape of a day or week, praying when a family member was ill, or through the observance of major milestones. Finally, these families formed Catholic worldviews in their children, helping them to interpret feelings and dreams and forming expectations about the future. Ethnic or cultural practices added an extra dimension with Italian, Polish, Ukrainian and Zimbabwean identities reinforcing and complicating catholicity. The data shows religious and family identities playing off against each other in interesting ways through relationships, celebrations, the catholicity of parents and other relatives, and even home decor. All this demonstrates that, despite Catholic identity beginning in what seems like an innate process – the handing of identity from one generation to the next – this vastly underestimates the degree of work and skill within families.

4.1.1 “I wouldn’t be Catholic if my parents weren’t”: Inheriting an Identity

The young people in the study had a sense that being Catholic was intrinsic to family identity and their sense of self. Participants consistently said, across the different groups, “I wouldn’t be Catholic if my parents weren’t”. Somewhat surprisingly, even with the same starting place, there were a variety of outcomes. Having Catholic parents with some sort of active practice seems to have been a necessary condition for choosing to take part in the study. At the same time, because inheriting an identity was expressed as problematic, having an active Catholic parent was not sufficient to create actively Catholic teenagers. Firstly, where Catholic identity was not so much chosen as given, there was a sense of ambivalence. For some in this group, their Catholicity was so foundational it was virtually (but not entirely) invisible. Secondly, there were some for whom ambivalence slid into negativity. Not every young person was pleased to have been born into a Catholic family. There are overlays of cultural and ethnic identity, together with family attitudes and practices that the young people are not sure if they share. Finally, there were those, even with similar experiences of growing up in a Catholic family, for whom being Catholic was positive and contributed to their sense of personhood.

Ambivalence

In an age that prizes autonomy and individual choice, the young people in the study were not always sure how to regard their identity. Their ambivalence lies precisely in the tension between an inherited and a chosen Catholicity:

> I: What helps you be a Catholic then?
>
> Leon: My parents. To be frank! If I’d gone, let’s say I’d been born into an atheist family and decided, oh, Christianity seems pretty good, and then I started believing, I have no semblance, no assurity that I’d go to Catholicism, I don’t know which denomination I’d pick or anything, it’s... sort of, it’s out there in the sense of, I think, I’d be a Christian, but at the same time, I don’t know which one I’d choose, but even now, the main reason, in fact the only reason I’m specifically a Roman Catholic is because of my upbringing. I mean, my mother, wasn’t a Roman Catholic, she was some other denomination, and then she married my dad, became a Catholic. I don’t know what I’d be without their influence. [...]
>
> I: What about you, Red, what helps you be a Catholic?
>
> Red: Basically my parents as well, like, if I like, if I ask them for help or something, basically if I’m stuck on anything, I ask my parents, I will like ask them for advice in case something goes wrong, or if I did something wrong.[27]

---

[27] Focus group X, #00:22:16-0#

Although these comments are hardly a ringing endorsement of Catholicism, they do reflect the views of many of the participants:

> Lucy: I don't think I'd be Catholic if my parents didn't bring us to church.
> <All the girls agree>
> Becca: I wouldn't
> Immie: I probably wouldn't be a Catholic cos I wouldn't like, have grown up with it, but now that I've, cos I've grown up with it, I feel like I know more about it so...[28]

Catholicism is something that comes from their parents without them knowing enough about it to make a positive choice. It is distinctive as an identity, but not necessarily as a set of beliefs or practices. In fact, sometimes this question raised further questions about the distinction between Catholicism and other denominations.[29] A notable finding is the uniformity of the starting point (parental practice) and the variability in the response. Here Sarah is verging on positive about her identity:

> Sarah: I think it was also from family, if I wasn't brought up that way, I potentially wouldn't be Catholic, so I feel like it's fairly dependent on the way that you're brought up.
> I: And is it a good thing? Are you happy being Catholic?
> S: Yeah[30]

The "yeah" at the end of this conversation was not a particularly emphatic one. Lena was equally phlegmatic: "I was brought up one, so I just continued on."[31] Ambivalence was shown most clearly in Kasha's comment:

> Kasha: So yeah, I don't really disclose it that much. If someone asks I'll tell them, but I don't go... I'm Kasha and I'm Catholic... But yeah, I've never had any problems with it, I feel like confident like saying I'm a Catholic, I don't feel ashamed of it or anything in any way.[32]

For her, being Catholic is not a negative, but it would not be a priority for describing herself. Somehow, despite this, it remains an integral part of her identity. Marco, a first generation Italian immigrant, identified so strongly he simply could not imagine not being Catholic. In this conversation, Laura, his girlfriend, jumps in to assist:

---

[28] Focus Group R, #00:19:38-3#
[29] For example, see Focus Group X, #00:04:46-3# onwards.
[30] Focus Group Q, #00:09:43-7#
[31] Interview C, #00:14:00-3#
[32] Interview B, #00:13:38-5#

> I: What about you, Marco, would you describe yourself as a Catholic?
>
> Marco: How do you mean?
>
> I: Would you say, I'm a Catholic?
>
> Marco: <puzzled> I am a Catholic.
>
> I: Yeah, yeah, <laughter> Well, like it's…
>
> Laura: Well, I'm a Protestant and I believe more in the Catholic side, whereas you're a Catholic and you could believe more in another denomination side.
>
> I: Or you could say, I'm not sure.
>
> Marco: Nah, I am Catholic and I believe in Catholic stuff.[33]

For Marco, the ambivalence lay in the fact that this very strong Catholic identity had little impact on his daily life:

> I: And is it hard?
>
> Marco: To be a Catholic?
>
> I: Mmm
>
> M: No. It's not. Catholic, you're a normal person at the end of the day, you're a person like the other but you have time alone with God and that's mainly on a Sunday at church. That's where every Catholic at Sunday has his own time alone with God. Like, through the week you can still go out with your friends, have fun, you're still a normal person.[34]

Negativity

Sometimes the ambivalence slipped into negativity. Here is Becca, beginning in the same place with her parents, but with a different outcome:

> I don't… I think it's partly because my parents brought it on me, it's like, oh ok I've gotto go church and all this stuff. But there is some days when I wake up and I don't even want to go in church, there will be some days I don't even want to, I dunno, I don't want to talk about it. I don't want to be seen as religious sometimes. But then, it's like, my parents are, it's what I've got to do. It's like it's just been brought on me. […]

---

[33] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#

[34] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#

> I would feel ashamed, I'd feel ashamed if one of my parents is like, I don't want to go to church, I don't want to be a Catholic, I'd feel ashamed, so I don't really say it to them, like, do I have to go to church, like…[35]

Becca described how her parents expected her to go to Mass every week while she was under eighteen. The lack of choice made it difficult for her to know what she wanted, while the relationship with her parents connected questioning identity with notions of shame. For Natasha, strict parents could make a religious identity less religious and more mundane:

> When I was growing up, my parents would be, 'we have to go to church Sunday, we have to go' and then, I feel like the repetativeness of it, the strictness of it, kind of made me not want to believe or go to church or something like that, because it was another like, school, you have to go to school, you have to go to church, it's like a rule, and it, kind of, took away the aspect…[36]
>
> I: And now, do you have to go every week, or do you go because you want to go?
>
> N: So that's still a debatable <laughs>[37]

Natasha is not rejecting Catholicism, or even going to Mass. She feels a disconnect between how she feels about her faith, and being forced to go to church. Marzena makes this point even more clearly:

> Marzena: I know that some people, for example, my brother as one, we have, we don't have strict parents where they will force you to go to church, but they will hint at it, a bit strongly, let's say <laughs> so that got my brother to be pushed away just by the constant kind of strictness that some Catholic people can impose onto their children. And that's the one thing that I feel can be a negative thing when it comes to Catholicness, and stuff like that.
>
> I: They get pushed away, they want to rebel against it.
>
> M: It's not that they want to rebel, it's more of the fact that they are constantly being forced to do something that they wouldn't mind doing, but just the negative idea of being forced to do it is pushing them away.[38]

Although Mass going was an obvious point of conflict (to be explored further in this chapter) the connection between family and religious identity could lead to deeper disquiet:

> Becca: Sometimes I do debate, am I just doing this to make my parents proud? Am I just [volunteering as a sacristan] because, oh, I said I'd help with my dad, and now I'm like, I'm too pretty afraid. But I don't feel that. But my brain's still kind of mixed

---

[35] Focus Group R, #00:21:36-7#

[36] Interview K, #00:12:39-7#

[37] Interview K, #00:12:45-3#

[38] Interview Q, #00:31:17-9#

> up with… have I chosen this, am I doing the right thing, are my parents like making me do it. I don't know. I think quite like, 50-50.[39]

Becca spent a lot of her interview wrestling with these issues. Gradually she moved towards a solution that might work for her:

> Becca: I don't think I'll grow out of it. But I'll probably won't have as much strong a faith as what I am now. But I probably won't go to church every Sunday, but I'll try and go church, but I'll definitely pray, if something bad happens in my life, I'll definitely pray for it. But I probably won't think about it as much… or… say I am to people as much […]
>
> I: And why do you think that? Is it a pain at the moment?
>
> B: No… I think because of being 50% 50%, I'm not 100% there, but I'm not 100% not going to be there. I think it's because of where I am – I could, in 10 years time, I could be at 75% there, and then I'll be like, yeah, I'm going to carry on my faith and stuff. But at this point in time, it's just like, I'm not not going to, I'll never say I'm not going to be Catholic, but at this point I'm just going to say, I'm kind of, like, I'm Catholic, but I'm not a strong faith. I think it's because of what I've experienced and stuff. It's kind of made me double think my life, and stuff.[40]

Becca sees her Catholicity as at risk, but what is vulnerable to change is not her fundamental identity: she says "I'll never say I'm not going to be Catholic". Instead, it is the expression of that identity that may decrease ("I probably won't go to church… I won't think about it as much… or… say I am to people as much"). There is a move here similar to the distinction between the "technically" and "practising" Catholics of the opening conversation, where what is at stake is not Catholic identity but Catholic activity.

Patrick also makes the distinction between a foundational, non-active identity, and its expression:

> I: So, would you describe yourself as a Catholic?
>
> Patrick: I would, but I wouldn't describe myself as a good Catholic, I struggle, like most people, but I always put God, like second, maybe third, fourth, fifth, and when I come to camps like this, it hits, it hits home.[41]

He differentiates between his notion of a good Catholic, and how he sees himself. For both Patrick and Becca, it is the activity or commitment level that changes, rather than the fundamental identity, but that has implications for how they describe their Catholicity. It is at once a settled state and at risk.

---

[39] Interview F, #00:13:33-9#

[40] Interview F, #00:10:47-5#

[41] Interview O, #00:01:53-9#

Benefit

Despite the ambivalence and wrestling, for the most part, the young people in the study were positive about their Catholic identity (they were, after all, taking part in a research project about Catholicism). What is striking is how often the positive comments began in the same way as the negative and ambiguous ones:

> Lena: From being brought up Catholic because my parents like instilled it upon me, because I've always gone to church, even when I was little, so it's just like carried on until now. If I didn't have that guidance, from say parents and family, then I probably wouldn't be Catholic, because it wouldn't have occurred to me.[42]

The language used is subtle. Here, it is only the positive connotation of the word "guidance" that lifts this statement from ambiguity or even negativity. Marzena combines all these positions in one thought:

> And another thing is that my parents, even though I say that they pressured me into it, I'm actually glad they actually showed me the ways, although some of their methods aren't, I'm not too keen on! <laughs> I mean, they did their best and it's because they're holding up the promise you do when you have your child baptised, when you want to keep them growing up in church, so I understand everything is from good will and yeah[43]

Like Becca, Marzena is another participant with strict parents, but she has been able to internalise their approach in a way that Becca was not able to do, with correspondingly different outcomes. For Immie it is more straightforward:

> I: And do you feel for yourself, that it's important to you?
>
> Immie: I think it does contribute to make me who I am, because I don't know what it would be like without it, because I've grown up with my dad being quite religious. It's sort of, I've picked it up as well. I don't know what I'd be like without it, so... I think it does contribute to my life a lot.[44]

Even among these positive accounts, however, there are signs that Catholic practice is at risk:

---

[42] Focus Group Q, #00:09:22-1#

[43] Interview G, #00:18:01-8#

[44] Interview U, #00:03:45-3#

> Natasha: Honestly, erm being Catholic gives me hope, so in that sense I would want to carry it on, but at the same time, I am aware, it will probably fluctuate, because if I'm away from the people that instils the faith in me, then I'll probably start getting shaky, but then I can watch the videos, I can like, my mum will probably text me "have you said your prayers?" <laughter> [45]

4.1.2 Normalising Catholic Identity

Although many parents and adult congregations might be surprised to hear it, the evidence from participants was that family identity was influential even for these older teenagers. The rest of the section will explore how this works through shared practices and beliefs. Before that, it is worth examining some of the underlying factors regarding family identity among participants. As part of handing on a religious identity, families normalise Catholicity, as can be seen in Natasha's comment above. Even when she leaves home, she half-expects her mum to remind her to say her prayers. One participant said, "It's just always been there, so I guess I've grown up used to it fitting in, and it's always just come in on the weekends, we've got time for it."[46] At the most practical level, Catholic families prioritise being Catholic over other aspects of their lives. They also socialise and celebrate together. The impact of this is to create a family "system" in which ordinary daily occurrences become reinforcers of identity:

> P: Yeah. Because, well my dad's parents were Catholic, my dad's family. My dad was raised Catholic, he went to Cardinal Newman in Luton with a lot of my family, so that's kind of, I've always been brought up, like, with it. Whenever we go and visit my grandparents we'd go to church with them and stuff, hmm, it's good as well, it's keeping connected.[47]

This is expressed most fully by Marco whose desire to maintain his Catholicity is motivated by pleasing his parents:

> I: So, into the future, do you see yourself staying Catholic?
> Marco: Yeah
> I: Something you stay, or something you grow out of?
> Laura: We'll stay and our children will stay

---

[45] Interview K, #00:12:00-8#
[46] Interview K, #00:03:10-7#
[47] Interview T, #00:03:18-9#

> M: It will be mainly because I want to be Catholic, but if it's not for them, it will be mainly for my family. Cos no-one stays around for long, and some point you will be alone, so the only point I can grant them is to keep like their education, they want me to be so that's the only thanks I can give them, that's how I'm going to thank them.
>
> I: So being Catholic is really wrapped up with being in your family then, for you? And then you see that, taking that forward?
>
> M: Yeah[48]

Inheriting an identity over time changes the young person, so that, as Immie said, "I don't know what I'd be like without it."

Not only parents but also other family members were key to this work of passing on identity.

> I: So who in your life has been important in your faith then?
>
> Barbara: Well I come from a whole family that's really into Catholicism. So my grand aunt was a nun, my uncle is a priest, and all my aunts and uncles, like, they are married now, but they are catechists, and even my mum and dad are catechists.[49]

In Pete's family, it is his grandmother who is the main Catholic influence.

> I: Oh yeah... But does it help having a, do you talk about faith at all? Do you have anyone at home you talk about faith stuff with?
>
> P: Not really, to be honest. I do with my gran, but that's about it, really.[50]

Grandparents were frequently mentioned as key sources of Catholicity, although sometimes with the same ambivalence as parents:

> I: Are there any other significant people for you, in terms of your faith?
>
> Natasha: I would say my gran, but I'm not, she doesn't live here obviously, but she's another very strict religious person who makes me feel bad about myself <laughs> erm, she just goes to church a lot, and yeah, that's the people.[51]

Many of the participants had non-Catholic parents, and while they were portrayed as supportive, this could be problematic:

---

[48] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#

[49] Interview A, #00:04:50-7#

[50] Interview I, #00:09:46-3#

[51] Interview K, #00:11:16-1#

> Pete: Cos, my Dad's an atheist, he's not Catholic, so it's all my Mum's side, which is, it's easier but it's harder. It would be easier if Dad did it, if Dad was a Catholic. But he's still supportive about it, he's not against it, it's just his opinion, which is fine. I don't have a problem with it. It's just… <pause> It's like, he'll come to church if we've got a communion, no not a communion, like a First Holy Communion, or like the sacraments, as it was. He comes to them. But he's not a big church goer.[52]

Pete's comment sums up the influence parents and other family members have over religious identity, whether as practising Catholics or not. Family even becomes a metaphor for faith:

> Sarah: And then this one is just one of me and my family at the beach and it just looks really calming and it's like a photo of your faith, and how it can be a journey, I guess. Yeah, I don't really know…[53]

Photograph 1: Family on the beach

In this section I have explored the importance of families to fundamental Catholic identity among participants. The surprise is the similarity of starting point in comparison to the variety of outcome. Virtually all the young people in the study had active Catholic families. How this then related to their own sense of Catholicity is complex; there must be more at play in their lives to explain this diversity. The next few sections outline some possibilities.

---

[52] Interview I, #00:07:55-1#

[53] Final Focus Group M, #00:08:10-0#

4.1.3 Enacting Catholic Identity in Families

Catholic identity exists on a variety of levels, as distinguished in the opening conversation by the distinction between "technical" and "practising" Catholicity. Families not only establish Catholic identity, they also teach their children how to behave as Catholics. Relationships are both subjects and objects of prayer and are important to Mass going in that they can make decisions about going to Mass more fraught. In this section I will explore how family catholicity enacts identity through prayer and Mass going.

Prayer

In telling stories about being Catholic, the young people spoke very often of prayer, and prayer in their families in particular. This is one example of Catholic identity being enacted: with practices to frame the beginning and end of the day and a set of responses to difficult times. Family is particularly important as the foundation of prayer. It is the source of the words and practices which form the repertoire, but it is also the basis for testing prayer in the reality of lives lived. Talking about prayer with others is an apprenticeship in interpreting experiences. Even more than this: families were often places of sacred encounter. From stories told by grandmas, connecting with deceased parents and shared experiences at Mass, it is often in that sense of belonging that the divine is found.

For many of the young people in the research, the first experiences of prayer were the practices of their parents. Barbara's father was devout even by the standards of this highly practising group:

> my dad, he needs a bit of extra prayer to get on with the day, so he gets up about 5 o'clock in the morning. He says a whole, there's a booklet of prayers to the Mother, and he says the whole thing, so he takes about an hour, and then he goes about his work.[54]

Natasha's morning routine is initiated by her mum:

> I don't have time to sit down and pray, so I usually pray on my way to the bus, and my mum's like, 'don't forget', she reminds me in the morning, she was like, she starts me off.[55]

---

[54] Interview A, #00:09:28-8#

[55] Interview K, 10:19-9#

Nancy's mum is her main spiritual inspiration. She feels her mum's advice is credible because she sees it being enacted in her own life:

> me and my mum have one bond, like I don't know, when the priest is talking we actually listen to it, and we actually listen to the meaning of it. So like, my mum is an important part of my faith, cos, whenever I'm down, she always says pray to God, and hopefully it will turn itself around.[56]

Nancy's mum validates Nancy's spiritual experiences and teaches her that prayer is an appropriate response to hard times. It is an apprenticeship in being Catholic. In Becca's family it is her grandma that fulfils this role:

> And then my grandma's been through so much in her life, and she tells me all these stories and stuff, and then she tells how she went to church in the end with all these tragic stuff in her life and how, like, that helped – it's like her comfort zone, it makes me feel good sometimes, that she prays and stuff.[57]

Prayer was also spoken of as co-produced, with the children having input as well as the parents:

> Beth: I, I keep meaning to get back into the habit, but we used, we used to say a prayer before we went to bed, we used to all go in my sister's room. We've got a bit older now so we don't really do that <pause, background noise>. Yeah, we don't really do that any more so I've kind of got out of the habit of doing it.
>
> I: You would have done prayers together as a family? [...]
>
> B: With mum and dad. Mum's not Catholic, well, she's not religious but she would always say a prayer with us anyway.
>
> I: <pause> And what kind of things would you do?
>
> B: Hmm, depends really. We'd just say any prayer really, someone would start, like choose what we did.[58]

These prayers have been a way of bringing Beth's family together each day, but with a simple change of routine, it has disappeared. Families also came together around prayer to help deal with family difficulties, whether relationship tensions or ill health:

> Kasha: And then like, if I'd had an argument with my mum or something, and then I'd pray about it and it would like, and then next day we'd make up or something. So

---

[56] Interview H, #00:13:06-1#
[57] Interview F, #00:04:58-0#
[58] Interview T, #00:07:39-0#

> yeah, where it like, was stuff that only I was going through kind of thing, that it helped guide me through kind of [59]

> Michael: and my nan as well, definitely… And unfortunately she had a, something wrong with her eye, she had some eye surgery, she can't really see out of her left eye, so we all as a family constantly prayed, just in case anything else would happen and she would get better.[60]

Finally, for some participants, family was where the sacred was located. Deceased relatives were a key part of this, as praying for the dead is an ancient Catholic practice, and many participants came from parts of the world where ancestors were held in higher regard than in white British families.

> K: I feel like…never like God, but like, I feel like sometimes an angel's present in a way like, just a hug kind of thing….
>
> I: What does that feel like?
>
> K: Yeah, just like a hug…by the wind…<laughs> I don't know but yeah. Um, yeah, something like that. I feel like, I kind of, to an extent, believe in the whole spirit thing. So I think that kind of ties into religion. So when my grandad dies, like, I saw him, kind of thing, after he died, so I feel like that's kind of connected with the whole kind of afterlife situation.[61]

For Marianna, her deceased mother was still part of her life. She connected with her through family prayer, relating worries and concerns:

> M: Yeah, we say the rosary together, maybe not every week but every few weeks, erm, and we, because I live with my grandparents because my mother died, we often pray for her that she's in heaven, and if she can help us, that she will.
>
> I: So your grandparents are, they have a real faith, it's important to them?
>
> M: I think especially more so now than when my mother was alive because it gives them a sense of hope and that they'll be reconnected.[62]

Here, the mother's presence is invoked in a similar way to that of a patron saint within the family community, and her ongoing help is sought.

---

[59] Interview B, #00:14:59-9#

[60] Interview P, #00:04:16-5#

[61] Interview B, #00:17:42-6#

[62] Interview D, #00:04:56-2#

Through these examples, it can be seen that, for these participants, prayer began at home, and practices were imbibed at the same time as stories about the effectiveness of practices. Spiritual responses were expected and noted, becoming part of the ongoing story. Because of this validation, families were trusted sources of Catholicity. At the same time, it can be seen that participants were engaged in prayer not as subjects but as co-producers. They learned words, actions and beliefs from their families which then became part of their own identity. There is a very different tone to these descriptions than in the descriptions above of being required to go to Mass. Prayer is a locus of their agency as Catholics, even in a family setting.

Families and Mass-going

Mass-going, for many of the participants, was an intrinsic part of Catholic identity. As Marzena said, "I come from generally a Catholic family, so everybody that I know goes to church." This could also be expressed from the opposite perspective: "I didn't want to go to church one time so I told my mum I didn't want to be Catholic."[63] This is not to suggest that every participant went to Mass weekly: that was only the case for fifteen out of the twenty-five. No matter what the pattern looked like, however, family were mentioned in every description of Mass-going in the study. At the same time, nearly all the young people went to Mass the same amount as their parents, rather than less often which might be expected. This was partly because of a strong expectation that Mass-going was normative, but it seems also that this was something that families just did together. As Immie says: "It's just always been there so I guess I've grown up used to it fitting in, and it's always just come in on the weekends, we've got time for it."[64] Mass going was so much a part of family life, it started early:

> Immie: I remember when I was really, really small, just coming to church
> Becca: I don't remember not ever coming to church
> Lucy: Yeah, that's the same for me
> Immie: Yeah, I feel like it's been regular since… I can't not remember
> Beth: I think they took me to St Joe's when I was a baby
> Becca: My parents are very, very religious. I wouldn't say I was as that high up religious as they are. As soon as we were born our parents took us straight to church.[65]

Even less regular patterns were connected to family. The following exchange was repeated a couple of times in the study:

---

[63] Interview A, #00:05:28-9#
[64] Interview U, #00:03:10-7#
[65] Focus Group R, #00:18:28-2#

> I: Do you go to church on Sundays?
>
> Teresa: Sometimes…
>
> I: Not so much? <laughs> And do your family go?
>
> T: Er, sometimes as well. Like, I go with them if they go.[66]

Here it is possible to see a mesh of practices – whether prayer or Mass-going – enacting and embodying Catholic identity. Parents and grandparents normalise these: teach the words, tell the stories, and create room in the diary. Participants were not concerned with what they should be doing – the institutional perspective – but rather with what their families do.

As with foundational Catholic identity, there were a variety of attitudes towards Mass-going. Marco, a first-generation Italian, struggled with his family practice:

> And it was going to Mass on Sunday, then praying at night every time I go to sleep. That was my routine. Especially like, cos my family is really religious, so we had to go Sunday, *every* Sunday. Every Sunday.[67]

For Becca, going to Mass, family and religious identity were wound together in an uncomfortable tension:

> I don't… I think it's partly because my parents brought it on me, it's like, oh ok I've gotto go church and all this stuff. But there is some days when I wake up and I don't even want to go in church, there will be some days I don't even want to, I dunno, I don't want to talk about it. I don't want to be seen as religious sometimes. But then, it's like, my parents are, it's what I've got to do. It's like it's just been brought on me.[68]

For others in the group, it was the parents who were posing the questions:

> I: And now, do you have to go every week, or do you go because you want to go?
>
> N: So that's still a debatable <laughs> My mum, she's like, if you pray at home, if you read your Bible, just do it that way… but my dad would be more adamant for me to go, he would be more like "you have to go, it's Sunday, it's like a sin if you don't go". I wouldn't go like a month without going, but sometimes it's like the day where just you're ill, or its raining and you just, uh, faith! <laughs> You know you're like, uh, do I?[69]

---

[66] Interview L: #00:03:45-4#

[67] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#

[68] Focus Group R, #00:19:17-1#

[69] Interview K, #00:13:32-0#

The complex relationship between family and Mass-going was best expressed by Sean:

> I: what keeps you going? [...]
> Sean: Family
> I: Family?
> S: Generally, they're make you going, I guess!
> <laughter>
> I: They help you to keep going, or they make you to, they make you keep going?
> S: A bit of both
> I: A bit of both
> S: they put you in the car[70]

Celebrations and Materiality

Celebrations continue the enactment of Catholic identity, bringing together faith and relationships. Sarah makes this clear when she brings together family, religious identity and festivities:

> I put family because often you inherit your religion from the rest of your family, and it's a, there's loads of celebrations when you all come together to celebrate.[71]

Marking high days together is key for many of the participants, whether that's a Ukrainian Christmas or a Polish Easter. Families are key to these accounts:

> K: Well we celebrate Christmas in January <wryly> , 6th January, so you'd have all the Ukrainian traditions and then you have, like, songs and hymns and stuff, and you'd go to midnight mass usually. They do that at Easter as well. So you'd go to midnight Mass and then like, either, then that night you'd have a family meal and stuff, like traditional food, so then we'd like pray before and after that and reflect on our year kind of thing.
> I: Ooh, sounds lovely. As a family, or at church?
> K: As a family before the meal, but then at church[72]

Sacramental celebrations also featured highly, with First Communion most often presented as a family occasion, and confirmation more of an individual moment of choice. First Communion, in particular, was the source of precious objects that brought together family, moments of celebration and religiosity. Becca's photo was of a cross, hung in the corner of her bedroom:

---

[70] Focus Group R, #00:27:31-4#
[71] Focus Group Q, #00:04:47-5#
[72] Interview B, #00:08:00-1#

Photograph 2: Holy Bond

She says of this dusty image:

> I guess it's important because it's like, my First Holy Communion was one which Grandad came, and he was ill, and then a year after that he died, so it's like the last memory I've got of him. My other siblings never had my grandad at their first communion, and I had him and then we found out he was ill, we didn't expect him to come, and he came, and we were just like "Ok"... Like, we knew that coming down to us, he could die any minute.[73]

Even though this is a religious item, this is a story about relationships. Becca's memories are all connected with her grandad, with the First Communion just being the occasion of the gift. For others, the emphasis was slightly different. Beth prizes the rosary her grandma gave her, and recognises that it has a religious significance:

> Beth: Yeah, I have it, it's in like, I've got it in a little pot, my mum got it, it's got little gold beads on it and stuff and, so I put it in there. So it's on my dressing table.
>
> I: Ah, oh lovely. So it's important to you then?
>
> B: Yeah, to have it there... I don't really use it because I don't really get how you use it. I've been told, but it still confuses me a bit but it's kind of nice to have it, like, with me.[74]

Marzena was one of the few participants who mentioned using their gift for its intended purpose, saying the rosary daily and taking her missal to Mass.

---

[73] Interview F, #00:01:49-9#

[74] Interview T, #00:03:54-9#

Photograph 3: Missal and Rosary

On the whole, religious items were part of the general milieux reinforcing Catholic identity, rather than in active use. As Immie said of the religious items that are dotted around her house: “They’re not always on display but you just know that they’re there.”[75]

Whether in prayers, Mass going, celebrations or material items, Catholicity shaped the daily and special routines of these families and, therefore, the participants. Catholic identity, established in families, was enacted, formed and re-formed in an endless cycle of life changes through adolescence. These young people were often growing up in active Catholic homes, where it is natural to speak of faith, and where the diary can be clear for Mass-going. Practices in families shape beliefs and conform bodies within cycles of prayer and church-going. They also help to form worldviews.

4.1.4 Forming Worldviews

One notable finding of this study is the intentionality with which immigrant families particularly spent time with their children forming a specifically Catholic worldview. While everyone forms a framework of beliefs, whether they are religious or not, many of the participants recounted stories of discussing basic theological concepts with their families, resolving tricky questions, or framing religious experiences. In doing this, families formed the way participants saw the world, shaping their imagination. A common theme across these conversations is the importance of relationship, whether with God, or some other being. Parents and other family members actively encouraged participants to interpret the happenings of their lives in the light of a loving presence, as well as resolving questions about faith. Marianna talked through difficult issues with her grandparents, and Natasha raised them with her uncle. Sometimes these key figures had themselves received significant theological formation:

---

[75] Interview U, #00:01:42-7#

> Barbara: I think my mother and my father, most importantly, because I've spent a lot of time debating and talking about Catholicism with them, since they were catechism teachers [...] So, that was, they showed me a lot of stuff when it comes to Catholicism and they've helped me grow in my faith a lot.[76]

Elsewhere, however, there were glimpses of how parents went beyond discussing theology to framing encounters with the divine. Nancy's mum is clear about what is fundamental to being Catholic:

> Personal connection. That's what my mum says, if you don't have a personal connection with God, then there's just no point of you in having that faith.[77]

Taking this one step further, she then helps Nancy to frame the experiences she is having as part of that relationship:

> Nancy: Like, I won't say every Sunday, but like sometimes I feel a little bit closer to God, after church on a Sunday, for some reason it just shocks me like, my mum was like, do you have that spiritual feeling inside and I was like yeah, and it's weird, and I don't know how to explain it...[78]

Marco's father helps to re-frame a frightening experience as a religious encounter:

> Marco: When I was ten years old. I dreamt about an angel, the Angel Gabriel [...] But, in my dream, the Angel Gabriel was trying to tell me something. I woke up and didn't know what he told me. I need to go and speak to a priest to see if he can interpret that dream. Because it's impossible to dream something religious. Like I was scared, I told my dad.

---

[76] Interview A, #00:07:20-1#
[77] Interview H, #00:21:06-5#
[78] Interview H, #00:17:31-3#

> I: What did your dad say?
>
> M: He was like, you know that it's impossible to dream about something religious and if you did, that's a miracle. It means that God really loves you.[79]

Becca heard encouraging voices when she was feeling stressed or unhappy. Her mum helped her to interpret these:

> When I have these feelings, I shiver for some reason, or I feel like there's someone behind me or someone next to me, and of course there's no-one behind me. [...] I could just be standing in my garden and just feel it, and there's no-one there and it's not even windy. And then I do think that maybe someone is there. I sound so stupid when I say it, I say it, I sometimes say it to my parents and they're like, are you sure you're not just having a dream or anything? They believe, they know... Mum's like, she sometimes hears voices and stuff, which she believes is her mother who's like, passing messages on. But I do believe someone *is* there – guardian angel or someone is there.[80]

Worldviews form the basis of interpreting experience. Participants' own worldviews will be explored at the end of the next chapter, but a key finding of the data was that a Catholic worldview helped them to interpret the world around them, and the happenings of their lives. These excerpts show that parents are foundational in establishing such a worldview.

4.1.5 Ethnicity

A final complicating factor of a Catholic family identity is an ethnic identity.

> I: So, where do you think, where does that come from for you, being Catholic? Why do you think that you are?
>
> Marzena: I feel like it's from growing up, from a young age in this sort of religion, because obviously, specifically being Polish, it is kind of more of a tradition to get baptised, to have all of your family involved and just being brought up with it also brings the identity.
>
> I: So, it comes from your family and being Polish?
>
> M: I mean there are some sort of roots which lead back to Polish people being more, like it's not even, a lot of people can not go to church in your family, but it's still a thing where if you have a child you should get it baptised because the whole family would expect it, so it just goes back to religion in that sort of sense.[81]

---

[79] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#

[80] Interview F, #00:19:19-5#

[81] Focus Group Q, #00:08:32-9#

Here, Marzena does not seem entirely sure that combining ethnic and religious identities is good. Polish identity seems to replace religious belief as the motivating factor for performing Catholicity. For Kasha, however, her Ukrainian, family and Eastern Catholic identities reinforce one another positively:

> Kasha: It's like the whole atmosphere and ambience and stuff, the churches are quite different and stuff. They're really like, EXTRA, with giant mosaics and gold and stuff. So yeah I do associate it with that <religion> [...]
>
> I: So you would see it, as you got older, that you might carry on with all of that
>
> K: Yeah, I think so, I really enjoy like the aspect of it, and how it's a bit different, and yeah. It's my own sense of belonging, I think, that's a bit different to everyone around me as obviously there's not many Ukrainian people around, so it's a bit different but at the same time it's another community that I'm part of...
>
> I: So it's something special to you.
>
> K: Yeah, I think so, it like it's a bit more unique to me[82]

Not all the participants found their ethnic identity so pressing:

> I: And is your family Polish background?
>
> Sarah: Yes
>
> I: Yeah, yeah. And so do you think that the, that being Catholic is wrapped up in being Polish as well.
>
> S: Erm... I guess you could say so, because <thinking> there's a Polish church down the road, and... when it comes to Christmas they have their own Mass you can go to. <pause>
>
> I: And is that where you go to church, the Polish church?
>
> S: No, I go to the English one which is closer to my house[83]

Although there were also participants from India and Africa, they did not speak of their ethnic identity in connection with their religiosity, except regarding practicalities, for example, "If I was in India, I would be going to Mass every day since we had a church pretty close by".[84] The national and religious identities of Polish and Italian participants were much more closely interwoven and added an extra layer of complexity.

---

[82] Interview B, #00:10:09-4#

[83] Interview J, #00:08:42-2#

[84] Interview A, #00:08:36-7#

4.1.6 Not-so-Catholic Families

Not all the young people in the study came from very religious families, and sometimes religiosity expressed itself mostly outside of weekly Mass-going. Tom and Pete are brothers, and despite longstanding attendance at diocesan retreat events, did not often go to Mass:

> I: Your family are all practising, aren't they?
> Tom: My dad isn't, my mum is, and my brothers and sisters more or less. We haven't been great church goers at the moment, but, yeah… Practising some of time <laughs>[85]

Their parents pay for the retreats and drive them the considerable distances several times a year, but for the two boys, their Catholicity resided in their attendance at the retreats rather than in their home life.

Kasha, despite delighting in her Ukrainian identity, rarely gets to Mass on a Sunday:

> K: I don't really go to church that often anyways to be honest, so I don't think I'm really going to change that. Cos you guys, like, really enjoy going to church and stuff. I, I don't like, not like it, but I don't really feel like an extra bit of it, kind of thing, I'm more like, I enjoy praying at home, like independently, I don't really get more benefit from being around other people, or stuff like that.[86]

What resonates through this section on families is the domesticity of Catholic identity. From grandmas telling stories to family lunches after Mass and from dream interpretation to prayers before bed, this is a religiosity that is woven into many aspects of daily life and, as such, is normalised as a good way to live. Whether or not participants liked their identity, the presence of it in their lives meant it had to be addressed, one way or another. For most of them, most of the time, being Catholic was not contentious. Immie's comment on the religious items in her house could be applied to Catholicity more widely: "They're not always on display but you just know that they're there."[87] The families of participants are revealed as skilled at normalising and enacting Catholic identity, even though national and ethnic identities provided complicating factors. The data in this study demonstrates that the intergenerational transfer of Catholic identity is not innate, but the result of intention and labour.

---

[85] Interview N, #00:08:05-5#
[86] Focus Group Q, #00:19:52-2#
[87] Interview U, #00:01:42-7#

4.2 External Influences: Peers

These processes of normalisation and enactment might start at home, but were to be found in other spaces. Schools and parishes could provide alternative experiences of being Catholic (either good or bad) as well as offering a range of additional practices. Having seen how contentious the shaping of Catholic identity could be at home, it is no surprise that non-domestic loci could provide significant challenges to participants, as well as positive impacts.

After family, friends and peer groups were the most often-discussed influence on forming Catholic identity. It might be expected that the impact of peer groups would be uncomplicated – supportive or negative – but the reality was more nuanced:

> Sean: Er…I mean, it's odd. It's harder in school, you get, you get asked questions, really like religious studies GCSE and yet expectation is not believing in God, so it's not that helpful in that sense. But I guess it gives you then another way to look at other views and other opinions. But then, in other sense there's a lot more activities you can get involved in in church, and met new people. So yeah, both sides…[88]

Peers could indeed have a positive or negative impact on Catholic identity. But like family, their impact depended on changing relationships and how the young person felt in themselves at any one point:

> Lucy: I think I like go through phases. I think that's just because I'm at the age that I'm at. Like, when I was younger I would just go to church, and now… when my friends go, "No, I'm never going to be a Christian", I'd like tell my friends, "No, I'm just going to church for now, I don't believe any of it, I'm not going to go to church when I'm older", but I think now that I probably will, and I think I'm a lot like stronger in my faith, but… I think, I think I will carry on going to church and I don't think I'll grow out of it, but it all depends what happens, we'll see.
>
> I: Why do you think you're stronger now than you were?
>
> P: I think generally just as a person I'm a bit more confident in myself, which might be why… but… dunno… I think I'm just realising now that I don't have to be the same as everyone else… People don't really care, I mean, if you're a Christian or a Muslim or a whatever, people don't, they're just like, 'oh, ok'. And they might joke about it, mock about it and stuff, but they're not… as long as no-one's being rude to me I don't really mind.[89]

---

[88] Focus Group R, #00:24:39-8#

[89] Interview E, #00:17:03-6#

As Lucy points out, the negative impact of friends fell away as she became more confident in her identity. The stories the young people told revealed the delicate nature of the relationship between their sense of self and how others saw them. Having one actively Catholic friend or Christian friend seemed to make a considerable difference to how participants felt about being Catholic. Large groups made an even larger impact, whether other actively Catholic friends at school, a retreat weekend, or the gathered masses of World Youth Day. Hostile environments, particularly at school, took their toll. At the same time, many of them had learned to navigate their religiosity in a secular culture, and even become something of an expert among their peers. There was more than one account of their most engaged conversations about religion being with a persistent and convinced atheist. In this section, I will assess the impact of peers, whether friends, at school or in Christian youth group or retreat settings, on participants' changing Catholic identity.

4.2.1 Schools

Schools demonstrated the power of the normalisation of Catholic identity because, depending on the school, they might support it or reverse it. Teasing or challenge revealed that a Catholic identity could be perceived as abnormal. Lucy recounted an episode at her large, rural, state secondary school:

> There were some girls at the back of the classroom who found it really funny and who were like joking about it, and one of them was like, "I'm a Christian, I go to church every week, I do this, I do that", but like she wasn't, she was like mocking it all, and I was sitting at the front of the classroom listening to it and everyone was laughing because they thought it was hilarious and I was just a bit like, like, I didn't know what to think about it. It's just awkward.[90]

These experiences were not limited to secular schools:

> Tom: I remember in year 7 I altar-served, we had a group Mass for the year 6s and the year 7s and afterwards, everyone was like, "Why were you up the front, what were you doing?" I was, "I'm altar serving", and they were like, "What's that?[91]

> Pete: They used to do like a sort of prayer thing in the chapel at school. And people go, but they wouldn't be all like, big practising Catholics. Just sort of went, and they

---

[90] Focus Group R, #00:26:22-5#

[91] Interview N, #00:10:18-9#

> would just sort of laugh. So I just stopped going. Didn't feel like a safe place. Felt threatened so...[92]

Alternatively, and emphasising this sense of abnormality, participants encountered loneliness. Of all the participants in the study, Patrick found it the most difficult to balance faith and friends, especially attending a large state FE college:

> I used to go to school and people would be like, "What did you do at the weekend?" and I would be like, "I went to church, I went to church". Now I just... it's something I'm afraid to admit because... I've lost friends because I'm Catholic and it's hard [...]
>
> There's, why should I be alone everywhere I am, why should I have to struggle to keep my faith when my friends have got such good bases around them. Friends-wise, not family-wise, I've got quite a strong family, friends-wise, they seem to have such good friendship groups and I'm, well I'm still alone. I don't have a strong friendship group that are Catholics.[93]

Michael expressed a similar sentiment, attending a similar FE college at the other end of the diocese:

> Sometimes I can't practise my faith. I was at a school which is not really religious and then I moved to a college which is not that religious at all, where there's different sorts of religions, people practising their different faiths there, I didn't really merge with the people that were the same people as me, in that, as Catholics, so I found it very hard.[94]

As with many of these factors, peer indifference could be a benefit as well as a disadvantage. It meant fewer awkward conversations, and a level of acceptance of difference:

> Kasha: I don't think we talk about religion much, like my best friend is Sikh, but we don't really talk about religion much, I don't think, I don't think young people do to be honest. We do like, debates in psychology or whatever, or RE we'll do like "ah, who's this" and stuff. But it's not like a common thing... we don't really talk about it that much to be honest.[95]

Kasha's experience was reflected among her friends and fellow students in School Group D:

> Natasha: But I respect other religions and atheists, I believe people are entitled to their own beliefs, so usually I don't usually converse about it.

---

[92] Interview I, #00:11:04-5#

[93] Interview O, #00:03:55-4#

[94] Interview P, #00:02:59-6#

[95] Interview B, #00:12:45-0#

> I: Would that be most people's experience, it just doesn't come up very much?
> Voices: yeah, yeah[96]

Of the many schools represented across the sample, two Catholic schools, research groups D and E, stood out. Both schools were chosen as sources of low-religiosity young people. Both had been had been denoted as failing schools after inspections and had had significant leadership changes. In both schools, young people told me how the environment supported rather than weakened Catholic identity. None of the three members of School Group E were Catholic, which provided an extra insight into the impact of a Catholic school environment:

> I: And do you think you get influenced by being in a Catholic school, or is it not particularly?
> Hanna: I think it's eye opening. Because I've got people that are non-religious or that are non-Catholic or stuff like that. Being in a Catholic school it does change a lot of things because you are more informed, and you've got a little bit more respect for other people's opinions and views, and you understand where it comes from[97]

Hanna came from a Zimbabwean Pentecostal church, but regularly attended Mass locally. The other two members, Macie and Rhianna navigated the catholicity of the school from a partially or fully non-believer perspective:

> Macie: Cos, prayer... like when they make us pray in assembly and they say, "If you don't want to do it, just sit there, and have respect for others", and that's what I do, I won't do the Our Father or anything, I'll just sit there and let them get on with it.[98]

For Catholics, a positive environment at school supported domestic processes of normalisation and enactment of identity, partly because they provided opportunities for different practices and partly because of the normalising effect of other active Catholics. In School Group D, Nancy spoke about the formal prayer in tutor time (which she calls Mass) and the school Masses, but also a culture of prayer that ran through the school:

> N: This school definitely helps. I've been to two Catholic schools... So when we do the Mass, in the morning, in tutor time we would do our prayer, obviously, together. There's like, other events. We've just had my house, St Teresa's, so we had a St Teresa feast day, obviously we had to celebrate that. We celebrate[d our feast day] a few

---

[96] Focus Group Q, #00:25:14-6#
[97] Focus Group Z, #00:06:28-3#
[98] Interview B2, #00:15:42-2#

> months ago. But all of that has kept like, like… It's also, like, not really, it's also like, how do I say it? Made my faith stronger. Definitely made my faith stronger.[99]

Kasha was open about not enjoying going to Mass on a Sunday, relying on school to maintain her Catholicity instead:

> I: What helps you stay Catholic, do you think?
>
> K: I think like, I think school does, and the way they do Mass and stuff. Cos to be honest I don't really go, out of school, but I feel less bad cos I do it during school. <laughter> so I'm like, ah it's fine, at least I was there like a couple of weeks ago when we did it for St Cecilia or whatever. So yeah, I feel a bit less bad for not going outside. <laughs>[100]

At School D, the combination of a supportive environment and a large number of first-generation Catholic immigrants meant that students felt safe to pray even among themselves (contrasting with Tom and Pete's experiences above):

> Marianna: most of my friends are Catholic, and those who aren't are still respectful of the faith, and, like, before we did all of our GCSEs we always said our prayers together and we gave our intentions and everything, and they've been quite supportive
>
> I: As a class you did that? <surprised>
>
> M: No, just my friendship group[101]

Schools had a significant impact on participants' religious identity because it is where they are most likely to come into contact with adverse opinions. Hostile peers could lead to young Catholics being embarrassed or lonely. As Patrick said, "I've lost friends because I'm Catholic". On the other hand, Catholic identity could be distinctive in a positive way, even in a secular school. For those comfortable in their identity, antagonistic questioning increased their resilience and knowledge, giving them practice in thinking through fundamental issues, and giving them expert status among their friends. Finally, schools could positively contribute to Catholic identity, enabling its normalisation and enactment, and creating an environment where the experiment of growing up Catholic could be conducted safely.

---

[99] Interview H, #00:15:51-8#

[100] Interview B, #00:10:58-7#

[101] Interview D, #00:13:30-8#

4.3 External Influences: Parishes

After family and friends, the parish was a third factor for this group of young people in developing Catholic identity, although in a more background and nuanced way. Here, Catholic identity was normalised through a sense of community and meeting significant adults. Church buildings represented the presence of Catholicism in the landscape, a physical enactment of a religious identity.

4.3.1 Community

While it might be expected that participants would speak about their spiritual experiences at church, this was rarely the case. Instead, the most important aspect of parish life was the sense of community – another expression of relational catholicity.

> I: How does it make you feel, church?
>
> Red: It makes me feel like I belong to somewhere, I belong somewhere. That… that you've got a reason to be there.[102]

Community contributes to a sense of identity because people and places are woven into young people's personal histories. Marzena's church is so significant to her that she took a photo of it in response to the "This is Catholic" theme, and spoke about it twice:

> Marzena: And, the last [photo]…is of my parish which I grew up in and when I was three I moved there and it's just the place I would want to just stay in, because when I've been to other churches they've been a bit off, it's a bit of a sentiment.[103]
>
> Marzena: So when I like go to church, I think of all of us as a community, like, we're all together, we're all praying, we're all believing in the same beliefs[104]

Patrick and his mother travel 45 minutes to their home church after moving house because it is so meaningful to them. It is where his grandparents go to church, and the only place he meets Catholic friends with any regularity.

---

[102] Focus Group X, #00:41:59-7#
[103] Interview G, #00:02:52-8#
[104] Focus Group M, #00:03:37-3#

> Patrick: I’m still going back to our old church because it’s really the only one that me and my mum feel comfortable going to because it’s the church we’ve been at pretty much all of our lives.[105]

For Barbara, the parish was the place her family made friends when they arrived from Dubai:

> B: Well first I went to a volunteering group and I got a few friends, and then I went to church, it was all in the first weeks, and we went to church and met the parish priest, and the parish priest introduced us to some other families and we started making friends and going, going for rosaries and Bible studies, and just tea sometimes.
>
> I: Oh, lovely. Oh that’s fantastic. So is that within an Indian community in your church then?
>
> B: No, everybody.[106]

4.3.2 Significant Adults

The parish was also a source of adult Catholics outside their family. When asked about significant adults in their lives, the participants quite often named someone in their parish, particularly the priest. These individuals are described in terms of a relational, emotionally affective catholicity that will be described more fully in Chapter Five. These are people (including priests) who are good at relationships, remember people’s names, create community, love being Catholic and have had a positive impact on participants. Lena’s parish priest was mentioned by more than one participant:

> I: And are there any other adults who’ve been important in your faith life?
>
> Lena: Perhaps the priest from St Benet’s. I went to St Benet Catholic School from nursery to year 6 and, he knew every child, he knew the name of every child, and there were so many children there. For me it was fascinating that he remembers everyone. And then, two years’ later, when I was doing my confirmation, he greeted me by my name, and I found that so fascinating that he remembered my name. And also, he was like, very inspirational and helpful. And when he conducts Mass he’s very funny, so, yeah…[107]

Nancy and her mum went to talk to the same priest when she was stressed during her exams, and the same man helped Barbara’s family settle when they were new. Marco and Laura would not have been at Summer Camp without their parish priest:

---

[105] Interview O, #00:05:21-3#

[106] Interview A, #00:06:23-0#

[107] Interview C, #00:15:07-5#

> Marco: She was speaking to Fr Matthew, and Fr Matthew told her about this. He told her that he would be delighted if me and her came, and when she came she encouraged me, and she was like, Marco, I really want to go, so, here we are.[108]

Participants appreciated priests who knew their name, and who were passionate about their faith:

> I: What helps you, being a Catholic?
>
> Patrick: I think priests. We've got, our parish, well we did have two young priests, one of them has just got a new parish, but the priest that we've got at the moment is Fr Mike, he's really nice, he's understanding, he knows a lot about what young people are like, and I think having a young priest as well helps young people understand that, helps people really look up to religion really. For example, Fr Alexander who's here, he's one of the youngest priests that I've ever met, but he's so knowledgeable about the religion that he loves and it's wonderful to hear him talk about it.[109]

The bishop was mentioned warmly, the young people having connected with him at youth events and their confirmation. There were also mentions of other people in the parish making an impact:

> My sponsor for my confirmation, she kinda was quite good about talking to me about stuff on a Sunday. I haven't seen her in quite a long time but she used to do all the cakes and coffees and stuff at Mass, and she was good at talking to me, you know, oh it's fine you know, God's got a plan for you. So yeah, I think she's quite important.[110]

The impact of this is to create layers of Catholic exemplars. Sean expresses this most clearly:

> I: Are there other important people, for your faith?
>
> Sean: Er... I think the Pope <laughs> He's an important part of faith. People from church, so the priest at the front shows the importance and power of faith. And also, the youth worker, family, my grandparents, they're Christian and I see how through their life they've followed a Christian, followed faith, and see how important it is for them. Erm... parents... relatives I think. You could, I have a lot of people around me who it's clear to see, their faith is important to them.[111]

---

[108] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#

[109] Interview O, #00:13:06-0#

[110] Interview E, #00:15:08-9#

[111] Interview S, #00:09:41-3#

4.3.3 Catholic Buildings

Finally, there was an affection in the conversations, and especially the photos, for Catholic buildings. Often, the response to the theme "This is Catholic" was to show a photo of a church. Once more, the Catholic worldview is at work, shaping participants' imagination. These photos seemed to make concrete and visible much that the young people felt about their Catholic identity:

> Beth: It's Westminster Cathedral, from across the road… <pause>
>
> I: Why did you take that one, why was that one important to you?
>
> P: Because I went, I went to the same place a few weeks ago, my dad mentioned how it's, and it's on Cardinal something as well, and it's quite churchy, and I was like, you know what, that would be a good picture. And it looks quite nice. It looks quite old, and it's set in the modern buildings around it. It's like the hustle and bustle of the shops in front of it. It's quite happening, there's lots of things going on at the same time, but that's always there.[112]

Photograph 5: Westminster Cathedral

Few of the participants took pictures of their own churches (for the Summer Camp group this would not have been possible as they were away from home). However, there was a certain pride in showing photos of beautiful churches and accessing a different kind of spirituality:

---

[112] Interview T, #00:02:01-4#

> Nancy: This was like in April, I went to Spain, and Spain they are very religious, they have beautiful cathedrals, lovely churches. So when I went to <Muerica?> I was like, mum, we need to go inside the church, and I don't know what I love about, like, those churches with the glass stain, I didn't manage to take any of them unfortunately, but I took, like, the outside of the buildings.
>
> I: It's beautiful
>
> N: There was like, when we went to the local one, there was like, the local area in Spain, there was like, churches there, and we actually went into one, and I didn't understand it, it was in Spanish, obviously, but it was very, you know, spiritual, um, it's something very different to what it is when I go to St Benet's, the one, my local church.[113]

These buildings also stood for evidence of the power of faith:

> Marzena: Częstochowa, which is in Poland, it's like Lourdes in France?
>
> I: Hmm
>
> M: A lot of miracles happened there. We went on a pilgrimage over there and it is a bit of <incomprehensible > It's nice to see how many people actually go because you have massive walls full of just, people that basically left their crutches and everything.[114]

Photograph 6: Częstochowa

---

[113] Interview H, #00:04:39-1#

[114] Interview G, #00:01:20-7#

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter opened by returning to the research question: How can we understand and interpret the complexities of Catholic identity among Catholic teenagers? As the first step in a two-step process, it concentrates on examining the Catholic world that participants grew up in, firstly unpacking the very significant role of families as they hand on Catholic identity: normalising, enacting and imagining it, then exploring how these processes are challenged and reinforced in other spheres. Two key themes of the data were relationality and ambivalence, with one often the cause of the other. Practising parents were key, but overly practising parents could turn their children away. Peer mockery could turn in time to respect with neither side changing fundamental positions. Schools were places where young Catholics felt exposed and unsafe, but could also be places of great support. There may not be many young Catholics in parishes, but these were places of community, significant adults and pride. Most importantly, within the young people themselves, there was often an ambivalence between identifying as Catholic and the degree to which they wanted to be active as a Catholic.

In these accounts, Catholicism is revealed as a domestic identity. It exists in lunches with grandparents, dusty crucifixes in a corner, the TV channel playing. It shapes the course of a day and a week, with time set aside in the family diary to attend Mass, and even to pray together at home. Catholic parents demonstrate being Catholic to their children through the kinds of conversations they have, and the practices that they turn to as adults. Catholic identity can bear the weight of the difficulties of life, encompassing the death of a parent or a move overseas. Families not only hand on Catholic identity to their children, they normalise and enact it, and in doing so, form even their imaginations. By and large, the parents featured in the stories of participants were good at transferring faith to the next generation. The first-generation immigrant families were particularly effective at this, being active themselves in practice and belief, having the theological knowledge and confidence to answer the young people's questions, but also being mostly able to negotiate degrees of practice with their teenagers. There was a level of daily expression of Catholicity not necessarily seen in white British families. At the same time, there are plenty of accounts of difference. Although these were superficially about Sunday Mass attendance, they often represented conflicts over fundamental identity. The interweaving of family, religious and even ethnic identities could lead to feelings of guilt and shame.

Interestingly, the concern from young people is not with what they ought to be doing – the institutional perspective – but rather with what their families do. This again shows the importance of the relational in the development of Catholic identity. For participants, the normative force of the Catholic Church is mediated by their families. While there were accounts of participants being told by family members that not going to Mass on Sunday was sinful, it was not the dispute with the institution, but with the family identity that was key. The reverse was also true: where Catholic identity ran deep, it was because of its domesticity and familiarity, not because of an alignment with a global institution. (This is different from the catholicities of more traditional young adults, where there would be an explicit identification with the institutional Church.) On this basis, it is no surprise that in these families, patterns of practice are mirrored. Where families went to Mass regularly (these) young people went regularly. Where they went occasionally, the young people went occasionally.

For these young people, being Catholic combines relationality and ambivalence. It gives them a strong identity, a sense of connection not only at home but in parishes and Catholic schools, and an introduction to practices such as prayer that are a resource for difficult times. At the same time, they regularly spoke about how difficult it could be to maintain a Catholic identity. Obstacles included navigating between family and personal religious identity, peer pressure and loneliness, and forming a coherent worldview. The next chapter will explore how participants overcame these obstacles as they moved from a family to a personal religious identity.

Chapter 5 Choosing to be Catholic

> Being young is hard, cos by being young you are easy, people can influence you easily cos you're young still, you don't know what's right and what's wrong. You just follow whatever someone tells you, because you're still young. But I think, if you grab into your faith, strong, and you know what God says, like you have strong belief in it, nothing will stop you, nothing can influence you.[115]
>
> Marco, 18, Diocesan Retreat Group C

It is clear from the previous chapter that Catholic identity is overwhelmingly born, formed and enacted in families, shaped for some by experiences in parish and school communities. All the participants in my study were Catholic because their families were, and indeed, they often did not think they would be Catholic without that foundation. At the same time, the decrease in numbers between baptism and confirmation shows that families seem to be necessary but not sufficient. What was different about this group of young people that they sustained their identity and practice when so many lost theirs? In order to answer this question, this chapter will examine the mechanisms of moving from inheriting to choosing Catholic identity. Chapter Five revealed the processes of normalising and enacting catholicity, first in families, then in other sites. In this chapter I will show how young people take on this process for themselves, moving through cycles of normalising and enacting their identity as they develop their own patterns of being Catholic that will meet the needs of their time and place. In the previous chapter, two key themes were relationality and ambivalence, often entwined in attitudes towards family or peers at school. In these stories of choosing, there is much less ambivalence, far fewer mentions of family, and relationships stabilise around a new sense of personal identity. At the same time, new communities (such as diocesan gatherings) offer different ways of normalising and enacting catholicity specifically for adolescents. Sadly not all of these could be integrated into the reality of parish or local catholicity, causing dissonances to arise.

Moving from inheriting to choosing often involved moments of decision. These could be provided by the institutional Church, such as confirmation, by moments of crisis, or by changes that might only be apparent in hindsight. Adolescence requires normalising being Catholic in a wider milieu (secondary school, different friends, thinking about the future) and enacting it according to one's own concept of being Catholic – how am I Catholic in this time and space? This involves balancing between institutional norms as established in families, and their own changing needs. Normalising can happen through incremental processes of adapting family norms or through dramatic religious experiences, which were often also intensely relational. Enacting these new personal norms impacted Catholic practices including Mass attendance and prayer. These cycles of normalising and enacting identity were given new force through relationships outside the family as young people wrestled together with what it means to be a young Catholic or Christian. Finally, shifting notions of identity were underpinned by a distinctively Catholic worldview, which shaped and, in turn, was shaped by these processes of choosing.

---

[115] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#

The surprising finding of this data is that, once choices have been made, and peer pressure subsides, being a religious young Catholic is an effective way of life in secular late modernity. Among the benefits were a hope-filled worldview, a personal relationship with God, social capital, and a sense of expertise and feeling special. In the light of this, this chapter will explore the part that choice plays in forming Catholic identity, shaping practices and beliefs, and even influencing their worldviews and expectations for the future.

5.1 Becoming Catholic: Choosing an Identity

Before examining the processes of moving from family to personal identities, it is helpful to reflect that this is by no means an innate or simple process. In these reflections, participants reflect on both the precarity of being Catholic and the strength of their foundational identity:

> Sarah: I think I'm going to remain Catholic, but I'll probably not go to church every single week, just because it's, I've always done that and I always think oh, I've got to go, I've got to go, and I tell myself that I have to, and sometimes, I do want to go and at other times I feel like I should, so I feel that that could stray me in the future, but I will probably still return back in the future. [...]
>
> I: And, what about you, Marzena, what do you think?
>
> M: Erm, I mean, I think I will be staying, because even now, being faced with a lot of questions, people are questioning why would you even want to be religious in this day and age... but I always argue against it, cos it did help me from a young age, not in maybe a way that I was having problems, but more of the fact that it's something that I enjoy, something I feel like I belong there and also that I believe in I feel like God exists [...]
>
> I: What about you Nancy?
>
> N: Yeah, I feel I'm going to stay.
>
> I: Yeah?

> N: Yeah [...] it's like belonging to me, it's like an identity to me, I'm not going to leave being Catholic. Erm, I don't really know what to say, it's just that whenever I go to church it makes me feel a little bit better. So hopefully when I'm older, I'm obviously going to teach my children and take them to church. Like she said, I won't be going to church like every week, cos I'm going to have, like, a LOT of studying to do when I'm going to uni, but if not, then I'll put time in. But yeah, I won't leave being Catholic.[116]

This is an unusual group of young people. Unlike many of their peers, they have high rates of practice and are interested enough in their faith to take part in a time-consuming research project. At the same time, even they make the point that remaining Catholic is not the same as being actively Catholic. In this discussion, it is possible to see a variety of points of identification. Sarah sits in the tension between identity and practice, recognising the struggle between institutional norms ("I've got to go") and personal choice ("I'll probably not go to church every single week"). For Marzena and Nancy, identity comes from belonging to the community, from believing in God, and from the authenticating sensation that it makes them feel good ("it's something I enjoy"). Marzena is to some extent certain about her future identity ("I think I will be staying") while Nancy is able to be definite ("I'm not going to leave being Catholic"). Sarah is a good deal more uncertain, and does not reference belief, self-identity or positive feelings about being Catholic. In this conversation at least, there are no other positive reinforcers of her Catholic identity. For her, the struggle is between what she ought to do, and what she wants to do. What might account for the differences both within the group and between them and other young Catholics? A further comment from Sarah sheds light on this complex process:

> Sarah: Well it is because you're born, either you're born into the faith or you grow up and then you decide to be a Catholic and have your baptism, communion, confirmation, and it's all part of a long journey, that you are Catholic.[117]

Here Sarah brings together the impact of family and individual choice as part of the 'long journey' of being Catholic. In the next section I will explore the variety of moments of choosing that arose in the data.

---

[116] Focus Group Q, #00:17:51-5#

[117] Interview J, #00:06:12-5#

5.1.1 Moments of Choice

Firstly, for many of the participants, it was important to make a considered decision.

> Nancy: There's a few people, obviously by their upbringing have to be Catholic, so like, for young people if they don't want to follow the way of being Catholic, they shouldn't, like there's a few that are, they have to be baptised, confirmed, but just don't have any belief in faith and that, then they shouldn't follow it, how do I say it, it's because it's like false advertising, because I feel that being Catholic is a big part of a person, like when someone's Muslim it's a big part of them, they have like different faiths, like, different beliefs. So obviously, if they don't want to be Catholic, don't want to be confirmed, like that, they shouldn't go further than the steps, yeah definitely.[118]

Nancy feels that Catholic identity should be meaningful, and for her, being Catholic consists of believing, choosing and doing. If "being Catholic is a big part of a person", then choosing to be Catholic should make someone's life distinctive, just as a Muslim's life would be distinctive. If a person does not choose to be Catholic, "they shouldn't follow it". In a world that prizes authenticity, choosing or not choosing is a process of making an inherited identity a personal one. Once the decision is made, there is an incentive to act on it in order to maintain an authentic identity:

> Marianna: I think from when you start having your confirmation and you're making those decisions for yourself and it becomes in your own hands rather than your grandparents telling you what to do and there's opportunities when they won't be there and I can choose, 'do I go to church or not?' and I always chose to go because it's what I believe in.[119]

One of the key quests of this study was to investigate what precipitates these moments of decision. When asked, "Was there a moment when being Catholic stopped being something you did with your family and became something important to you?" seven of the participants pointed to confirmation. When presented as a moment of choice by parents and catechists, it is a powerful opportunity for young people to own their Catholic identity. Here are similar comments made by young people in two different groups, with quite different backgrounds:

> Beth: when we were growing up, and definitely with me, my parents were like, before I signed up for holy communion and confirmation, they were like, ok we're not going

---

[118] Interview H, #00:22:21-6#

[119] Interview D, #00:11:25-4#

> to force you into it, you can chose, like if you, make sure before you start it is something you actually do want to do, and I was like yeah, ok[120]

> Lena: Being brought up as a Catholic is like ingrained in me, and I don't know if I'd be a Catholic if my family weren't, but I feel like my life has drifted me in that way because the sacrament of confirmation is based on you and how you feel. If you don't want to continue this, you don't have to. Like, communion is more forced by your parents <laughs> I'd say but I feel like the sacrament of confirmation is your own decision and I took that decision and I'm happy.[121]

Here the role of parents is vital to creating the decision point. As Becca and Beth point out at the beginning of Chapter Four, confirmation on its own is not a panacea. It is possible to complete a confirmation programme, and in their terms, still be only "technically Catholic". Indeed, it is often spoken of by catechists as "the sacrament of lapsation". At the same time, in this data, confirmation programmes when constructed as moments of choice were surprisingly powerful in enabling young people to take on Catholic identity for themselves, not only at that moment in time but into the future:

> Beth: I find that, when I'm kind of, I will speak about it [at school]. People, rather than like saying stuff about it, they're actually quite interested and want to actually know more about it. They always ask me questions, like do you believe in this, do you think about that?
>
> I: And do you think that's got easier as you've got older?
>
> Beth: Yep. I think for me, confirmation was a turning point. Before that I was like, I didn't really want to speak about it, but then after that, I was really open.
>
> I: Mmm
>
> Beth: I think I just went: I can talk about it![122]

Confirmation has given Beth not just an internal confidence about her identity, but the ability to speak about it with others. Rather than just being the point at which young Catholics leave the church, it seems to force a decision, reinforcing and invigorating faith identity for those who choose to stay.

---

[120] Focus Group R, #00:20:01-1#

[121] Interview C, #00:08:53-1#

[122] Focus Group R, #00:33:15-3#

5.1.2 A Slow Process of Choosing

While confirmation was most often mentioned by participants as a moment of choice, there were other key moments. These tended not to be as dramatic as confirmation, being instead a series of incremental changes, normalising Catholic identity through the lives of participants. Interestingly, the influence of others diminishes in these accounts as participants become more confident in their catholicity.

> I: What is it, do you think, that helped you to switch from, "this is something I do with my mum, this is my family thing, to this is something that is important for me."
>
> Kasha: I think it's even stuff I've been through in life, kind of thing. [...] And then like, if I'd had an argument with my mum or something, and then I'd pray about it and it would like, and then next day we'd make up or something. So yeah, where it like, was stuff that only I was going through kind of thing, that it helped guide me through kind of...<thoughtful voice>
>
> I: It made you feel more confident in your faith.
>
> K: Yes, yeah. And it made it feel like more real, kind of thing, that this is something that I can do by myself. And, I can achieve this, or I don't need anybody else to help me with this, because it's just about wanting to do it, kind of thing. And about having faith and thinking that it's going to help you in life and stuff.[123]

Kasha has established a positive feedback loop where her expectations that being Catholic is a resource to her in difficult times are fulfilled, giving her a sense of personal choice ("this is something I can do by myself") and an effective faith that will help her in her life.

Sometimes this process is better seen in hindsight:

> Lucy: I think I like go through phases. I think that's just because I'm at the age that I'm at. Like, when I was younger...I'd like tell my friends, "no I'm just going to church for now"... but... I think I will carry on going to church and I don't think I'll grow out of it, but it all depends what happens, we'll see.
>
> I: Why do you think you're stronger now than you were?
>
> L I think generally just as a person I'm a bit more confident in myself, which might be why... but.. dunno... I think I'm just realising now that I don't have to be the same as everyone else... People don't really care, I mean, if you're a Christian or a Muslim or a whatever, people don't, they're just like, oh, ok. And they might joke about it, mock about it and stuff, but they're not... as long as no-one's being rude to me I don't really mind.[124]

---

[123] Interview B, #00:15:27-7#

[124] Interview E, #00:17:03-6#

Lucy has overcome the main barrier to her catholicity (being teased by peers) by feeling that this is a valid identity. She does not have to be the same as everyone else.

5.1.3 Choosing to Disagree

Part of the process of forming identity for these young people is choosing what parts of Catholic teaching they do not feel belong to them. This involves normalising their catholicity to make sense of wider secular culture, youth cultures and other influences they encounter through adolescence. Once again, it sees the influence of others (in particular family members) diminish. While this may have caused heartache to Catholics in the past, it was not the case for this group of young people, whether they came from traditional families, or had spent years attending the diocesan youth retreats. Kasha did not attend Mass much outside school, and saw herself as a modern Catholic:

> I think being a good person is above everything, because like, personally… I still identify as Catholic but I don't agree with a lot of the traditional Catholic teachings, so like even modern issues, kind of thing, stuff like abortion, stuff like that, that I'm kind of like, I don't really agree with like the 'Catholic view'. So I don't really think it matters, cause I still identify as Catholic even though I still disagree with some of what they teach…[125]

Marianna came from a much stricter Catholic family who went to Mass every week, but her reasoning is no different from Kasha's:

> M: There are just some things in the Bible that I don't agree with, like, erm, attitudes towards, erm, females in the Bible, although, there is reasons for it as I've discussed with my family, I still think that it's unequal, and there's like the modern issues of sexuality as well and… people's like, identity, that I sometimes find unnecessary.
>
> I: Hmm. Does that make you, not want to be a Catholic or does it…?
>
> M: No, it just… Because some people will categorise all Catholics into believing the same thing, but people will interpret the Bible differently, I just have a different interpretation to other, more conservative people.[126]

Although there is a rise in the prominence of traditional Catholic perspectives, including among young adults, such perspectives were not represented among this group of young people. Participants were either more likely to argue on the lines above, that individual doctrines do not impact wider identity; or they did not mention them at all. This shows the steadiness of Catholic identity in comparison to the flexing of catholicity: the challenges posed by the Church's position on abortion or women can be encompassed within a beneficial sense of Catholic identity and do not, for these young people at least, challenge it.

---

[125] Interview B, #00:19:27-4#

[126] Interview D, #00:07:23-8#

Looking at the data, it is clear that the choices being made are not abstract. They lead to real differences in young people's behaviour, whether that is going to Mass or talking to their peers about their faith. Building on the foundational identity from family and ethnic backgrounds, moments of choice have been key in the lives of these young people, cascading practices and beliefs.

5.2 Choosing Community

Chapter Four revealed the variety of effects that peers had on this group of young Catholics, from challenge to support. While peer pressure caused some to want to give up being Catholic, pushing through could lead to surprising results. Once again agency and choice were key for participants. They actively looked for both friends and significant adults to support them in their faith. Many of the young people in the study had few Catholic friends, while some, like Michael, Pete and Patrick, expressly said they felt lonely. In moving from an inherited to a personal identity, it was important for them to find people to normalise what that personal faith might look like. Mostly these people were friends they made in Christian contexts, but they might also be family members, other significant adults, or even whole communities. The key is the effort expended by participants to create these relationships. Catholic youth gatherings, from parish youth groups to vast World Youth Day Gatherings, were places where young Catholics could make friends with like-minded peers. In addition, these groups could be important sources of both faith and practical information with peers modelling what a Catholic lifestyle might look like. They presented new opportunities for normalisation and enactment. Finally, these groups were also sources of key spiritual experiences, with some remaining clear years later.

5.2.1 Parish Youth Groups

Parish youth groups are rare around the diocese: of all the parishes that the participants belonged to, there were only two mentioned. These were particularly helpful for young people in non-Catholic schools, allowing them the time to get to know fellow teenage parishioners better than just seeing one another at Mass:

> Becca: like, I've become, I knew Beth before this started, and I've become much closer with Beth
>
> Beth: us three did holy communion together?
>
> Michael: yes, yeah
>
> Becca: but I wasn't that close to Beth, and now we've become much closer with Beth because of this…
>
> Immie: I met Lucy through pre-communion, cos I didn't know anyone and I don't think Lucy did either so they just said, right, this is Immie, this is Lucy… be friends, pretty much[127]

Through this conversation, it is possible to trace a progressive befriending through particular events and groups. Mass attendance on a Sunday is not enough to create a friendship. First communion (which usually happens at age 7–8) is the first touching point, but the creation of the parish youth Alpha group is what really brings these young people together.

For Michael, attending a parish group in a different part of the diocese was key to finding people who shared his values – the kind of friends he could not find at college:

> I: What helps you?
>
> Michael: Meeting up with people that are the same age as me, and then just talking about God and, where I'm from we have a, normally every Friday, every start of the month on the Friday, we normally have a meeting that brings all the young people, just from one parish, and then we just talk about what's happening with our lives.[128]

Patrick is clear about the difference his Catholic friends make to his catholicity:

> So it's like, I may only see my friends at church once every week and then I go back home and I don't really meet up with people, so it's kind of hard to try and keep the faith throughout the week because I only really feel I'm strong about my religion when I'm around friends.[129]

---

[127] Focus Group R, #00:23:52-9#

[128] Interview P, #00:03:34-0#

[129] Focus Group Y, #00:09:10-7#

5.2.2 Bigger gatherings

The majority of young people in the project did not speak of friends at church. For many of them, joining a large-scale event was the only way to find other young Catholics. Red's experiences of meeting Catholics of his own age at the diocesan youth retreat were discussed in Chapter Four. Beth was at a non-Catholic school where her catholicity was under regular question from peers. Going to the same annual youth retreat had given her practising Catholic friends in her year group, and they stayed in touch via social media.

> I: and so anything like, any apps, or you mentioned a WhatsApp group, is it a WhatsApp group?
> B: Snapchat
> I: Snapchat group which has come from Lux
> B: I'm always on that
> I: So that's helpful?
> B: like, we don't, we don't always talk about...
> A: Sure, sure
> B: it's a lot like, who's going here, who's going here, we do sometimes
> Immie: when you make friends, it's like, community
> Beth: I love that[130]

The Snapchat group is a place for sharing prayer intentions, worries and concerns but within an everyday experience of Catholic community.

For Laura, there is a qualitative difference to the kind of person she finds at the youth retreat:

> Laura: Yeah, we weren't expecting there to be so many people of our age that are such good people, because where we're from, like our friends, they're not religious, they're not good people, they don't always have your back, and coming here people have so much respect for you. And they're your age, and they believe the same things that you do, and they inspire you and you inspire them and it's just amazing. And I think that's what really made the experience.[131]

Even being in a Catholic school does not necessarily make it easy to find Catholic friends. Beyond family, school, and parish, Pete finds the diocesan retreat weekend and summer camp the most straightforward setting to express his identity:

---

[130] Focus Group R, mapping exercise #00:28:25-7#
[131] Interview W

> Pete: The easiest time to be open about your faith is when you're with other Catholics like, your own age. When you're at home it's harder, like I went to a school where everyone said they were Catholic, but none of them were, like, practising, so it's harder.[132]

Although the summer camp group were very positive about their experiences within the diocese, the impact of youth gatherings was felt across the participants:

> Barbara: In Dubai, we had something called TUFF, Teens Unite For Faith. Yes, so, that would get teens all over the United Arab Emirates, that is seven Emirates by the way, so Dubai was just a little bit, and we'd have about… a huge amount of teens, like, uncontrollable, uncontrollable! <laughter> The amount of hormones in that room was mad! But it was really nice, we had lots of pastors, we had an adoration session, we had very good lunches, and dinners… We had one-on-one confessions or one-on-one prayers if we needed help with anything, so that was one of the main ones. TUFF retreat. It was three days.[133]

These gatherings could also bring about important contacts with adults. For Michael, this was so key that his response to the theme "This is Catholic" was to take a photo that brought together faith, friendship and prayer:

Photograph 7: Connecting through faith

> M: The picture is meant to describe how young people and adults can connect through faith at these religious events, in front of the cross, in front of the cross that was designed…
>
> I: So you've had a good weekend, a good time here then?

---

[132] Interview I, #00:02:48-6#

[133] Interview A, #00:13:22-2#

> M: Yes. This place. Like, every time I come here it's a new experience. Like, last year I met new people, but this year I met even more new people that I can call brothers, and a few sisters as well. So it's great to have people on the same wavelength as me.[134]

Elsewhere in his interview, Michael was not quite able to express what he felt about prayer. Here, in the context of community, he is fluent. For him, the combination of faith and community was essentially "Catholic."

In addition to being sources of Catholic friends, bigger gatherings were places where catholicity was both taught and modelled. The difference made is not just one of social proof but of an apprenticeship in how to live a Christian life in detail.

> Patrick: I think it's, I think it helps because you learn from people with different experiences, and through those different experiences you learn about your faith. You might hear a story that you've never heard before from someone who's experienced it, and from that you start thinking about it and then, you might have a similar experience to that.[135]

Lucy did not have a Christian friend either at school, or in either of the churches she attended each week. Like Patrick, she found friends at a Christian gathering:

> L: Having people around me that are good, like, the same as me. I made a friend on the Scripture Union camp who I talk to most days, she lives in Nottingham but I talk to her most days, and it's quite good because we talk about problems with our friends and stuff, but it's good to like, have someone to talk to because obviously things are a bit different in certain situations when you're a Christian, and it's nice to have other people, how they sort their problems out, how they achieve things, so I think it's just good to surround yourself with Christians... I think it's a lot harder when you're on your own.[136]

Lucy expected that her life should be different because of her faith identity but was not sure how this manifested on a daily basis. Having a friend to share experiences and advice was key to her maintaining her identity, a kind of shared spiritual apprenticeship.

The final impact of these larger gatherings was key spiritual experiences. The particular impact of Eucharistic Adoration will be discussed later in this chapter. For Lucy's brother, Sean, the impact of being around other Christians was more spiritual than practical:

---

[134] Interview P, #00:00:50-1#

[135] Interview O, #00:23:03-1#

[136] Interview E, #00:18:12-9#

> I've been on Christian camps which I've felt like my faith was important then, being around other Christians, seeing how it can bring so much joy and power to other people, and that sort of showed the importance of my faith, when you have, when you have, er, faith healings, in the actual time of worship.[137]

5.2.3 Normalising Identity at School

Growing in confidence through these external experiences helped a number of participants emerge from the peer pressure of early adolescence to find themselves celebrated at school as a religious expert. This manifested in a range of ways, from being the go-to person for help with A-level RE to being a known debating partner on religious issues. Far from being a negative experience, this seemed to enhance their sense of Catholic identity. Leon found it amusing:

> I: Mmm. So, basically, do you ever talk about [being Catholic]? [...]
>
> Leon: Amongst one friend, that's literally all, and that's because he's an *atheist* and he's got a surprising interest when it comes to religion. He's done his research! I don't know what his endgame is with this, but he definitely shows interest! <laughter> So, I mean, I talk to him occasionally, he'll ask me questions and I'll say <dramatically> "I haven't read that section of the Bible recently!" <laughter> "I don't know the answers to your question"[138]

For Marzena it helped to create a resilience and pride in her identity:

> I: And what helps you then, what helps you to be a Catholic?
>
> Marzena: Weirdly enough, debating with my friends, even if it means that I give in sometimes. I mean, I'm proud of the fact that I'm Catholic, and people try and lower me down, it doesn't work. <laughter> I want to make my way through it, and there are sometimes, and even sometimes I won debates with atheists, which I'm kind of surprised because they have all the evidence, apparently! But, I don't convert people, for sure, but it's just, I dunno, it's something in me right now, that I don't think I'll lose.[139]

Beth's experience brings together the positive and the negative elements of being openly Catholic at school, but also shows that there can be an interest in spiritual matters among non-Catholic young people if they have a safe forum to ask:

---

[137] Interview S, #00:07:25-7#

[138] Focus Group X, #00:27:27-9#

[139] Interview G, #00:19:33-2#

> Beth: Erm, it doesn't always come up, but a lot of my friends they are quite interested in my faith, a lot of them really want to know so they ask me questions about it. But, yeah, a lot of the time we don't normally talk about it, but sometimes you do, because one of my friends does RS at school. She sometimes likes to have a little debate <exasperated> which ISN'T always fun because she's very adamant in her ways. I'm there like, I don't really think I can do anything to change it, but yeah, that's normally what we do at school.
>
> I: Are you seen as a religious expert then?
>
> B: I think so. I think people automatically assume that because you're religious that you know everything about it, and you, like you can quote any passage in the Bible, but yeah, I can't do that <laughs>[140]

Family may be the foundation of Catholic identity, but this section shows the influence of peers when living out catholicity as a teenager. Patrick has a strongly active Catholic family and goes to Mass each week, but the lack of close friends makes him despondent about the future:

> Patrick: I want to have the ability to practice my faith with people that I know, like friends and stuff, on a regular basis but I can't do that because of where I live, and how I, I won't be able to do in the future when I have a job that's 9–5, I won't be able to meet up during the day, I won't be able to do stuff in the evenings.[141]

This impact can be seen from the opposite perspective as well. Encountering positive peer models made Laura feel more positive about being Catholic:

> Laura: I think we'll definitely like start putting a lot more effort into our religion because we've realised how important it is. I think it's better, like when you're with people of your age, you get across the most, like when your parents tell you or the older generation. But when you're out with people of your own age, and they're so strong in their faith it inspires you so much, so I think that's what really, like changed, or will change, when we come out of here.[142]

Positive peer role models live out their catholicity in a way that is appealing to others. Gathering with friends normalises identity by enabling the development of similar values and behaviours, and creating opportunities for shared prayer. By putting energy into making friends, these young Catholics develop their understanding of what living as a Catholic looks like, while developing a resilient identity that may have been inherited from their families, but by this point, is chosen by them.

---

[140] Interview T, #00:09:01-6#

[141] Interview O, #00:09:29-1#

[142] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#

5.3 Choosing Practices

Choosing identity was only one part of forming a teenage catholicity. As we have seen, practices support family identity by enacting it. A similar process is at work with a chosen identity. Implicit in the process of moving from a family to an individual identity is the move from family to individual practices that participants chose and crafted to suit their needs. As this happens, there is a process of developing habits that work for their circumstances. This leads to surprising gaps and elisions including a lack of interest in doctrine and merging the meanings of communion and community.

5.3.1 Praying and Not-Praying

Practices of prayer varied widely across the group, as can be seen in Table 1 in Chapter Three. The teenagers in my research groups were, by one definition or another, highly religious, but even within this group, there was a range of practice. These differences highlight one of the principal analytical keys of the project. Participants chose practices according to their internal sense of what ‘worked’. This depended on their expectations of prayer as passed on by their families and how they might interpret what happens after they prayed. The belief element of this is explored in more detail in section 5.4, below. In this section, I will explore how family experiences of prayer became normalised and enacted by participants in their processes of choosing.

For some participants, prayer meant very little, while for others, the day was structured around a rhythm of prayer that lasted from morning to night. The word prayer also meant different things to different participants. When asked about praying, some had a richness of practice and story, while others merely said they did not pray. The manner in which they constructed praying and not-praying opens up new analytical pathways through the data. Eight young people in the group prayed daily or more often, all of whom were first-generation immigrants, while ten of the twenty-four young people did not talk about praying or actively said they did not pray, eight of them of white English ethnicity. A significant number in the rarely-pray group had had experiences of Eucharistic Adoration, and some were regular Mass-goers, but this did not lead to more regular prayer. All those who identified as Catholic and said they rarely prayed either attended Mass weekly or took part in the diocesan youth retreat, which suggests that prayer fulfilled different functions for different participants. Moving from family to personalised practices sometimes meant rejecting perceived notions of prayer, and responses to the word were complex.

One way to exemplify this is to examine why some participants said they did not pray. Firstly, some participants did not recognise their concept of prayer in the things they did (or did not do). Lucy, who went to two different churches, a youth group, and who drew calligraphy of Bible verses in her spare time, commented "I don't really pray, I don't really do anything like that."[143] From a research perspective, it might be said that someone who goes to two church services and a youth group must pray a lot. It would seem however, that she has a particular idea of prayer, not encompassed within these other activities, and something she does not see herself doing.

Michael struggled even to name what prayer might look like for him:

> I: And when do you pray, you know, in normal life?
> M: I would only pray at church, I used to but I wish to change.
> I: What would you like to do then?
> M: What do you mean?
> I: Sorry, you'd like to change? The way that you pray, what sort of thing would you like to do?
> M: I thought, I'm not sure how to answer that[144]

Sometimes participants had a notion of what prayer might look like but did not feel that this was for them. Pete finds that prayer by himself pales by comparison to the collective prayer (especially Adoration) at Summer Camp: "there's something about I think that's better than just kneeling and praying."[145] Becca makes the distinction between "only" praying to St Anthony as instructed by her mum when she's lost something, and what she considered to be prayer: perhaps something more involved or committed.

> B: I don't generally pray. The only times I pray is, if I lose something, Mum tells me to pray to St… St Anthony? Is that it?
> I: Oh, yeah, yeah
> B: But I don't, I wouldn't say I pray. I pray if I need to or if I have to, but I don't just sit down by myself and think, I'm going to pray for five minutes.[146]

---

[143] Interview E, 09:01-5#
[144] Interview P, #00:05:57-3#
[145] Interview I, #00:05:40-2#
[146] Interview F, #00:06:44-1#

This is one of the rare occasions when the participant expresses what they think prayer might be. Becca's idea of sitting by herself and thinking echoes Pete's "just sitting and kneeling". The word "just", used by both participants, expresses the limitations of their experiences in comparison to what they think prayer might be for them.

Tom's lack of prayer arises from a mismatch of expectations:

> T: I tried saying an Our Father and a Hail Mary every night, just to try and get in the rhythm of praying, but eventually that kind of, stopped, I kind of, I don't know, if I wasn't getting anything from it, or it just, became too repetitive. And sometimes I'll have a casual prayer, <laughs> just talk to God for a bit, but I don't, I don't think I make a lot of time.
>
> I: Do you find it helpful?
>
> T: Praying?
>
> I: Mmm
>
> T: I find it helpful sometimes, and sometimes, like, what's the point? You don't actually get anything back.[147]

This conversation reveals multiple layers of meaning: prayer is anything from a quick Hail Mary to a more intense affective experience. Both Becca and Tom switch between different meanings of the word prayer as they juggle the various understandings underlying them. They draw on tradition and family as a resource but, for some reason, are not able to frame their experiences positively as the "daily" prayer group does. For these participants, there is an idealised notion of what prayer could be, but this is not something that lines up with their lived experience. They are not able to internalise this as a relational experience with the divine as other participants did in the same situation. For Tom and Becca, "you don't actually get anything back". It would be easy to see these young people as on the edge, with their Catholic identity either at risk or a distant memory. However, these "non-pray-ers" are some of the most engaged young people in the project: Lucy attends church activities three times a weekend; Becca is on the rota for sacristans in her parish entailing extra work and commitment; Tom, Pete and Michael are regular attendees at the diocesan youth retreat. Neither dissent from Catholic norms nor reinforcing practices seems to threaten their Catholic identity. Instead, they are able to achieve an internal coherence that works for them.

---

[147] Interview N, 06:49-4#

Daily Routines of Prayer – When Normalising Becomes Enactment

Other experiences of prayer in the study were more positive, especially for those who were first-generation immigrants. For these young people, a daily round of prayer was intrinsic to their families. We have already seen Natasha's mum starting her off on her morning prayers on the way out the door each day. Barbara had come to the UK from Kerala via Dubai and was part of a very devout family. Her daily routine was:

> Wake up in the morning, you say the psalm 91 and the other morning prayers that I learned when I was a really little child, and you'd say the guardian angel prayer and the Michael archangel prayer, and you'd go to work and all. By the time you'd come home, in the evening you'd say the rosary, and prayers before bed and go to bed.[148]

At the same time, comments from the daily prayer group show a similar pattern of choosing, rejecting and crafting practices as the non-pray-ers above. Barbara sees herself as having developed her own informal style:

> Yeah. I don't, I don't pray formally. So when anything's on my mind, I say a little prayer, more like a conversation, I just present it, I say, there's this guy's being really irritating guy, so just deal with him, I will help myself, better myself in front of him so maybe he, maybe's he being rude to me because I'm being rude to him, I will stop, yeah. And then, before exams, I say whole novenas in one day![149]

In the one set of thoughts about prayer, she recounts how she does not pray formally, but then mentions novenas, an intricate series of formal prayers and petitions said over nine days. Barbara is able to include this in her account of her prayer practices because she has crafted it for her situation, creating a set of tick-lists on her phone to keep track of them. She draws on the toolkit of practices she has learned from her family and has agency in the way she uses them. Lena explains why this process of negotiation is important:

> Obviously I believe in traditional prayers to be helpful, but I feel like individual ones speak bigger impact, cos they're more, more private and like, I feel like they have a deeper meaning. I feel that traditional prayer is also good, it's just that I feel that they're not as impactful.[150]

---

[148] Interview A, 08:10-6#

[149] Interview A, #00:10:10-9#

[150] Interview C, #00:13:43-1#

For some participants, night prayer became a source of reflection, spiritual connection and self-knowledge:

> I: So what would you do, what sort of thing would you do when you're praying at night time?
> Teresa: It's mainly like… erm… thankfulness for what, like, reflection on what has gone on through the day, and then, thanking God, and praying for something to go well, either for me or for someone else.[151]

Nowhere in these comments is there repetition of Tom and Becca's comment that "you don't actually get anything back". For this group, daily prayer habits are effective because they help participants engage with the process of growing up, enabling them to learn from their behaviour and alter it. There is gratitude and thinking of others, and above all, there is a relational connection to God. For this group of participants, prayer is central to their Catholic identity.

A Resource in Difficult Times

Prayer was also a resource for these young people in times of stress. They had a variety of concerns on their minds, from exam stress to loneliness to worries about families or friends:

> Laura: When times are hard, that's when you can turn more to God. When things are ok and you pray and you have that time with God, but when times are hard I feel like you spend more time with God because you want to tell him what's wrong and how he can help or ask him questions. But I don't feel that necessarily makes you more religious, it just makes you a bit more communicative – is that a word?[152]

For others, these prayers tended to be nuanced with a sense that some things were proper to ask about, and some were not. There were some things they were expected to take responsibility for:

> Sarah: I guess it depends on the situation because if it were something to do with a health issue or something, or a problem that isn't easily solved, then I guess I'd pray more. But if it were an issue with me failing my exams, then it's something I have to work on myself…[153]

For Lena, the "good thing" that she was asking for was not good exam results but a change in herself:

---

[151] Interview L, #00:03:16-9#

[152] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#

[153] Interview J, 13:36-6#

> So for example during my GCSEs, I, I guess I was more practising, more… Though whenever I prayed, I never said, "let me do well on this test" or anything. I asked for guidance, cos we can't demand God, we need, we need to do it ourselves, he can only like, help us. So…[154]

As Nancy shares, praying about stress helps change her mind about being stressed, rather than taking away the source of stress itself:

> N: I'll pray a little bit more when I'm like, sad, and when I'm very, I don't know, lost… It just comes back and I don't know.
>
> I: It helps?
>
> N: It does help. Honestly. I think, prayer for me, it helps with, like the stress. It's like a weight come off, like we're off there praying, like why am I stressed out about this? It's good to have that private conversation with God.[155]

Throughout this section, it is fascinating to see how prayer is braided into everyday life for some participants. It is a tool they reach for in both mundane and difficult situations, and there is reassurance in such regular practice. Families, peers, and wider culture play a part in normalising options for prayer and ways of thinking about it, but their own worldview and positive experiences substantiate it.

Intense Experiences

Regular prayer was only experienced by a subset of the group. For other participants, prayer was associated with intense, one-off experiences. Although there was overlap between the two groups, a curious finding of the data was that these intense experiences did not lead to daily prayer, but rather seemed to throw an unfavourable contrast on the everyday. Some of the most compelling accounts of transcendence in the study concerned the Eucharistic Adoration service at the Diocesan Youth Retreat. All the participants in Group C identified this as a moment of "feeling close to God or something special". A far cry from the traditional silent Adoration of the past in which the emphasis was on the individual, the Diocesan Youth Service re-conceived it as a collective worship experience, with Bible readings, music, incense, and a tactile element in a humeral veil (special scarf) trailing from the priest that each young person could hold. Laura, from an English-Italian background and a Catholic-Protestant family, had only occasional levels of practice before attending the Youth Retreat. Adoration seems to have been outside her previous experience:

---

[154] Interview C, 19:43-9#

[155] Interview H, #00:09:29-4#

> Laura: Adoration, well, adoration. Like, I've never really seen God as a Father, I've never seen myself to be close to him in that way, so like yesterday, I don't know, I just felt a bit weird. I don't know, in a good way. I just felt spiritual. So I think that's probably the closest I've ever been to God. It was really beautiful.[156]

Michael runs out of words to describe his experience:

> I: Would you say that you had an experience of, a spiritual experience, or an experience of the presence of God, or anything like that?
>
> Michael: Yesterday in adoration, I do believe. Sarah was on the piano, I'm not sure what song she was playing, but she started to fade it out, I could just feel in myself I just needed to carry on singing, so I think people around me just kept on singing, I just got a bit goosebumps and couldn't do anything about it. It was <incomprehensible>[157]

Apart from these Summer Camp accounts, there were two other occurrences of adoration in the data. Barbara mentions it in passing with reference to a youth retreat she had been to in Dubai. Patrick's account is more dramatic. It occurs at World Youth Day, in an even more heightened atmosphere in a stadium. The Blessed Sacrament was being processed around the stadium, and when it passed in front of him:

> I just burst out crying, well I didn't burst out crying, I just started getting really tearful and I closed my eyes, and the only things that I actually remember… from my point of view, I was crying for about 2 minutes, I'd actually been crying for about 40… and we had to go up some stairs to go out the doors and apparently after I'd got out the door, I fell on the floor, went into the fetal position and was just crying there for about another 5 minutes and they couldn't get me up.[158]

This had happened two years previously and was still clear in Patrick's memory. It seems to have been the more confusing because it did not connect with any expectation of a spiritual experience:

> I still don't know what it was, all I remember was that I was just praying for God to give me a sign or something, and that happened. But that was just it, I didn't hear a

---

[156] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#
[157] Interview P, #00:07:26-3#
[158] Interview O, #00:19:12-8#

> voice, all that I remember seeing when my eyes were closed was a black room. I knew it was a room because I could see walls, I could see the ceiling, I could see floor, but it was just black… That was about it, I didn't hear a voice, I didn't hear a sound of fire, or a sound of wind that you'd see in the Bible, it was just a black room.[159]

Patrick knew what he should have been seeing. He had sufficient religious and biblical literacy to expect God to manifest in particular ways. Despite not having a spiritual reference point to explain his experience, he still interpreted the black room as God's presence, and although confusing, it was significant for him. However, in Patrick's telling, it did not have a lasting impact on his life:

> that's the thing that winds me up, I've had such a wonderful experience yet I'm still struggling in my faith. I hate myself for it because I don't, I don't wanna, that's what I mean by going back to how I felt in Poland because I felt so alive, I felt so different, but now I've just gone backward.[160]

These intense prayer experiences are designed to be mountain-top experiences that support a daily lived catholicity. Curiously, for some participants, they seem to mitigate against it. One of the reasons that Pete struggles with the idea of prayer is that the feelings of presence he has in adoration are simply not replicated elsewhere in his life:

> In Adoration, probably. It's, when the monstrance is right in front of me that's when I'm closest to God, I think. It's why I like Adoration so much… I dunno. There's something about it. <pause> Best bit.[161]

"Best bit" here refers to Adoration being his favourite part of the four-day summer youth retreat, prized more highly than meeting up with friends or going to Alton Towers. Pete does not pray or practice much at all outside these youth retreats, but the religious element is clearly key to his attendance. It is not that Pete does not want to pray. In his interview, he regularly expressed the desire to pray more often, without feeling that any of the resources available to him (the parish Sunday Mass, talking to his Catholic best mate Anthony or his gran, the Catholic school he attends) will make this happen. For him, prayer is Adoration at Summer Camp. More prayer, and indeed his identity and practice as a Catholic, are conceived within the framework of more youth retreat events:

---

[159] Interview O, #00:19:16-5#

[160] Interview O, #00:19:45-7#

[161] Interview I, #00:12:02-2#

> I: And as, as you go forward in life, do you see yourself, how do you see your being a Catholic going forward?
>
> Pete: I think, helping with these [retreat weekends]. Not only because I'm going for two more years, I think, then I have to go on service team to be helping with these, helping at the church. I think that would help.[162]

These accounts of Adoration reveal powerful feelings of transcendence from one-off experiences. Interestingly, all these young people were also in the group that did not mention prayer as part of their routine or actively said they did not pray. Although they mention family members as role models of belief, they do not mention family prayer routines in the same way as the daily prayer group. This is a key finding in the data. It might be a fair assumption that providing mountain-top experiences of this type would result in Catholics with a strong personal faith and regular practice. However, without family practices of prayer, these experiences of adoration do not lead to expressions of devotion to the Eucharist, for example receiving communion on a Sunday. Instead, this type of Eucharistic Adoration encourages a desire for more of the same. Both Tom and Pete recount how they always intend to pray more coming out of this type of weekend, but that it is very difficult on their own. It is just too difficult to normalise the experiences of a youth retreat to parish worship. They rarely go to Mass, and the sole religious experience they spoke about was the retreat weekends. Like others in the group, it seemed to stand outside their everyday experience, and there was nothing to match it in their daily life. At the same time, these experiences were so powerful, they only had to happen once or twice a year in order to sustain a thriving Catholic identity.

5.3.2 Mass-going: "You shouldn't have to go to church if you want to be a Christian"

Conversations about Mass going are particularly revealing of the process of forming individual Catholic identities. Above all, Mass going was a family activity in the data, it was the place where family identity was publicly practised, and for parents and grandparents, there was a strong institutional norm for weekly Sunday attendance. As all participants were still living at home, they often spoke about changing routines of Mass going as a future activity, but their reasoning helps develop the wider framework of choosing identity. In the data, making choices about wider Catholic identity sometimes had implications for Mass going, but not always. Choosing not to go to Mass could be a signifier for a broader change of identity: in the same way as confirmation, but on an everyday level, forcing a choice one way or another. This section examines how Mass-going is parsed by participants as part of their wider Catholic identity, and what the drivers are for them.

---

[162] Interview I, #00:13:45-5#

The Church requires Catholics to attend Mass every Sunday. There was some awareness of the Sunday obligation, as transmitted by parents and grandparents:

> Natasha: My mum, she's like, if you pray at home, if you read your Bible, just do it that way… but my dad would be more adamant for me to go, he would be more like "you have to go, it's Sunday, it's like a sin if you don't go".[163]

This passage shows how institutional norms are received, negotiated and improvised within families. Natasha's mother offers praying and reading the Bible at home as an alternative to going to Mass, while her father wants to enforce the norm. Within this framing, Natasha finds her own logic: the Eucharist is important, but not a weekly necessity. What is more important to Natasha is how she feels on any particular day within a wider commitment to go to church.

In other conversations, participants showed a similar ability to assess institutional norms against their own criteria:

> Lucy: I think you should be allowed to be a Christian whatever you want.
> Voices: Yeah.
> Lucy: You shouldn't have to go to church if you want to be a Christian.
> <Some laughter>
> I: what about a Catholic? Do you have to go to church if you want to be a Catholic?
> <pause for thinking. Various thinking/grunting noises>
> Immie: We kinda have the communion aspect of it, I guess, but it shouldn't really matter. Like, you should be able to practise your faith wherever. […]
> I: what about other people? Do you think you have to go to church to be a Catholic?
> <background chatting, noise>
> Sean: Yeah, probably. The emphasis in Catholicism is on communion
> I: Beth, is communion important to you?
> Beth: Yeah, probably is, because you know the way…
> Immie: You're connected
> Beth: Yeah, you are like properly connected, and it's kind of, I feel it's from God, and that sort of stuff < embarrassed>[164]

---

[163] Interview K, #00:13:32-0#
[164] Focus Group R, #00:14:40-3#

This conversation reveals the processes of normalising Catholic doctrine for this group of young people, with some uncertainty around the word “communion”, and a level of nuance towards the institutional position of required weekly Mass-going. With a different group, from different backgrounds, the fluctuating meaning of the word “communion” is revealed again, when taking part in the participatory mapping exercise at the beginning of the focus group:

> I: What did you write?
>
> Natasha: I’ve put communion and congregation, because the people in the church make it the experience that it is. So if everyone is very quiet and they like respect the religion, then that’s, that’s religion. And the communion is, because the Eucharist that you take every Mass.
>
> I: Excellent. And is the communion important?
>
> N: Well, yes, because it’s the Body of Jesus <uncertainly>
>
> I: Excellent. <to another participant> what did you put?
>
> Marianna: Discipline, because I think being Catholic is all about the way of life, and how you respect others and how you present yourself. And communion because it’s a united community.[165]

Other mentions of communion as Eucharist do exist in the data, but they are similarly tentative. For example, Leon, listing what makes Catholics distinctive, says: “the attire that the priest and the under-servers wear. The, what’s it called, communion, yeah, that too.”[166]

If Eucharist or obligation do not drive Mass attendance, what does? There was appreciation for the discipline of regular church-going from some participants:

> Sean: Erm, go to church weekly. It can change from Saturday to Sunday, but… I think that helps you stay close to faith. Without that you start to lose sight of it, and I guess, motivation from parents helps you get there.[167]

For Laura, weekly Mass attendance is something she aspires to following the youth retreat:

> We went to church regularly before we started working, then we started going a lot less regularly, but I think this has really made us want to have that routine, because by having that routine you are closer to God. So, I’m not sure. I’m hoping to have a routine, and I’m hoping to pray when I wake up and when I go to bed at least if I can’t

---

[165] Focus Group Q, #00:04:29-2#
[166] Focus Group X, #00:11:56-3#
[167] Interview S, #00:08:24-8#

> go to church, but I'm not sure. Like I need to be at home to know that, but that's what I want.[168]

This notion of discipline was not widespread in the data. More participants, when asked if they might grow out of being Catholic, were keen to make the distinction between choosing whether to go to Mass and maintaining a Catholic identity. These two comments were typical of others in the study:

> Becca: I don't think I'll grow out of it. But I'll probably won't have as much strong a faith as what I am now. But I probably won't go to church every Sunday, but I'll try and go church, but I'll definitely pray, if something bad happens in my life[169]

> Sarah: I think I'll stay a Catholic, but whether or not I'll go to church more regularly or less depending on, cos if I'm at uni it will be a harder task for me to do.[170]

What might drive future Mass attendance, according to the participants is not the Eucharist, but their other use of the word "communion": community:

> Nancy: So when I like go to church, I think of all of us as a community, like, we're all together, we're all praying, we're all believing in the same beliefs[171]

> I: How does it make you feel, church?
> Red: It makes me feel like I belong to somewhere, I belong somewhere. That… that you've got a reason to be there.[172]

From family to peers, parish communities and significant adults, relationships have been key to these young people's Catholic identity. Therefore it should not be a surprise that it is a factor in Mass-going too. Nonetheless, there is an interesting linguistic change. As has been seen, participants regularly mentioned family when discussing going to church. When discussing future plans in the comments in this section, there is little mention of family and much more discussion of young people's own opinions. This represents another stage in moving away from inherited towards chosen identity and practice:

> Lena: I don't think you have to go to Mass and, practice it every day to be a Catholic, I feel like, if you have that belief, and you are sure of what you believe, then you are a

---

[168] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#
[169] Interview F, #00:09:59-5#
[170] Interview J, #00:10:18-4#
[171] Focus Group M, #00:03:37-3#
[172] Focus Group X, #00:41:59-7#

> Catholic. I obviously feel that, with belief comes practice, so you have to pray. And through all, not necessarily pray, but help the community, that's like a Catholic value. So just doing those things, I feel like you are Catholic.[173]

Lena's comment sums up the ambivalence of many participants to going to church. It is an interesting perspective distinguishing between identifying as a Catholic through belief, and what practice might look like.

5.3.3 Parishes as Sites for Agency

In addition to the wider conversation about Mass going, some participants were able to make the parish the site of significant choice. This was particularly the case for those with strict parents, where participants used their agency to replace an enforced Catholic identity with a chosen identity. They provided a safe space for improvisation where the choices made by the young people would, of necessity, have to be approved by parents. Becca felt significant pressure from her parents to go to Mass, so "because I've got that rule that I have to go to church until I'm eighteen, it's like, I might as well have to be religious."[174] Her solution might seem unusual, but it has given her a sense of expertise:

> Becca: Because I'm a sacristan of the church [...] so every three weeks I'll wake up at, like, 6, but the other weeks I wake up at 7.30 [...] Being sacristan I've learned a lot more about church, and what goes on behind the scenes, I guess you could say.
>
> I: And has it helped you with your faith?
>
> B: Yeah... I've learned, cos before I didn't really know what, what the priest uses and stuff, and how that helps the church, and I now like know everything, just about. It opens your eyes, to like, wow! There's a lot to what goes on before Mass and how that impacts in Mass...yeah[175]

It has also paid dividends in terms of social capital and opportunities:

> I: Becca, when you said it opens doors for you, what did you mean?
>
> Becca: I've... made like friends along the way, it's opened up events and stuff that you can go to, and it gives you a wider range of stuff that you can do inside the church, and with church, I'd say.[176]

---

[173] Interview C, #00:17:00-8#

[174] Focus Group R, #00:20:18-0#

[175] Interview F, #00:06:05-9#

[176] Focus Group R, #00:23:52-9#

Marzena's father was more demanding, insisting that not only should she go to Mass each week, but that she should sit with her hands together in prayer throughout the service. Her solution was just as radical: to become the first female altar server in her traditional Polish parish:

> the first year, the first actual announcement that was made that girls can finally join in, because they had a shortage, I was the first girl to actually sign up <for altar serving> [...]
>
> But I realised that I do enjoy it, and obviously I didn't have to sit next to my dad <laughs> and in general it kind of opened me to a whole new world of just worshipping God... it made me actually think about it more and question it, and kind of kept me together when other people may have went off the religion.[177]

Like Becca, Marzena carved out a space for herself in her community, and in doing so gained some local celebrity, but also the confidence to take on her catholicity for herself:

> M: I mean, just being a server means you are Catholic, you are right there. Sometimes even walking on the street because... instantly everybody on the street can see that you are in this white gown... hands like this, instantly people can see that you're Catholic. So, at that point I realised I can speak up about it, even though it was between me and God at that moment in time, after I got confident I was like, look there's nothing to be ashamed of.[178]

For both girls, constrained by their parents into particular patterns of behaviour, parish communities offered an opportunity to exercise their agency in creative ways. Both were repaid through confidence, knowledge and opportunities in their parish.

The ultimate form of agency in this area is to find a new parish community. While this was difficult on a permanent basis for young people, because of geography and family ties to particular churches, Natasha managed this on a temporary basis, driving some distance to attend Mass with the charismatic Polish priest she had been following online:

> N: So, he literally talks about sins, how we perceive them, and like, he just helps you understand, and that's faith, you have to understand it to believe it, so it's really helpful. I took photos inside the church... it was really lovely to see the people that had like, watched him for years, and they finally get to see him. Some of them are thankful because he helped them with their faith, so it was really lovely to watch people hug and meet their idol.[179]

---

[177] Interview G, #00:09:29-7#

[178] Interview G, #00:24:38-4#

[179] Interview K, #00:03:42-9#

Photograph 8: Fr Adam comes to Reading

Natasha contrasts her two experiences of parish:

> N: it just felt really, it just felt like a community, because sometimes it just doesn't, so it was really lovely to experience it.
>
> I: It doesn't, at your normal Sunday Mass?
>
> N: Erm, I feel like it's more traditional, it's more like stricter in like, it's the word, and you're meant to respect it, but he talks about it in a very, just like a friendly way, he's not like distant, you feel close to your faith. And songs that we sang weren't the traditional ones, we got to like clap along and it was really engaging <laughs> I don't know. [180]

Keywords in this passage include "it felt like a community", "it was lovely to experience", "you feel close to your faith" and "it was really engaging". These all point to an emphasis on the experiential, similar to that in the accounts of adoration. Looking for a religious experience outside what she could obtain at her local parish, Natasha was able to find it through her own efforts. Examples of this elsewhere in the data include the temporary communities of the diocesan retreat, World Youth Day and other large-scale gatherings.

---

[180] Interview K, #00:04:56-5#

5.3.4 Personalising Practices

Finally, there were a number of accounts of participants not just choosing but personalising practices to fit their needs, finding small ways to enact their identity into an ordinary day. Sometimes this could be as simple as finding a time in the day to accommodate prayer. As Marzena says, “ I always have a rosary with me in my bag because half the time I do it on the bus, thirty minutes so why not?”[181] Participants populated their digital space with catholicity; for example, Pete listened to Christian music on Spotify (the Youth Retreat team created a playlist each year), and Laura and Marco thought they could incorporate some of the music at Summer Camp into a daily prayer routine. Natasha followed a Polish priest vlogger and Beth followed the Pope on Instagram, creating a Catholic presence on her social media feed. Lucy, who had had a hard time being Christian at school when she was younger, found role models online:

> I follow several people that are Christians, and I find it quite interesting that they’re so confident and open about their religion, and they don’t really get, like, hate for it.[182]

Beth chatted with her diocesan retreat friends in a Snapchat group most days, and Lucy kept in touch with the friend she had made at the Scripture Union camp via WhatsApp. Barbara took this a step further, requiring more extensive improvising:

> B: I had, um, St Joseph’s, no not St Joseph’s, St Joseph’s novena on my phone, no St Jude’s!...
>
> I: On your phone?
>
> B: Yes. And I made tick boxes one through nine, and sub-tick boxes of all the Our Fathers, and Hail Mary’s and Glory Be’s that I have to say, so as I go I tick them on my phone. ...
>
> But after that, for the whole of the summer vacation, I was praying and praying and praying, goodness, I need my grades, because we were thinking of moving to London. My dad actually got transferred, so we had that thought in our heads, so, I needed the grades. So, the novenas every day, I figured it out... and I got great grades.[183]

Having only moved to the UK from Dubai six months later, Babara felt getting good grades would be important, not just to her but to the family, as they navigated a further move. The sense of agency in putting the novena boxes on her phone and ticking them off each day was central to her way of coping with this stress. Through her own work and intentionality, Barbara accessed a sense of transcendence, connected with the needs of her family, and the results authenticated her actions: she got great grades.

---

[181] Interview G #00:13:08-2#

[182] Focus Group R, #00:28:44-9#

[183] Interview A, #00:12:09-7#

Lucy, seeking to move away from her phone, was inspired by a friend from another denomination:

> Lucy: Yeah, and then… I don't really pray, I don't really do anything like that… I do this <calligraphy>, I don't know if that counts but
>
> I: Well, I think everything's prayer… And drawing out Bible words, sounds like prayer to me, in a way. But you're doing it because of the way it makes you feel? Why would you do it?
>
> L: I find it quite… It's like mindfulness, that everyone just went and did, it's kind of just quite, I dunno, stop for a minute and do something different and I spend so much time on my phone and stuff that it's nice to do something else.[184]

It seems that for Lucy, the defining characteristic of prayer is how it makes her feel. Out of everything religious she does during the week, this form of Bible calligraphy brings her closest to how she feels prayer should be.

5.4 Worldviews and Beliefs

These chapters have explored the process of becoming Catholic, with deep roots in family practice and identity, complicated by peer and parish experiences. As they grow up, these young people have made a number of choices and adjustments in order to transition from a family to a personal identity. I have shown how this happens through practices of prayer and Mass-going, but also through finding friends and opportunities in parishes. Finally, it is worth exploring the internal processes of meaning-making that participants undergo. The relationship between beliefs, practices, and identity is slippery, with each defining and reinforcing the other. Formed initially in families, worldviews are challenged by the lives these young people lead, as their experiences of being Catholic have to be made sense of. How do they integrate suffering, death and difficult times into their belief in a loving God? In the final part of this chapter, I will explore the fundamental religious beliefs of participants as expressed in their own words and examine the evidence for a Catholic imagination which extends beyond purely religious matters into the natural world, feelings of purpose, and expectations of the holy. I will follow the trail of meaning-making through two accounts which focus on answers to prayer to explore how worldviews impact practice and vice versa. Finally, I will examine how a Catholic worldview supports ongoing Catholic identity.[185]

---

[184] Interview E, #00:09:30-2#

5.4.1 Fundamental Beliefs

While it has been decades since Catholic children were formed in the question-and-answer form of the Baltimore Catechism, participants were clear that being a Catholic meant believing in God:

> Marianna: it's hard to define in general what a Catholic is other than having a belief in God, and erm, the Bible, and having that, kind of sense of, there is a higher power.[186]
>
> Pete: To be Catholic... is to believe in God. Cos God is always there, he loves you, even if you don't think he does, you've just got to have it in your mind. If you can tell that God doesn't loves you, he does, but it's your mindset rather than God's, I think. It's more of a personal thing.[187]

As represented in Pete's response, the beliefs expressed across the board were of a relationship with a loving God: a being to whom they can bring problems (Nancy, Kasha); who will intervene in times of difficulty and illness (Michael, Natasha, Teresa, Becca); who can be trusted (Beth, Laura, Immie, Nancy); and from whom they derive a sense of purpose (Marianna). Heaven is a reality that they look forward to (Teresa, Marianna, Lucy, Rhianna) and the small number of participants who spoke about sin considered it something to be overcome:

> Natasha: So, [Fr Adam] literally talks about sins, how we perceive them, and like, he just helps you understand, and that's faith, you have to understand it to believe it.[188]

At the same time, there was much less clarity in speaking about Jesus. Most of those references were to Bible stories, or brought Jesus and God together in an uncertain way. Becca's comment was typical: "definitely during communion, there's some part of Jesus or God with us, present..."[189]. Beyond this, and the knowledge of Bible stories, there was little sense of connection with Jesus as a person of the Trinity. At the same time, his life was used metaphorically by some of the participants to help them understand their lives:

---

[185] Note: Following a lived religion methodology, participants were not surveyed on their religious views or asked directly about them to avoid the rote or "correct" answers of those who had attended years of Catholic education. By recording religious beliefs only as they arose in conversation, a more accurate expression of participants' own worldview is obtained.

[186] Interview D, #00:12:27-2#

[187] Interview I, #00:03:31-3#

[188] Interview K, #00:03:11-1#

[189] Interview F, #00:21:51-6#

> Natasha: This photo, is like a metaphor, because it's a boat and sea, and I like the, I think it's a story in the Bible which talks about Jesus sending out the disciples, and they were really scared to be alone, they got lost, and that's like us in our daily life, it's like our journey across the other side, which is the afterlife, and we also can get lost like the disciples did[190]

There were a number of similar correlations in the data, framing everyday life within a Biblical context via the photos taken:

> Marianna: I have this picture that I chose. I liked it because it shows a lot of the aspects of the Creation story. So it shows the light and then the, you know, the differentiation between land and sea, and then, I think that's my sister, standing there as well. And there's a bird as well, and that's mentioned in Genesis. [...]
>
> I: Sort of, with the sun quite low, beautiful sky. That's gorgeous. That reminded you of creation?
>
> M: Yes. But also it reminded me of hope in dark situations because the picture's quite dark but the sky is still beautiful and there's the light peeping through.[191]

Marianna's narration of her photo starts with a Biblical framing, encompasses her family, and then moves into philosophical thinking. This bridges to moments when participants make theological sense of their lives without Biblical metaphors, a more abstract and, therefore, potentially more virtuosic move.

5.4.2 The Immanent Divine

The participants' belief in a loving and immanent God gives rise to a broader expectation of the divine in the everyday:

> Barbara: Another [photo] is of a sunset. And I have one of a really tiny grass flower, so that is the range in which God works – he has the power to orchestrate something so huge as a sunset and the little tiny parts inside a grass flower. Have you seen a grass flower? It's really, really tiny, it's really, *really* tiny and the fact that he made reproductive organs in it, and has so much detail in that, it's just, it's marvellous.[192]

---

[190] Focus Group M, #00:05:39-6#

[191] Interview D, #00:02:07-6#

[192] Interview A, #00:03:44-2#

Photograph 9: Grass flower

Within Barbara's account lies a belief that the power of God represented in her photos is a power for good. Looking at nature reveals an awesome God, intimately involved in creation. The implication in this account is of a God also intimately involved with Barbara's life. Lena makes this explicit:

> Obviously everyone has significance to this world and we all play a part, however there's 7.4 billion people in the world, I think, and to others we are like shadows, we don't seem important, but to God we are, so that's why I'm touching the light.[193]

Photograph 10: Touching the Light

---

[193] Interview C, #00:03:03-6#

The ability to think metaphorically about catholicity extended to material items. For example, Leon discovered in the course of the conversation about a cross that he wore around his neck something significant about his faith. The cross usually sits under his shirt and tie for school, and when friends ask him about it,

> I'll say "I ALWAYS have it on" <laughs> Um, it's the best, you know, reminder, like even when I'm not thinking about it, it's there, which is quite sort of mirrors my faith in a sense… as in you're not always thinking about "Oh I wonder what God would think about that" <laughter> you know, you live your life and then, you think about it once in a while[194]

With this kind of Catholic imagination, it becomes more straightforward for participants to feel that God is active in their lives:

> Marzena: I mean, even on my confirmation, a lot of my friends and me, we were saying that we literally could feel that, it's not the witness having the hand on our shoulder, it was just generally sitting in the bench when we had the blessing, someone could feel something on their shoulder, and everyone was saying well maybe it was Jesus, maybe the Holy Spirit and everything. And yes there were some moments like that. I personally maybe didn't exactly feel it, but there were some moments when I was like, oo, maybe. I mean, everything happens for a reason, and for me, God knows everything, and… yeah, maybe it didn't happen personally, but I know enough people that said it.[195]

Interestingly, this was also a response to the question: "Have you ever had an experience of feeling close to God?". Marzena was in the room when this happened, but did not have this experience herself. She was able to class the proximity of such an experience as the thing itself. This was not unusual among participants with high rates of daily practice. For Sean, answering the same question, he did not even have to be in the same room as others having a spiritual experience. A vicarious transcendence was enough:

> Sean: Not really, I've just, I've just been in church, nothing just special's happened to me, throughout it, really, I've just seen the importance of it from other people's, how it's changed their lives without anything really happening to me.[196]

Other people have shared their spiritual experiences with Sean and that has been enough for this interpretation to become reflexive. The variety of supportive Christians around Sean, of different ages and relationships with him, brings a consistency of worldview, which allows him to recognise spiritual experiences in others without having had them himself. A Catholic imagination encounters the divine through nature, in a religious service, and even in the stories told by others. All this helps to build a resilient faith for the whole of life.

---

[194] Focus Group X, #00:28:59-3#

[195] Interview G, #00:22:15-6#

[196] Interview S, #00:13:08-4#

5.4.3 Sensemaking

An important function of a religious or philosophical worldview is making sense of difficult times. How resilient is the image of a loving and benevolent God then? Of those who spoke in these terms, nearly all were able to frame hard times positively:

> Teresa: Erm, I think it's hard when you question God, because bad stuff happens, and that kind of thing, but then you kind of, everything works out in the end, and you always believe that God has a reason to do whatever he does, so I think you always keep those values, and it just teaches you life lessons as you go on.[197]
>
> Immie: When I'm struggling, when I'm feeling really sad and low, I know that I'll always have it there, like it's always there to, in a way, comfort me...[198]

Teresa is able to work through times of questioning God without risk to her core belief. Immie finds that her faith is a particular support through difficult times. Two accounts gave a glimpse of this process of sense-making at work. Lena told a story of working through doubts about God which had arisen when her cousin had been taken ill, and she turned to prayer.

> L: It helps, cos even like when I've struggled, and there were some moments when I doubted God, cos I was just so sad, but then in the end I thought, reasons why he's doing this, why this is happening and I had like a moment of reflection, time on my own and it kind of helped me. Also for example that situation in Poland, I felt so bad and I prayed, and then like, when the sun came out I just knew, I was so much happier and I just knew he was feeling better...[199]

Lena used a photo of a sunset to unpack this episode:

> To me, well it might sound weird, but like, Jesus represents the light, and like, during the summer holidays, there was this time when I was like, struggling, cos, me and my family were in a very bad position, and like it was gloomy, those two days, and the

---

[197] Focus Group Q, #00:22:39-1#

[198] Interview U, #00:07:42-6#

[199] Interview C, #00:12:51-6#

> sun came out and it felt like it was better, and it was, because my cousin landed in hospital and then he was better.[200]

Lena makes links across a set of theological statements and natural happenings: Jesus is represented by the light – her cousin was in hospital and the weather was gloomy – she prayed for her cousin to be healed – the sun came out – her cousin started to feel better. She weaves together these natural and supernatural occurrences into a narrative of a healing prayer answered that strengthens her faith for the future.

Becca also shares stories of praying for poorly relatives, but has a different way of interpreting those experiences:

> I suppose there's been times when I've prayed, can't remember what it was for, but I think someone was poorly in my family, and I think I prayed for them and kept on praying for them because, well, I could see how much it made my parents upset,… And then eventually it's like, whatever I prayed for happened, came true, so that kind of made me feel good about myself. Maybe God really is up there like, watching over us, listening to us. But then there's also been some times when I've prayed, but it hasn't happened… Ok, I'll believe in God and all, I believe in God, but then when it doesn't come true, is there an actual God, is there someone actually up there, or am I just being told all lies…[201]

In this account there are some key differences from others in this section. Becca has been brought up to believe in God by her parents, but her comment, "Am I just being told all lies?" suggests that her family are not entirely a trusted source. Not being able to rely on them, she is thrown back on her own experience. In this account, there are no Biblical or other religious framings, and God is also not entirely benevolent, so it is not surprising that there is also little sense of the transcendent. Becca's account of her emotional journey centres around her feelings, and those of her parents. Even when prayers "come true" she is not convinced, and so every episode of prayer becomes a new test. This is so important to her that she is still reflecting on it at the end of her interview:

> Because there has been some times when I've prayed for someone to get better but I know, there's like a 10% chance they will get better. And of course it hasn't happened and then they die. And then I feel, I feel really hate on God because why didn't he do it? And then I realise, if he did do it, there's much suffering that they'd be in…so

---

[200] Interview C, #00:12:06-0#

[201] Interview F, #00:08:14-2#

> you've got to realise, maybe he's doing it <God>, maybe that's the best thing because that's the best thing to do.[202]

These two accounts of prayers answered show not only the difference made by a worldview that can encompass difficulty and suffering as part of a religious journey, but the subsequent impact on practice. Lena's account was given in response to the question "Why do you want to hang onto [your Catholic identity] into the future?"[203] Being able to frame her experience as an answer to prayer gives confidence to her Catholic identity. On the other hand, Becca describes herself as someone who does not pray, and her very identity as a Catholic seems to depend on how she feels her prayers have been answered:

> P: I'm still about 50/50% [about the existence of God], definitely. I think, once it's happened probably enough, and then I realise, ok yes someone is up there, but as it's happened more negative than positive, I'm on the other end of the scale. I think it's got to happen enough times for me to believe it, so I'm just going with my gut and it's like, oh maybe he isn't up there, or maybe it isn't true, or maybe I've just been told my whole life's a lie... yeah... I don't know. It's a hard question.[204]

It is important to note that answers to prayers (or lack thereof) were not an obstacle to Catholic identity more widely across the cohort. We have already encountered Pete and Tom "not getting a lot back" from their prayers, and there were significant numbers of other participants whose prayer life was not mentioned as significant, and yet were committed to their Catholic identity and belief in God. However, unlike Tom and Pete, Becca is not able to frame her accounts of prayer within what she expects of God, and it is that lack of sense-making that is so jarring for her.

5.4.4 Non-Catholic Perspectives

Most of the worldviews in the accounts were recognisably Catholic (if for no other reason than because that is how participants identified them) but there were other perspectives. Kasha related notions of karma to a story about being a good Catholic and helping others:

> Like the other day I had some really good karma, like I was walking back from school and I saw this old woman carrying a bag, and she was walking so slow, and I was like ah, whatever, I'm tired, I'm not helping people, and I'm going home, and then I walked a few steps and I was like, 'NO, when you're old you're going to need help

---

[202] Interview F, #00:24:56-4#
[203] Interview C, #00:11:29-3#
[204] Interview F, #00:09:01-5#

> <laughing> so you'd better help this old woman.' […] Yeah, so I carried it and afterwards I was like, 'yes get me in my good karma, better get like, I don't know, good results now or something!' So I thought that was really good.[205]

One of the non-Catholic participants, Rhianna, combined notions of being a good person and going to heaven (which she ascribed to her Catholic school) with horoscopes, conspiracy theories, ghosts, dead ancestors and a feeling of an immanent God watching over her:

> R: Um, cos I always believe that there's someone there, like, out there in the heavens, just like, watching us and guiding us through. So I just did like, the light represents, like, erm, the Holy Spirit and stuff and that represents God and Jesus <slightly uncertain> so like the three put together.
>
> I: And so, do you, do you believe in Jesus? […]
>
> R: I believe in him, but there's just some stories that I don't believe in the Bible, I don't, cos, there isn't really any explanation for it, it's just there. But I do believe in him, but some things I don't believe in.[206]

Photograph 11: Someone watching and guiding us through

Hers is a warm, hopeful worldview in which the Christian element is only one part, but a positive one:

---

[205] Interview B, #00:20:44-5#

[206] Interview A1, #00:10:22-6#

> R: I don't think it really changed my life, it just helps me get through when I'm not feeling the greatest. Cos then I'm like, it makes you feel less alone, when you're upset.[207]

By comparison, Macie, the other non-Christian participant in the study saw difficult times as evidence against the existence of God:

> Cos for me, these natural disasters, and like children dying from an earthquake, or children dying from cancer, for me that's enough proof to say that a normal loving God can't be there. And if he is, he's doing something wrong.[208]

Mason .. brain tumour
Boy of 15 is cancer blast bid pioneer
By SHAUN WOOLL
ASPIRIN BLEEDIN' DEADLY
Raises risk by 4
TRAGEDY
TEARS ... Nantes fans wait for news on their
I BL NET FOR MY GIRL SUICIDE
Dad's fu
FAT IN AC ATTACK
Son, 3
I was so close to suicide
By OSCAR PAUL

Photograph 12: Tragedy and natural disasters

These viewpoints arising from non-Catholic participants from a Catholic school illustrate some of the potential alternative perspectives that the Catholic participants could have offered.

5.4.5 Worldviews and their Relationship to Identity

To circle back to the starting point of this argument, for most of the participants in the study identifying as Catholic meant believing in God:

> Lena: To be honest, I don't think there are bad Catholics. Cos, if you simply don't believe then you're not Catholic at all.[209]

---

[207] Interview A1, #00:11:35-5#
[208] Interview B2, #00:13:06-6#
[209] Interview C, #00:17:53-7#

At the same time, what that meant varied from young person to young person. For Sarah, the fact of being Catholic in some way presumed the existence of God:

> Er…I don't really know… mmm… I guess the presence of God has always been with me, since I'm a Catholic and being guided to make the right decisions in life, especially when it comes to making a moral decision of doing something right or wrong. But… I don't think I've had any experience that I personally know of, especially since you can only really understand fully when you're a bit older.[210]

Not able to point to any one particular experience of God, her understanding is that God has been part of her life and that with more mature eyes, this will become clear. Barbara, who was one of the most religious young people in the group, also could not point to a particular spiritual moment, but situated her whole life within the frame of divine encounter:

> I: And have you ever had an experience of God's presence… just a sense of presence or something like that?
>
> B: Um <pause for thought> I'm not sure about that one. I did… Maybe I did, but I just don't remember it right now.
>
> I: No? That's fine.
>
> B: But in many ways God has been with me and he's shown me that he's with me, not explicitly, and, like, I feel it but I don't know how to explain it.[211]

For those with a particular Catholic worldview, it was not necessary to be able to point to a specific experience of God to feel that God was present in their life. Here Catholic identity, upbringing and practice manifest God, or at very least, manifest the possibility of God. Remember Nancy's mum saying, "Do you have that spiritual feeling inside?" These young people have developed from having their experiences framed by others to framing them for themselves, and even, in Marzena's confirmation tale, for one another. While this is more a slow process of sense-making over years than a moment of choice, the ability to frame beliefs, practices and identity gives young people agency through the tough years of adolescence and provides a toolkit that they can reach for. Worldviews not only underlie practices and identity, they are formed by them as new challenges are faced and new obstacles arise. As part of this process, for some young people, the belief in a loving and immanent God is transformed into a resilience which can encompass illness, exams, trouble with friends, and even death. This has to be among the most significant benefits of being a teenage Catholic.

---

[210] Interview J, #00:13:00-7#

[211] Interview A, #00:23:43-8#

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter was part of a pair exploring the creation and development of Catholic identity in the young people in the study. The previous chapter laid out the ways in which family identity is foundational for young Catholics together with the challenges and encouragement this receives outside the family in parish and school settings. This chapter examines the process of moving from a family to a personal Catholic identity. Participants undergo cycles of choosing, normalising and enacting beliefs and practices as they meet new challenges, and mature through adolescence. Through these processes, they develop catholicities that are particular to the moment, retaining and evolving those which are a resource to them and leaving behind what does not seem to fit. In contrast to the ambivalence of the previous chapter, these accounts see participants growing in confidence, negotiating with strict parents, finding innovative solutions to weekly Mass attendance, and standing proud in their Catholic identity among their peers.

In the micro-changes they made, participants consistently moved towards a relational, affective catholicity through cycles of normalisation and enactment, encouraged by new communities and friendships, and seeking out practices that were compatible with their worldview. While participants often mirrored family practices (for example, saying the same prayers but by themselves), they were also able to manage dissonances between their own beliefs or wider culture and institutional norms without losing their Catholic identity. Church teaching was mediated via family practice, which allowed for another step of negotiation and improvisation. While the Catholic Church would place a priority on weekly Mass going and the importance of the Eucharist, for these young people, community and relationships were central, including, for many of them, a sense of the divine in their daily lives. Making choices based on individual notions of Catholic identity explains the diversity of practice within the sample group. Although all were more or less highly religious, there were weekly Mass-goers who never prayed, daily prayers who never went to Mass, and most surprisingly, those on the diocesan retreat who neither went to Mass nor prayed. Each of these groups took elements of Catholic identity and forged it into a coherent set of beliefs and practices that worked for them. If the only prayer that feels emotionally affective is the Eucharistic Adoration experienced at a youth retreat, it is no surprise that prayer does not feature elsewhere in that person's life. If weekly Mass attendance is required of someone who is not sure if they believe in God, it is a credit to their ingenuity that, by becoming sacristan, they make an accommodation that boosts their sense of self, if not their sense of the divine.

This chapter examined the tension between a Church that has transmitted faith down through the generations with an emphasis on conformity, and a secular culture that places an emphasis on authenticity and individuality. Throughout history, Catholicism has demonstrated an ability to change while holding the centre. The Catholic identity demonstrated here is foundational but resilient enough to change and grow with the young people themselves. If Catholic identity holds strongly enough, it can stay recognisable even within this degree of variety. The surprising finding of this chapter is that having an identity as a practising or engaged Catholic benefits young people in a number of ways: a resilient worldview to protect them in difficult times; new friends with whom shared religious identity forms strong bonds; access to leadership opportunities and social capital within parish communities. Significant questions remain: is this a Catholicism that will continue into the future in the lives of these young people? Is it enough to transition down a further generation? It is necessary now to look to the wider literature to assess underlying trends.

Chapter 6: Forming Catholic Identity part 1: Families

> Sometimes I do debate, am I just doing this to make my parents proud? Am I just [volunteering as a sacristan] because, oh, I said I'd help with my dad, and now I'm like, I'm too pretty afraid. But I don't feel that. But my brain's still kind of mixed up with… have I chosen this, am I doing the right thing, are my parents like making me do it. I don't know. I think quite like, 50–50.[212]
>
> Becca, Parish Group B

Understanding the production of identity in Catholic young people requires making sense of a good deal of ambiguous material. Not only do practices and beliefs not correlate exactly (such as the young sacristan who is not sure if she believes in God), but the creation of Catholic identity seems at one remove from the institutional Church. This task involves resolving theoretical puzzles at two levels: the conceptual and the lived. From a conceptual perspective, this picture of complex but undoubtedly lively Catholicism challenges the standard sociological analyses which often concentrate on stories of decline (as noted in Chapter Two). A Lived Catholicism approach requires altering normative expectations from understanding catholicity as held and produced by the institutional Church, to understanding it being held and co-produced by all in the Catholic sphere, in dynamic relationship to the institutional Church. This relocates divergence to the normative: it is part of the dynamic of how Catholicism is lived out in particular contexts. For Mayblin et al, "Catholicism's strength seems to be based as much on its rhetorical toleration of locality and difference as on its universalising and highly centralised 'infallible' core." (Mayblin, Norget, and Napolitano 2017, 7). This data shows that process in action.

Resolving the second theoretical puzzle requires accounting for these tensions of sameness and difference as they impact participants' lives. The previous two chapters identified the mechanics of receiving/choosing, normalising, enacting and imagining Catholic identity as undertaken first by families, and then by the participants themselves. However, while the data can show these processes at work, it cannot explain why they are effective, in particular, why some families are more successful at transferring Catholic identity through the generations than others. To answer this question, this second pair of chapters applies two theoretical framings to the themes of family and agency: Bourdieu's theory of cultural production and Orsi's understanding of lived religion. These theories highlight the themes of sameness and difference playing out through the practices, worldviews, stories and daily life of the project. I harness their contrasting notions of the structuring structures of family life and meaning-making in the moment to explain the labour of normalising and enacting Catholicism for the range of contexts in the data.

---

[212] Interview F, #00:13:33-9#

Bourdieu's emphasis on the domestic production of culture in family life provides the theoretical understanding of sameness in the overall framework. In this chapter, I have applied his notions of doxa and habitus to the actions of normalising and enacting, as seen in Chapters Four and Five. I argue that, while the institutional Church is a presence in families, the work of passing Catholic identity through the generations largely falls to parents and grandparents. The transfer of faith through the generations is thus exposed as not innate or straightforward, but significantly dependent on the skills of individual parents and family members. Because it is domestic and often female, this labour is unseen, unexamined and, therefore, under-appreciated. The resulting picture destabilises normative narratives of institution-led, sacramental development of Catholic identity, revealing a rich yet commonplace Catholicism lived largely away from religious institutions and congregations, which unexpectedly meets some of the challenges of twenty-first century adolescent life.

Bourdieu's work does not fully explain the ambiguities in the data. As discussed in Chapter Three, his theories can be accused of determinism, and sometimes struggle to explain divergence and innovation (McCloud 2012; Verter 2003). I have shown that lived religion approaches are more nuanced, privileging the agency of individuals in identity creation and revealing how they negotiate, craft and subvert their religiosity. Orsi helps account for the diversity in the data. He is interested in difference within sameness, the contextual and conditional; in particular how religious lives are made in the moment within the bounds of institutional religion (Roberts 2006). Orsi's work brings two key values to the project: the importance of making-meaning with what is to hand; and the relational nature of such meaning-making: "Men, women and children *together* make religious worlds in relationship with special beings and with each other." (Orsi 2005, 2). The improvisatory nature of this process helps explain some of the diversity across the families and the logic that creates the differences, arising as it does out of a variety of sets of contexts. These values will be even more important to participants making their own choices as seen in Chapter Seven. Within a wider frame of sameness and difference, Bourdieu and Orsi hold in tension two directions of travel: Bourdieu in maintaining structures and Orsi in the destabilising and creative force of individual agency. Looping back to the opening conceptual puzzle, I suggest that one way to hold together both Catholicism as lived, and the "continually crystallising system of patterns" of the institutional Church is to bring Orsi and Bourdieu into conversation with one another.

This chapter is the first of a two-step analysis of the creation and production of a lived Catholic identity in a group of Catholic teenagers in the UK. Firstly, I will explore the theorisation of religious families, both in Bourdieu and Orsi, and in Catholic teaching. Tracing three "types" of family in the data creates new possibilities for enquiry, especially how the "fiction"/reality of a Catholic family is created and sustained; the roles of parents and other family members as religious specialists as they create and co-create Catholic families; and the process by which the localising of institutional Catholicism within the family happens. I will explore notions of family doxa and orthodoxy, mapping the ways in which adult family members use their practical and spiritual mastery to bridge between the institutional Church and lived experience. Such enquiries shed new light on practices of spiritual apprenticeship which are not currently well understood, bringing to the fore the skills of mothers and grandmothers who find a way between sameness and difference to make religion relevant to the lives of their teenagers. Chapter Seven will focus on the young people themselves, exploring agency within structure, as the young people shape their Catholic identity and practice over time.

6.1 Theorising Families: Sociological, Lived Religion and Theological Perspectives

6.1.1 Approaches to Studying Faith in Families

It has long been recognised that families are important to religious identity, practice and belief. Teasing out the complex interrelations between parental behaviour, childhood experiences and religious practice has happened more recently, prompted both by the sudden failure of centuries-old patterns of faith transfer in families in the West, and by the unexpected vitality of religion across much of the world in late modernity. However, the importance of family is both self-evident and surprising in a study of older teenagers; indeed, it only appeared as a sub-category in my original research questions. Families have long been recognised as significant to the transfer of faith identity and practice between generations as outlined in Chapter Two. What has not been so clear are the precise mechanisms by which this transfer of identity happens, and why it still pertains when parents (and advertisers) feel that young people are making their own choices (Voas and Watt 2014). Examining families as laboratories of faith identity transmission allows for a more complex exploration of why some families are more successful at this than others, opening up new questions as to what processes are more successful; the extent to which doubt or difference can be tolerated; and the passive/active role of the young person within the process. The whole question of agency within families and institutional norms is key, not only for unpacking these dynamics within families, but for answering wider questions about innovation and maintenance within the Catholic Church. This section outlines Bourdieu and Orsi's particular approaches to theorising families, comparing these to the Catholic understanding of the responsibility of parents. It then explores three expressions of Catholic family that emerge from the data, using Bourdieu's theories of doxa and habitus to differentiate them. Finally, the section addresses the complexities in the data.

6.1.2 Families in Bourdieu and Orsi

In Bourdieu's work, families are seen as essential for social stability, behoving wider society and the state to create conditions for families to function. For Bourdieu, families are both a "social fiction with no other basis than social construction" but also: "they really exist". His key insight is that the taken-for-granted-ness of family life is in itself a social construction "because it has been inculcated in us through a process of socialisation preformed in a world that was itself organised according to the division into families" (Bourdieu 1998, 66). Common sense notions of family arise from experiences of people's own family life, but also through the intervention of the state, from registering births to family allowances, housing policy and much more. Bringing Bourdieu's wider theory to bear on families shows how structuring structures create realities, creating or generating devotion, generosity and solidarity among family members, the continuous creation of "*obliged affections* and *affective obligations* of family feeling" (author's emphasis). He writes, "The structures of kinship and family as bodies can only be perpetuated through a continuous creation of family feeling, a cognitive principle of vision and division that is at the same time an affective principle of cohesion, i.e. the adhesion that is vital to the existence of a family group and its interests," work that more often falls to women (Bourdieu 1996, 22). Bourdieu intends these to be generic theories that can be applied in different times and places, while emphasising the importance of fieldwork in developing theory (Bourdieu 2000).

Using Bourdieu's notions of doxa, habitus and field as a lens to view the stories of family life in the data gives new emphasis to the process of the production of catholicity. He gives particular emphasis to experiences of early childhood, while ideas of field and mastery centre the dynamics of power in families, revealing the importance of parents and grandparents in this process

(Atkinson 2016). The notion of habitus locates young people in their families, a structuring structure which defines their identity and, to a certain degree, constrains their agency (or, more accurately, their expectations of agency). Doxa explains much that is taken-for-granted or unsaid, which is perhaps what people mean when they say they were "raised Catholic". Taken together, doxa and habitus spotlight the breadth of domestic catholicity, which is concerned with food, celebration, holidays, the passing of time, friendships, home decor, illness and health, and daily routine; and is marked in time and space, the embodiment of family life. Finally, access to different forms of capital might help to explain why young people persist in practising as Catholics despite pressure from wider culture to desist. Taken together, Bourdieu's emphases on early life experiences, consistent practices and ways of understanding the world, together with notions of practical and symbolic mastery, resonated at each point with my data while accounting for both the replication and the variety within the data set. At the same time, it is impossible to ignore criticisms that Bourdieu's theories are "too determinist, reductionist and reproductionist" and that his theory of family is simply "too crude" to make sense of the ways in which people come to want what they want and do what they do (Atkinson 2016, 9).

Orsi's work on families, on the other hand, plunges the reader into the specificity of lives lived, for example, those of American Catholic women from the 1920s to the 1970s (Orsi 1996). His study of the "American Catholic family romance" examines the particular cultural and religious conditions that give rise to a distinctive understanding of family, in which women (mothers) stayed at home in order to raise Catholic children while husbands were often seen as weak and likely to fail. It is an understanding of Catholic family that is formed from whatever comes to hand – devotional tracts, Catholic magazines, TV and radio, family wisdom, word of mouth, homilies and much more – shaping the lives of Catholic families by influencing both the choices they made and the meaning they made of the situation they were in.[213] Orsi credits the term "family romance" as arising from psychoanalysis, defined by Freud as "paranoic delusions" such as imagining that one is adopted. In his words, it is "a domestic dreamscape shaped by specific and identifiable (but not often conscious) desires and denials and presented by cultural authorities as historically authentic, morally imperative, and religiously sanctioned" (ibid, 78). The source of the fiction is not so much the benign "common-sense" of Bourdieu, but malignant societal concerns about juvenile delinquency overwhelmingly aimed at young women, and

---

[213] Orsi quotes Fr Fulton Sheen's article "How to stay married though unhappy" as an example of much of the Catholic literature at the time.

Catholic devotional reading which viewed them as having the potential to undermine "Catholic culture, the stability of the family, and the integrity of Western civilisation" (ibid, 80).

In his accounts of the desperate women who turned to St Jude, Orsi outlines not just this oppressive environment but how people found hope within the cult of the saint. While Bourdieu's theories help to explain why Catholicism has continued for centuries (sameness), Orsi's work introduces notions of difference, agency and innovation. It helps counter overly deterministic interpretations of data by showing how people create space for hope and action within religious worlds. As Roberts writes, "Orsi counters the tendency of explanatory approaches to stress the closure, stability, and hegemony affected by religious discourse, a tendency that offers little if any theoretical space to the destabilizing and creative work of religion and religious agents." (Roberts 2006, 714). Orsi's research is a reminder that religious family lives happen in time and space.

Bringing these different approaches into conversation helps form the basis for a Lived Catholicism approach: one which holds tradition and innovation and sees the agency of individuals and communities in relation to the institutional Church. While Bourdieu's theories help explain the transmission of Catholicism over the centuries, Orsi situates families in their context, and may help to explain why that process is failing in the West now. Applying these theories to Catholic family life, I will track hints of doxa, habitus and spiritual mastery through the descriptions of family life which fill my data, shining a light on the co-production of Catholic identities of participants, and revealing why some families are more successful at this than others. Chapter Seven will draw on Orsi's understanding of making religious meaning in the moment and Bourdieu's notion of cleft habitus to explore how these young people expressed their religious identity through the choices they made and the religious worlds they constructed.

6.1.3 The Family in Catholic Teaching

Before addressing how these analyses can be applied to my data, it is worth examining how the Catholic Church understands the transmission of faith in families. This re-centres the institutional Church as co-producer of any notion of a "Catholic family" as well as exploring how the Church views its "continually crystallising system of patterns" in a particular setting. Just as it is possible for Bourdieu to conceive of the family as a social construction as well as a reality, I suggest it is possible to examine the Catholic family as a Catholic social construction.

In the Catechism, the Catholic Church agrees with sociologists of religion in regarding the family as central to the transmission of faith:

> Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery – the preconditions of all true freedom…
>
> The home is the natural environment for initiating a human being into solidarity and communal responsibilities. (CCC §2223-4)

This is the "social construction" of the family at the heart of Catholicism, which has some distinctive elements. Firstly, it is parents who are the first educators in a school of virtue, apprentice-ors of future generations. There is no mention in this passage of the institutional Church, of priests, children's workers, or teachers. The first steps of faith are taken at home, and parents are assumed to have the spiritual mastery to carry out this task. Secondly, the home is not a place for raising individuals but members of a community. Forgiveness and self-denial are good virtues for living with others, but there is no place for doubt or choice in this description of the Catholic home. Finally, using words such as "well-suited" and "natural" suggests that the Church sees this process as innate and that faith transition will continue to happen through the generations as it has for centuries.

In addition to this inward focus on the home, the Church also expects that parents will:

> associate [their children] from their tenderest years 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. (ibid, §2225)

The second task of parents, therefore, is to introduce their children to the "life of the Church" so that they grow up with the communal practices of the faith woven into their lives. This all resonates with Bourdieu's description of a habitus:

> a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating all past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions (Bourdieu 1977, 82)

Note the common use of "disposition" in both settings. This word is associated with creating a worldview that can guide every element of life.

Bourdieu's critics accuse him of excessive determinism in his descriptions of structuring structures. I suggest this is a fair criticism of the Church's description of faith transmission. So taken for granted is this process that the 1997 General Directory of Catechesis can conceive of it not happening only under extraordinary circumstances:

> There are indeed many gravely disadvantaged children who lack adequate religious support in the family, either because they have no true family, or because they do not attend school, or because they are victims of dysfunctional social conditions or other environmental factors. (GDC §180)

As the participants in my study were born in the late 1990s/early 2000s, this is the catechetical world they grew up in. The passage shows the shortcomings of the institutional view of the Catholic family. The Church's confidence in parents to carry out the tasks described above is not necessarily mirrored in parents themselves. Smith and Snell provide a useful analysis of the problem, comparing the myth of the decreasing influence of parents through adolescence with the reality in their data that parents are the most important influence, even when adolescents become young adults. Parents fear being overly controlling, meddling in their children's lives, or "forcing religion down their throats".

> Thus, in the name of individual autonomy—informed here by a cultural myth that is sociologically erroneous—the usually most crucial players in teenagers' lives disengage from them precisely when they most need conversation partners to help sort through these weighty matters. (Smith and Snell 2009, 284)

Casson's qualitative survey of Catholic primary school parents in the UK surfaced other concerns: parents did not feel it was their job to pass on faith and were concerned that their children might be adversely impacted at school or elsewhere if they were overly religious (Casson 2014). At the heart of the notion of the Catholic family, there is a fatal flaw. The parents on whom the Catholic model of faith transmission has depended for generations are, for a variety of reasons, not fulfilling that role. Unlike Bourdieu's description of a fiction that is also a reality, this is a fiction that can struggle to translate into reality.

Understanding why this might be requires paying attention to lived experiences. Bourdieu's notion of family, while paralleling that in the Catechism, is more explicit about the work involved:

> To understand how the family turns from a nominal fiction into a real group whose members are united by intense affective bonds, one has to take account of all the

> practical and symbolic work that transforms the obligation to love into a loving disposition and tends to endow each member of the family with a "family feeling" that generates devotion, generosity, and solidarity. (Bourdieu 1998, 68)

This is strikingly similar to the passage in the Catechism which urges "tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service". However, with his mention of "practical and symbolic work", Bourdieu highlights the domestic labour carried out largely unseen in families, and as unseen, therefore unrecognised and unsupported. Within Islam, families are acknowledged as the key to faith transmission. Muslim parents in the UK are more active in promoting faith in the home and have more success in transmitting their faith to their children. Activities include arranging for children to learn the Qu'ran in Arabic, engaging in religious rituals in the home, and repeating prayers and extracts from holy texts (Scourfield et al. 2013, quoted in Mark 2016). Faith transmission through families is a structuring structure designed to pass faith accurately through generation after generation. Bourdieu's mapping suggests that it is not innate but requires practical and symbolic work, and can therefore go awry.

6.2 Catholic Families in the Data

Having explored sociological and theological notions of Catholic families, I will turn to the lived reality of the families in the data. Before offering a detailed analysis, it is helpful to draw out some of the key themes. Bourdieu and the Catechism were correct in identifying the significance of families in forming identity: as seen in Chapter Four, they provide the key context for its formation within the data. The repetition of the statement "I wouldn't be Catholic if my parents weren't" by participants brings to the fore the importance of the religious lives of families, and the many rituals, stories and beliefs that are part of their home lives. The complexities of religious, ethnic, national and generational identities were worked out in the car and around the dinner table. Interestingly, while participants are actively involved in co-creating their own and their family Catholic identity, these catholicities are neither uniform nor of random variation. Each family draws on its own experiences, including ethnic origin, family histories, local expressions of catholicity and the availability of options[214] to create a set of specific normativities. Notions of a proper catholicity were drawn from family doxa ("this is who we are") in addition to institutional orthodoxy, and families in the study largely replicated their own way of being Catholic in their children. Through the stories of participants, the work of creating Catholic identity is revealed as located in the domestic, not the public sphere, largely unseen and unrecognised within the institutional Church, which insists on obligatory Sunday Mass attendance but neglects the personal and familial.

---

[214] For example, does a parish advertise the diocesan youth retreat? Does it have a prayer group?

Three significant themes emerge from the data. Firstly, Catholicism is revealed as a diversity of catholicities: in Polish, Nigerian, Keralan, Italian and English families; at the diocesan retreat, and in the local parish; in schools where it was safe to be Catholic and in schools where it was not. This is thrown into relief by the particular diversity of young Catholics in the UK. This group of twenty-five young people had at least nine ethnic origins, meaning that the sources for their catholicities stretched around the world. Secondly, rather than the institutional Church being the single point of religious dissemination, the data reveals a multiplicity of sites of co-production: from grandmas, to Vatican TV, to priests, to Instagram influencers, to the young people themselves, with the role of families being especially significant. Foregrounding their lived experience exposes the researcher's catholicity, and indeed any one notion of institutional catholicity, as one among many. Thirdly, and significantly, the institutional Church is not bracketed out of these accounts. Participants were clear that they identified as Catholic (not just "raised" Catholic), and could articulate the many areas of their lives that were impacted by this identification.

6.2.1 Patterns in the Data

Unlike some of the families in the secondary literature (Chapter Two) the families in my study had the confidence to be actively engaged in the transmission of catholicity to their children. Family members checked up on participants' prayer life, told stories about their own faith, took them to retreats and on pilgrimage, and in doing so, created an identity that these young people could recognise as Catholic. At the same time, there were significant differences in the lived experience of being Catholic among participants. These families were concerned with replicating not so much an orthodox Catholicism as a familiar one. They had different attitudes to Sunday Mass-going, prayer, the importance of having Catholic friends, and much more. In Bourdeusian terms, it is possible to track distinctive Catholic doxa, which spill over into distinctive sets of habits and practices, forming beliefs and actions in their children. At the same time, following Orsi, it is necessary to recognise how these families are co-producing their catholicity, making meaning between the generations according to the context they find themselves in.

Sociologists often use scales or types to group their data: for example, Christian Smith uses the terms “apostates”, “switchers”, “estranged”, “nominal”, “engaged”, and “devout” (Smith and Snell 2009). He grades participants according to a number of different practices and by the orthodoxy of their beliefs. Taking a Lived Catholicism approach requires leaving behind the institutional norm and re-calibrating according to what the participants regard as important. This is not to denigrate Church teaching or to say that Catholicism has no meaning beyond what any one person thinks it is. The institutional Church remains a significant co-producer of Catholicism. Rather it allows for a variety of different catholicities which, as will be seen, are difficult to rank as they operate with their own logic. Sunday Mass attendance, used by the Church as a marker of orthodox membership, is not seen by participants in that light.[215] They went with their families, or they went as and when their families went. For many of them, it was not spoken of as central to their identity as Catholics (although it was perhaps taken for granted).

What, then, might replace Mass going as a signifier of Catholic identity to these young people? Rather than any one signifier, I suggest a set of elements rather like the images in a kaleidoscope which create a different picture with each rotation. Such a set of Catholic elements might include beliefs, ethnicity, culture, family practice, friends/peers, access to youth activities, and worldview. Across the data, there are combinations and re-combinations of these elements, with different results: attendance at youth events + belief in God but no Sunday Mass or prayer; daily prayer but no Mass attendance; Mass attendance + volunteering + parish youth group but not necessarily belief in God. With each rotation of the kaleidoscope, different elements come into prominence. However, this process is not random. A kaleidoscope operates with a given set of images with recognisable patterns. I will explore three different patterns that emerge through the data.

Combination A: Catholic Culture + Family + Belief in God

(Barbara, Nancy, Marianna, Red, Leon, Michael)

This was unique to non-white participants and was especially noticeable in first-generation Keralan and African participants. Ethnicity did not play a part in their Catholic identity, which is to say, they did not elide being Catholic with being Indian or Nigerian. Instead, a distinctly Catholic culture existed within their extended families, shaping the day from morning to evening and across the year, in addition to worldviews, expectations about the future, and coping mechanisms. Barbara's example is an extreme version, but echoes could also be found in Nancy, Marianna, Red and Leon's accounts.

---

[215] See the discussion about getting places in Catholic schools in Chapter 1.

> B: My mum's at home nowadays, but she listens to the Mass in the Vatican City every day […] And EWTN [a traditional Catholic TV channel from the US], we watch it pretty often… and my dad, he needs a bit of extra prayer to get on with the day, so he gets up about 5 o'clock in the morning. He says a whole, there's a booklet of prayers to the Mother, and he says the whole thing, so he takes about an hour, and then he goes about his work. But he says that away from us as we don't wake up that early. <laughs>[216]

It is worth remembering that, even in this group, there are degrees of variability. Nancy was one of the few who spoke of the spiritual benefit of going to Mass but did not go every week outside her GCSE exams. While Michael had a strong Catholic family, it was the local parish youth group and diocesan retreat that made the difference to him.

Combination B: Ethnicity + Family + Belief in God

(Natasha, Sarah, Marzena, Kasha, Marco)

Running alongside this strand is another where ethnicity replaces culture. This was true for the Polish and Italian participants, where Catholic identity was nearly or (in Marco's case) completely identical to their ethnic identity. However, this was a more conflicted group than the first. While there were still high levels of practice in some families, there was often disagreement as to how Catholic identity should be expressed, either between the parents or between the parents and children. These were the families in which Catholic institutions loomed largest (such as Marzena's awareness of the approval or otherwise of her becoming the first girl altar server in her parish). Strict was a word that was often applied (not always negatively). Sunday Mass going was a source of conflict, and this group was likely to say they would not attend Mass so often in the future. At the same time, despite the attention to institutional rules, this context was where the clearest expression of Catholicism as a cultural rather than religious force was expressed:

> Marzena: a lot of people can not go to church in your family, but it's still a thing where if you have a child you should get it baptised because the whole family would expect it, so it just goes back to religion in that sort of sense.[217]

---

[216] Interview A, #00:10:10-9#

[217] Focus Group Q, #00:08:32-9#

Combination C: Family + Peers + Belief in God

(Tom, Pete, Beth, Immie, Sean, Lucy, Patrick, Laura)

Family was still very important for this group, but peer relationships also formed a key part of Catholic identity. Interestingly, they were all from white British families. These young people formed Catholic friendships either via a parish youth group or at a residential, for example, the diocesan youth retreats, Scripture Union or World Youth Day. They were maintained by messaging, for example, Lucy texting her friend from Scripture Union most days, or Beth's Snapchat prayer group that chatted about many other aspects of life. Individual friendships could be sustained from bi-annual event to bi-annual event (Pete missed his usual Summer Camp friends as they were off doing the National Citizenship Scheme), and were quoted as significant to Catholic identity. In addition, the feeling of being with other Catholics or Christians of the same age was profound. As Pete says "Brings a lot of joy, things like this [Summer Camp], it's hard, it's not as easy to do this sort of thing at home." Sean notices that his belief is boosted by the belief of others around him at the Scripture Union Camp. Lack of Catholic friends was key for some, especially Patrick who had struggled to make friends at the big FE college he attended, and Michael, who described his sadness at not having friends with the same values as him. Families still play a significant part in facilitating these experiences, driving their children to events, paying for them, and in the case of the parish group, even running it. At the same time, while it is clear that religious practice is important in these homes, there were fewer stories of family members demonstrating religion than in the previous two strands, but there was also little, if any, conflict about religion. The upshot of this is much more variability in practice: three in this group rarely went to Mass, and a significant number said they did not pray regularly. This particular combination of elements seems to deepen Catholic identity and worldview, but without the same impact on practice.

Exceptions

It is important to note that these are only outline patterns rather than statistically created types. One final example demonstrates the complexity of the data. Becca comes from a strict Catholic family, white South African on her mother's side. She has taken on the religious culture of her mother, which puts her in Combination A (in this case, the religious practice of feeling the presence of ancestors). Mass attendance is non-negotiable and causes family conflict, putting her in Combination B. She is part of the same parish youth group as Beth, Sean, Immie and others, which is Combination C. What stands out about Becca is that she is the only one in the group who is not sure about the existence of God. Despite that, she is on the sacristan rota and gets up at 6am every three weeks to set up her church for Mass. Is she highly religious, or not?

6.2.2 Forming the Patterns: Habitus, Doxa and Field

Applying Bourdieu's theory to these groups helps to make sense of them. While it is possible to say that some families are more overtly Catholic than others, the overriding conclusion is that these groups represent a range of catholicities existing in one diocese in the context of a global church. In Chapters Four and Five, I distinguished between processes of receiving/choosing, normalising, enacting and imagining Catholic identity. I suggest that Bourdieu's notion of doxa and habitus are more thoroughly theorised versions of these categories. The doxa forms expectations of family life, what can and should be said in different circumstances, and expectations of what might happen next, just as, in the data, families normalised their catholicity through their self-understanding of who they were, the stories they told and their shared sense of history and future. The outworking of each particular doxa is the habitus – the enactment of daily habits and practices which might include Sunday Mass and lunch with grandparents or might lead to saying the rosary on the bus. Atkinson, in applying Bourdieu to secular family life, describes three mechanisms by which family life is formed (Atkinson 2016, 53):

- time/space paths – dad's chair, bath time, meal routines
- family language – stories, ways of speaking that reference stories or shared experiences, nicknames
- how we are together, what does it mean to be in this family, what is my role.

These are helpful patterns to look for in my data. From a Catholic perspective, it is possible to look for:

- the shaping of Catholic time and space – including daily routines, material items, bodily postures and family celebrations
- stories of faith that become part of family history, shared experiences
- the "common sense" of different families, the role of young people in the Catholic life of the family, what to do in difficult times.

Understanding Catholicism as woven into both the family imaginary and into everyday life forces a broader and deeper understanding of Catholicism as created daily, co-produced in a domestic setting, and, in this Western context, with little contact with the institutional Church from Sunday to Sunday. This makes the transmission of Catholicism between generations dependent on the abilities of individual parents to reproduce the catholicity of their own upbringing while adapting it to a rapidly changing culture and, for immigrant families, in a different part of the world.

In Chapter Three, I outlined Bourdieu's theory of family and religious fields, and suggested a new field of religious family. This requires a more developed understanding of the parents as spiritual masters to explain the dynamics within these families. After all, the Catechism suggests that parents are capable of creating a domestic church within which the first steps of faith are taken. Re-categorising parents in this way regards them as spiritual masters in their domestic setting, producing habitus, domination and production of capital on a domestic scale (Bourdieu 1996). In this model, the religious specialists are parents and, even more powerfully, grandparents, with associated mechanisms of power and the ability to trade capital. The process of forming Catholic identity is ongoing through adolescence, with effective parents accompanying their children through difficulties inside a scaffolding of family-embodied and family-inhabited catholicity. In the most skilled families, this is a process of spiritual apprenticeship which teaches young people to form a relationship with God and the expectations of that relationship (for example, how prayers are answered and what can be prayed for). In the following sections, I will explore how Bourdieu's analysis drills down into the role of the parent across each of the family types.

6.2.3 Combination A: Being Catholic Makes Sense

The combination of family, Catholic culture and belief in God in this group is particularly powerful for transferring an engaged catholicity through the generations. Parents and grandparents are regarded with respect, and are confident in speaking about Catholicism with their children. They exercise a symbolic mastery which is sympathetic and well-received. A number of participants describe talking through difficulties with their parents, both practical and theological. The most striking account is that of Barbara:

> B: A few years ago I was in love… And, thank God, my mum came to know before I actually fell […] she was like, no, cut him out of of your life and then she started teaching me what it is to be pure, what it is to be chaste. She said that you need to pray to the Virgin Mary because only she knows your situation right now.

> I: And did that help?
> B: Yes, that helped a lot.[218]

Here, Barbara's mother has the skill and theological understanding to present Catholic teaching to her daughter in a way that makes sense to her and is helpful. Marianna discusses some of her disagreements with traditional Catholicism with her family, including the place of women, and to a certain extent, takes on their perspective.[219] Red turns to his parents for advice when he gets stuck, but also says apart from the Lux retreat weekend, he does not have people in his life that he could talk to about religion.[220] This group of parents also exert their spiritual mastery in daily life through their own example. In the data, parents and grandparents got up early to pray, watched EWTN, interpreted dreams as messages from God, gathered the family to pray, and actively enquired into their children's prayer life. Prayer was recommended as a response to illness, arguments, exam stress and loneliness. It was mostly experienced as "working", that is, resolving the issues that had caused the prayer in the first place. Accounts of Catholic family life are presented as "what we do". Nancy's mum encourages her to read the Bible, gives her prayer cards, and speaks to her about spiritual matters. Barbara's family discuss a knotty theological question over dinner. Michael's family all pray for his grandmother when she has an operation on her eye.

Occasionally, the religious field reveals itself in terms of classic Bourdieusian power structures. Even so, participants are able to make sense of this, as in this statement from Marianna: "I don't think I'll stop going [to church] and my grandad is very strictly religious and he's instilled it into me that if you don't go to church it's a sin, and I don't want to do that."[221] However, this sense-making would not happen without the considerable effort undertaken by some parents and grandparents to maintain a consistent catholicity of understanding and practice. These are not robotic or automatic enforcements of institutional norms. Marianna's grandparents are a trusted source of religious expertise, reassuring her about her dead mother and allowing her to express doubts and challenge Church teaching. These families can be seen labouring to produce traditional Catholic teaching in the next generation with the skill of making it acceptable to their young people. Authoritative parental catholicity creates a doxa of catholicity ("this is what we do") which is so normalised and taken for granted that even disagreement is depicted as straying from and returning to the norm. Stories of conflict in the wider data show this is not always the case.

---

[218] Interview A, #00:20:19-0#
[219] Interview D, #00:07:05-7#
[220] Focus Group X, #00:22:16-0#
[221] Focus Group Q, #00:15:41-6#

Despite the commonalities, it is necessary to emphasise that these habitus consistently produced catholicities distinct to individual families and different from one another. Barbara and Marianna's families had a devotional catholicity in which traditional prayers and weekly Mass going played an important part. Nancy and her mother did not go to Mass every week, but as needed. Nancy did not mention traditional prayers, but Bible reading was important to her and her mother. Leon and Red grew up in similar African families in different parishes in the same town. Neither went to Catholic school or knew other Catholics of their own age. Despite the similarities, Leon was not sure he would have been a Catholic if it was not for his mother becoming Catholic, while for Red, "[Church] makes me feel like I belong to somewhere".[222] Michael did not feel he prayed well outside the youth retreat environment but went to Mass weekly. The combination of confident, exemplary parenting with daily practices produced catholicities in young people which, even among this group, replicated those of their parents rather than being concerned with reaching a particular institutional norm.

6.2.4 Combination B: Potential for Cleft Habitus

It is fascinating to see the difference between the catholicities across the data, with families adapting to changing circumstances and cultural heritages. In Combination B, in which ethnicity replaces Catholic culture as a contributing element, the forces creating the family habitus have a different quality, seeming to be more authoritarian than authoritative. The shape of the habitus – the time and space, family stories, the sense of "who we are" – is often contested. Marzena illustrates how enforcing an ethnic Catholic identity can be when she says:

> there are some sort of roots which lead back to Polish people being more… a lot of people can not go to church in your family, but it's still a thing where if you have a child you should get it baptised because the whole family would expect it, so it just goes back to religion in that sort of sense.[223]

Claire Mitchell, writing about Northern Ireland, argues that the power of religion as an ethnic marker is often underestimated "and that religious ideas, structures, and social practices fuse with other dimensions of difference to construct the meaning of communal identity and membership ((Mitchell 2016, 133) quoted in (King 2010, 17)). This adds national as well as religious significance to a Catholic identity. The religious field is revealed by stories of conflict, not only between parent and child but between parents and between other generations. Parents' status as religious specialists is not always accepted when it is seen as too "religious" or "strict". Marco rejects his parents' requirement to go to Mass every week; Marzena refuses to hold her hands in prayer mode through Mass; Natasha finds her parish Mass lacking in joy and is helped to find alternative online sources of catholicity by her uncle. Marzena has one of the most distinctive accounts of the field of the family in the data. Her fiction/reality of Catholic family is laid bare:

---

[222] Focus Group X, #00:41:59-7#

[223] Interview G, #00:08:32-9#

> I come from generally a Catholic family, so everybody that I know goes to church. Some of them may have stopped after a while, gone less frequently. Instantly I realise that my parents may have been a bit, hmm, not judgemental, but had like a little note in their head and that got like me and my brother being like, oh, we can't do anything against them[224]

In these conflicts, family relationships are pitted against versions of institutional norms, which makes it particularly delicate and difficult. In Marco's family, Sunday Mass attendance has been compulsory: "cos my family is really religious, so we had to go Sunday, *every* Sunday. Every Sunday."[225] Natasha, reflecting on whether confirmation had made a difference to her ability to choose to go to Mass, gives further insight to family dynamics:

> So [Sunday Mass-going is] still a debatable <laughs> My mum, she's like, if you pray at home, if you read your Bible, just do it that way... but my dad would be more adamant for me to go, he would be more like "you have to go, it's Sunday, it's like a sin if you don't go".[226]

In these families with a strong ethnic identity of Catholicism, it was possible to see not only a strong Catholic family field but also additional nesting (and often reinforcing) fields of religion: for example, parents, other family, and parish/ethnic community.

The institution looms larger as a normative force in these families. Natasha speaks of her parents as one source of Catholic authority, but then also of her grandmother back in Poland: "She's another very strict religious person who makes me feel bad about myself". These accounts are also the only place in the data where parishes are viewed as having power. Here, Natasha contrasts her usual (English) parish with the style of worship she encountered with the travelling priest vlogger:

---

[224] Interview G, #00:06:17-7#
[225] Interview W, #00:01:05-3#
[226] Interview K, #00:13:32-0#

> Natasha: Mass... it just felt like a community, because sometimes it just doesn't, so it was really lovely to experience it.
>
> I: It doesn't, at your normal Sunday Mass?
>
> N: Erm, I feel like it's more traditional, it's more like stricter in like, it's the word, and you're meant to respect it[227]

Marzena's response to her parents' authority is to become a religious specialist in her own right (more about choices in the next chapter), but this must pass the approval of her community:

> a lot of Polish people do realise anything subtle, and they will say anything about it. So if they realise that one person is new, they will be saying, "Have you seen this person?" But I guess I got good reactions from it, especially being the first altar server that's a girl in my church.[228]

Despite the disagreements, these are loving families. Marco's parents might have made him attend Sunday Mass, but he and his girlfriend, Laura, find their selflessness and devotion inspiring. Sarah uses a photo of her family on the beach as a metaphor for being Catholic. There is a strong sense of family and pride attached to ethnicity, for example, Marzena's descriptions of Polish easter baskets and gatherings of Polish scouts, and the mentions of Czestachowa and other Polish shrines in the data.

While parents represented spiritual mastery in the home for this group, they are rarely described as performing it. Natasha's mum might remind her to say her prayers, but unlike Barbara's or Nancy's parents, there are no accounts of her praying. In fact, she is a sign of the difficulties of having faith: "My mum sometimes has her ups and downs. She helps me understand that, faith, you won't be, like, holy all the time <laughs>. So sometimes she has her down days, she's like, I really, I just can't go today."[229] In fact, there are few accounts across Group B of parents praying or speaking about or practising their faith at home. Instead their role seems to be to transmit institutional and ethnic norms around Mass attendance and traditional prayers directly to their children, rather than sharing them through example. (It is possible that this was just not mentioned by participants, although one of the interview questions asked about a routine of catholicity at home.) Much has been written about the political context of the Polish Catholic Church, particularly in the post-communist era, and the lives of Polish migrants abroad, especially the choices they can make about the way that they practice away from a normatising community (Gallagher and Trzebiatowska 2017a; Dunlop and Ward 2014; Mandes and Rogaczewska 2013). These issues are not mentioned by my Polish participants but form the background of their family lives; indeed are the habitus their parents and grandparents grew up in. Marco's experience of the sheer taken-for-grantedness of Italian Catholicism is also represented in the wider literature (Pace 2007; Cipriani 2003; Tomasi 2000).

---

[227] Interview K, #00:04:30-1#
[228] Interview G, #00:15:51-4#
[229] Interview K, #00:09:26-8#

The danger in this is what Bourdieu describes as a "cleft habitus": when a gap opens up between expectations and experience, for example, when parents say one thing and do another. The degree to which this gap is experienced as positive or negative shapes whether the habitus is reinforced or inhibited (Bourdieu 2000). How individuals adapt to changing circumstances is a key problem for Bourdieu's theory. Nowika addresses this in the context of the series of habitus that migrants move through. Her question: "What is the nature of the corrections and adjustments of one's habitus?" is pertinent for all seeking to apply Bourdieu to particular contexts (Nowicka 2015, 105). In my data there were shadow participants for whom the negative gap could not be accommodated (most notably, Marzena's brother, but also the others her parents disapprove of). Many of the participants in this group did not foresee attending Mass regularly into the future, revealing a failure of the family habitus to transmit intact.

Because "habitus is not destiny", while there may be distinctive forms of transmitting faith through generations, they are not guaranteed to produce the same results. In addition to the complicated family life of Natasha, Marzena and Marco, there are those for whom ethnic identity does not cause conflict or, indeed, is a source of enjoyment. Sarah comes from a Polish family and attends Mass weekly but without any sense of friction. Her catholicity seems to have happened to her, and she seems content with it: " I've brought up being a Catholic, and I've been to Catholic schools and I believe in God and the faith and it's become like a part of me, that I can't really just take off."[230] Kasha positively rejoices in her Ukrainian identity: it makes her feel special, and she enjoys the Ukrainian churches and services, which she describes as "extra". Kasha's parents are divorced, and her dad is not Ukrainian nor a Christian. There is no pressure to attend church regularly, and her accounts of Ukrainian Christmas and Easter services are bound up with seeing family and eating together. Orsi's understanding of contingency and context is helpful in understanding the breadth of catholicities even within this group.

---

[230] Interview J, #00:11:00-5#

In the previous section, one process produced a range of different kinds of catholicities, whether devotional or Bible-based, daily Mass going, or as and when. When ethnic identity replaces Catholic culture in the mix, or more accurately, when a concern for institutional behaviour trumps the personal, a more uniform Catholicism emerges (if the ethnic elements such as Easter baskets are stripped out). Across these families, there was a concern for weekly Mass going and traditional prayers. There was less room for innovation, and the young people disagreeing with their families found their own ways of making the necessary accommodations. Despite that, these are young people who were (largely) happy to call themselves Catholic, and who (largely) cooperated with the Catholic family habitus. Even the most overt use of power to compel Catholic behaviour was not seen as necessarily problematic. Despite having some of the most enforcing parents in the study, Marzena is still grateful to them:

> my parents, even though I say that they pressured me into it, I'm actually glad they actually showed me the ways, although some of their methods aren't, I'm not too keen on![231]

6.2.5 Combination C – a Less Visible Habitus

One of the findings in the study of religious socialisation in families is the discovery that where parents value personal autonomy more than religious conformity, rates of religious transmission between generations tend to fall (Groen and Vermeer 2013). Within the final group, the white British group, the religious field is less visible both because it is less present in the parents themselves, and because the style of parenting is more about persuasion and individual choice. Parents do not always appear as religious specialists: there are few accounts of theological discussions with parents among this group and little conflict. In these accounts, religious life in the home is less evident and less obviously Catholic. Interestingly, one family in the group was known to me and is as religious in their way as any of the Group A families; they just do not appear so in their children's accounts.

Beth and Immie used to have family prayers, but these have lapsed. They have a deep connection to the Catholicism of their grandparents, with Mass and Sunday lunch with the family a taken-for-granted combination. Tom and Pete's family rarely go to Mass or pray, although their grandma represents a devout Catholic presence and is the person that Pete talks to about religious matters. Lucy and Sean come from a Catholic/Baptist family and spend time at Mass and in Baptist youth groups, but they did not mention religious interaction with their parents. In this set of accounts, parents do not appear either as spiritual masters or as religious enforcers the way they do in the accounts of group A and B participants. On the other hand, this group of parents recognise the role of Catholic friends in their children's catholicity, and some of their religious expertise is devoted to providing these opportunities. In the previous group, Catholic friends were not seen as necessary. Despite the fact some of those in Combination A and B were school friends, having Catholic friends was either not mentioned (including in answer to the question, "What helps you stay Catholic?"), or actively rejected as necessary to their faith. As more than one said, "We don't really discuss faith at school that much, or with friends". This was not the case with the white British participants. Having Catholic friends was felt as a positive attribute.

---

[231] Interview G, #00:18:01-8#

Why such an emphasis on peers in this group? Being Catholic is seen by them as something so distinctive and particular that there is a qualitative difference in having Catholic friends. According to the data, peers model Catholic behaviours to each other, work out solutions to problems, and even provide an element of accountability. It is possible to speculate that without the highly religious wider families that some of the others describe, there are less likely to be Catholic cousins and family members of a similar age, meaning that peers have to be sought elsewhere. Combination C participants were much more likely to have gone to a religious youth event, including the two diocesan youth retreats, World Youth Day, and Scripture Union summer camps. Tom's description reveals what he particularly values: "You're meeting with all other people your own age, who are Catholic, and doing lots of prayerful things, and letting you question, and think about things."[232] The communal element comes first, then Catholic identity, then prayer, then being allowed to question.

The importance of relationships to this group was observed elsewhere in the data. While Catholic material items were mentioned sporadically by participants in the other two groups as religious items to be used, the participants in Combination C spoke about them more than any other group and in terms of relationships and memorable events rather than as aids to prayer. Beth treasures a rosary she received from her grandmother but does not know how to use it. Material items also appeared in her photos:

---

[232] Interview N, #00:09:12-6#

> Beth: Yeah… <next photo of a cross necklace on green material> and then I've got my necklace on the green because I really like the green colour. Because I wear it all the time… it was a present for my First Holy Communion from my cousin who I'm really close to so it's really nice to have that there.[233]

Becca's photo for the exhibition was of a cross given to her by her grandfather, who died shortly afterwards, and Immie took photos of a rosary from her grandma and her father's cross. She says of the religious items in her room: "They're dotted around. They're not always on display but you just know that they're there."[234] King sees a similar connection between material items and relationships in Northern Ireland: "Frequently mentioned in terms of friends or family – how someone else had given them the item as a gift, or it had once belonged to a parent, with the implication that the object had meaning for the present owner because of the way it embodied another relationship." (King 2010, 23).

6.2.6 Outliers and Exceptions

There were two participants who continued to identify as Catholic despite disagreements with their families. Here, it is the "cleft" between family and child which is worth exploring further. Becca and Patrick have very different families. Becca's family habitus is similar to that of Natasha, Marzena and Marco. Her parents are white South African Catholics who put high importance on Mass attendance. Of all the participants in the study, Becca is most conflicted about her Catholic identity. The pressure her parents put on her causes her to question everything about her catholicity, including whether she believes in God:

> Sometimes I do debate, am I just doing this to make my parents proud? Am I just doing it because, oh, I said I'd help with my dad, and now I'm like, I'm too pretty afraid. But I don't feel that. But my brain's still kind of mixed up with… have I chosen this, am I doing the right thing, are my parents like… making me do it? I don't know. I think quite like, 50–50.[235]

Despite this, although Becca is not sure how her Catholic identity will manifest itself in the future, she does not think she will give up on it: "I'll probably isolate myself and try and forget about it, but still have a connection with him. Have that connection that there is someone watching over me and I'm not alone."[236]

---

[233] Interview T, #00:04:42-9#

[234] Interview I, #00:01:42-7#

[235] Interview F, #00:13:33-9#

Patrick has a different problem with his family. His grandad was a late convert, and the whole family attends Mass weekly in a congregation where he is known and looked up to. For Becca, the cleft is between her parents' belief and her doubts. Patrick cannot express his feelings of sinfulness and unworthiness to his family, leading to a cleft of behaviour. He feels they are better Catholics than him and would be disappointed if they knew the truth about him. He even describes the Church rehabilitating Judas as a saint – the saint of sinners.

> When I go to church I, I have the persona that I'm very religious, I'm holy, I'm all these things but then, that's just a front for me, [...] I want to tell them that I'm not turning away from the church but I don't want to tell them that I can't do it because I've sinned. And I don't like admitting to my friends and family that I've sinned, it makes me feel really awkward.[237]

These are two significant accounts of shame within the data. Each time, the shame is because of the gap between the young person and their family: Becca does not identify with her family habitus, and Patrick does not want to reveal the kind of person he feels he is. Bourdieu speaks of the power of misrecognition as the practice of being able to hold both a positive and a negative opinion about something simultaneously. This enables the habitus to be preserved even when under threat. Dillon uses this theory to explain how Catholics campaigning for change remain in the Catholic Church (Dillon, 1999). In these two accounts, the power of the field of the religious family to evoke shame is caused by the inability to practice misrecognition. When religious identity and family identity are so closely aligned, the failure of misrecognition can threaten not just young people's feelings towards their faith identity, but towards their family.

6.2.7 The "Fiction" of Catholic Families in the Data

Finally, it is worth outlining how notions of family helped form the religious worldview of participants, being an image more than one participant turned to when taking photos on the theme "This is Catholic". For Barbara, there is a straightforward analogy between her family and her image of Catholicism:

---

[236] Interview F, #00:13:33-9#

[237] Interview O, #00:11:17-2#

> B: One of the photos is my mum and dad's wedding photo… it's very, like, homely, you know that, it's a big part of marriage and the Bible and when you see the smile on my mum and dad's face, you actually see how happy they are.
>
> I: Ah, that's lovely. And what does it say to you about being Catholic then?
>
> B: Um, it says a lot, since they have left all the other people back behind in their lives, and they have devoted their lives, their time, their money, to themselves and to me, and it's… it's pretty selfless and that reminds me of Catholicism[238]…

Note the similarities here to both Bourdieu's and the Catechism's description of a good family, including notions of selflessness and discipline.

Others did not draw such direct parallels but used family as a metaphor for Catholicism. It is possible to trace Bourdieu's "intense affective bonds" in Sean's account:

> Sean: <talking about a photo of his family on holiday> I was thinking about how, how I enjoy my faith being around people, Christians, how, what else, it's a good parallel between my faith and something else I enjoy. I remember using, erm, we had a holiday in Majorca over Easter, and we bought croissants from the local patisserie or corner shop and, yeah, I remembered them being really nice, so yeah, it was the first thing that came to mind.
>
> I: Food and faith and is that like, togetherness in the family?
>
> S: Yes, yes, very, and all five of us were there, you know, the enjoyment of that trip[239]

For Sarah, the links between family and being Catholic are represented in her photo, they are just difficult to express:

> And then this one is just one of me and my family at the beach and it just looks really calming and it's like a photo of your faith, and how it can be a journey, I guess. Yeah, I don't really know…[240]

The fact that several participants used photos of their families to express the theme "This is Catholic" shows how intertwined their faith and family identities are. These are positive images of family and Catholicism, represented in wedding photos, holiday memories, and a day out at the beach. Far from being of little influence on these adolescents, their families are central to their understanding of their faith and themselves.

---

[238] Interview A: #00:01:47-7#

[239] Interview S, #00:03:59-7#

[240] Focus Group M, #00:08:10-0#

6.3 Conclusion

The Catechism of the Catholic Church assumes that faith transfer through the generations is a straightforward, if not innate, process. The more determinist strands of the study of religious socialisation concur. This implies that the failure to transfer Catholic identity through the generations is due to bad parenting alone. While this study agrees that families are central to producing Catholic identity in young people, the findings show that this process is far from innate. Indeed, the stories of the participants show that parents are required to have personal conviction, theological knowledge, and skill in negotiating to co-construct a convincing Catholic identity in a specific context. Whereas past researchers have tended to assess young Catholics against a generic Catholic norm (Portmann 2009; Hoge, et al., 2001; Tomasi 2000), this research contributes to the growing number of geographically bounded studies to explore what is required to produce Catholic identity in a particular time and place (Andersen 2010; Mandes and Rogaczewska 2013). However, it is unusual in focussing on the contribution that differentiated parenting makes to that identity. Applying Bourdieu's framework of field, doxa, and habitus reveals Catholic family life as a place of structuring structures and micro-innovation, where the tensions of maintaining Catholic identity within a secular world have to be worked out on a day-by-day basis. It uncovers both the "crystallising set of patterns" that form the centre of Catholicism and its ability to flex according to local cultures and worldviews, spotlighting the need for spiritual mastery in parents and other family members. Casson's research shows that parents do not feel up to the task (Casson 2014). This is compounded by a societal feeling that parents ought not to interfere in their children's faith lives (Smith and Snell 2009). The parents in this study are unusual in that they demonstrate real skill in wrestling with these tensions.

One of the more important findings of this study is that Catholic families make Catholics with more regard to their own doxa than to institutional orthodoxy. The early work of faith formation, recognised by the Catechism as happening largely at home, is a local co-production of catholicities, dependent on cultural norms to interpret and filter institutional norms. With such a range of immigrant families in the study, these doxa also include the cultural norms of the parents' childhood. This helps explain the variety of catholicities in the data. For example, the Nigerian Catholic Church puts great emphasis on parish support for family catechesis (Obodo 2022). Nancy's mum, who is Nigerian, demonstrates this in the accompaniment of her daughter's faith life. Trzebiatowska maps the contrasting catholicities between British Catholics and Polish migrant Catholics, noting that "A Polish priest... is the boss." (Trzebiatowska 2010, 1063). This mirrors the strict approach to Catholic parenting in these Polish families. On the other hand, British parents take their children to lots of clubs and activities, and the data revealed the importance of such activities to British Catholic young people and their families.

The variety of catholicities also includes those which depart from Church teaching, for example not mandating Sunday Mass attendance. In each case, parents have to co-produce a catholicity out of their own cultural and religious understanding which then needs to be effective in a different cultural and religious setting – the UK in the 2020s – without any help from the institutional Church. This means that the verification of an idea or practice as Catholic is contingent as much on individual families as on their contact with the institutional Church. For example, when the religious field becomes visible due to conflict or dissonance, it is not because of a perceived lack of orthodoxy, but because it fails to satisfy that young person's sense of what Catholicism should be. As a result, a range of catholicities can function as doxa, whether that be twice yearly attendance at a youth retreat with little practice in between or weekly Mass-going without certain belief in God. From here, it is possible to speculate that families have always created Catholics in their own image, but in the past, societal and cultural norms provided a unifying base from which this process could happen. Now parents in the UK are required to find their own ways to accommodate cultural norms within their understanding of Catholicism. The resulting micro-innovations help form catholicities that make sense in particular contexts or cultures. On the other hand, the transfer of Catholicism through the generations in the UK is revealed as vulnerable to the skill and interest of individual families.

While the breadth of Catholic activity in a family impacts their young people, there is no straightforward correlation between the quantity of catholicity in a family and the outcomes in their children. This is most clearly seen in the Combination A and B families. For example, in the Keralan and African families represented here, the natural response to ill health or an uncertain future is prayer, and daily life consists of a set of rituals from rising in the morning to bedtime. These young people were likely to regard being Catholic positively and to imagine themselves identifying as Catholic in the future. Even with similar levels of practice, the Polish and Italian young people in the study were more likely to regard Catholicism as being enforced on them and were less likely to describe the catholicity of their parents and grandparents in positive terms. Polish parents were often equivocal about the extent of Catholic practice in their own lives. More curious is the lack of much description of daily catholicity in the lives of white British parents. Either they did not express their faith much, or they did so privately.

These differences translate into three types of approaches to parenting Catholic young people. Some of the parents were spiritual masters, confident in their own spirituality and knowledge of faith, and capable of communicating it with their children. Spiritual mastery is required to bridge between the institution and lived experience to provide accounts of the possibilities of catholicity for a particular time and context. Through a process of apprenticeship, parents and other family members shape the worldview and expectations of their children, teaching them the appropriate Catholic practices for different situations and leading them to an awareness of a spiritual dimension of life. The most successful in this group (such as Barbara's mother, who translated Catholic teaching on chastity for her teenage daughter in a meaningful way) have had years of theological and practical formation as catechists. Without this skill of translation, parents can become enforcers, with Sunday Mass attendance becoming contested (sometimes between the parents) and even behaviour at Church being judged. This is less successful in supporting Catholic identity. Marzena's parents fail to persuade her brother to attend Sunday Mass while Natasha's strict Polish grandmother only makes her feel bad about herself. The final group of parents functioned as enablers. Without the same descriptions of parental catholicity, these parents enable the creation of a specific teenage Catholic identity, one which revolves around friends and events rather than domestic practice. It is not the quantity of catholicity that matters as much as its salience to the lives of the significant adults in these young people's lives and their ability to communicate it in a meaningful way.

One of the implications of developing a field of the religious family is that family life and religious identity become entwined. When this is positive, it benefits both family and religious identity, as was seen in the family photos that were taken on the theme "This is Catholic". When it is troublesome, however, difficulties of catholicity spill over into family relationships, leading to feelings of shame and resentment. While Marzena and Natasha are aware of this as an underlying dynamic in their families, it is a central theme for Patrick and Becca. Smith and Snell (2009) suggest that one of the reasons parents are not more involved in their children's faith lives is fear of driving them away. In my data, the opposite can also be found: the fear children have of disappointing their parents. While "the avoidance of relationship breakdown" is one of Smith and Snell's social mechanisms for the impact of religious socialisation, what is also clear from this data is that most families negotiated this without such feelings of shame. Religious practice was simply not significant enough to risk the breakdown of relationships.

Although the present results clearly support the centrality of family to the creation of Catholic identity, it is appropriate to recognise several potential limitations. This project was not designed to study families. There were no interviews with the parents and no way of triangulating the stories told by participants. The interview questions did not mention families, concentrating on daily routines and significant adults. A second limitation is the size of the study, which is not large enough to represent all the ethnic groups in Catholic parishes in the UK, nor to have enough of any one group to play down individual differences. A future study could draw on the intergenerational methodology of Hopkins et al, and involve the parents and young people, enabling comparison between generations as well as different groups and ethnicities (Hopkins et al. 2011).

Despite these limitations, the data suggests several theoretical and practical implications. Firstly, it complicates the study of religion in young people, suggesting that it is difficult to understand young people's religiosity without understanding their families' religiosity. At the same time, it challenges normative scholarly definitions of catholicity, examining not just religiosity, but also cultural, ethnic and social assumptions about how families work, and what shapes the daily expectations and future hopes of participants. Secondly, although this was only a small-scale study, it has provided support for the use of Bourdieu in exploring the production of Catholic identity. Bourdieu's emphasis on the domestic habitus reveals the labour implicit in the transfer of religious identity through the generations, a labour compounded when there is no one community catholicity to inhabit. The notions of mastery and apprenticeship not only reveal power plays within families but also particularly highlight the skill of women (mothers and grandmothers).

Thirdly, in order to overcome the problem of vanishing generations, the Catholic Church must amend its narrative of the structuring structure of family faith, and recognise the significant craft of micro-innovation in producing ways of being Catholic in each time and place. Some parts of the Catholic world, like Nigeria, emphasise the importance of supporting faith in families in their official documents. Ethnicity and Catholicism are tightly bound together in other places, which can be difficult to translate to another country. British parents seem particularly lacking in confidence authoritatively to shape their young people's faith world, while recognising the importance of Catholic peers and experiences in settings which are more overtly Catholic. Overall, the many accounts of faith-based conversations within families in the data should give parents confidence that this would be both welcome and useful. However, the decline of Catholic identity from generation to generation suggests that active Catholic families are required but not sufficient to pass on faith. The next chapter will explore the strategies of agency and choice employed by these teenagers to move from a family to a personal Catholic identity.

Chapter 7: Forming Catholic Identity part 2: Agency

> M: There are just some things in the Bible that I don't agree with, like, erm, attitudes towards, erm, females in the Bible, although, there is reasons for it as I've discussed with my family, I still think that it's unequal, and there's like the modern issues of sexuality as well and... people's like, identity, that I sometimes find unnecessary.
>
> I: Hmm. Does that make you, not want to be a Catholic or does it...?
>
> M: No, it just... Because some people will categorise all Catholics into believing the same thing, but people will interpret the Bible differently, I just have a different interpretation to other, more conservative people.[241]
>
> Marianna, School Group D

The previous chapter reveals the mechanisms of family habitus and institutional practice by which Catholicism has reliably reproduced itself. Looking at the pattern of historic Mass attendance figures in the UK, a new question arises. If habitus is such a reliable producer of religion, why has family transmission declined in the last 50 years? (Smith et al. 2014). Clearly being part of a Catholic family is important but not sufficient for the creation of an ongoing active Catholic identity. Continuing to explore the themes of sameness and difference that permeate this project, this chapter will assess the role of difference in creating a Catholic identity, drawing on the stories of choosing, normalising, enacting and imagining Catholic identity described in Chapter Six. An important part of this process is, in Bourdeusian terms, the dialectical confrontation between a Catholic family habitus and the fields of secular and youth cultures and alternative catholicities. But rather than an indicator of decline, in this chapter, difference emerges as a catalyst for agency, creating the discomfort that motivates change. In exploring how and under what conditions agency becomes possible, it is necessary to ask what logic allows for agency within structure and structure within agency. To what extent do the concerns of these alternative cultures permeate participants' catholicity, and by what mechanisms is a fundamental identity held as beliefs and practices flex?

The data reveals two elements of agency as participants wrestled with their identity. The first was the necessity of normalising being Catholic within a specific context. Whether this was at school, finding a role in a parish, or struggling to integrate the experiences of a youth retreat into everyday life, the prompt for adaptation or innovation was an initial discomfort or, in Bourdeusian terms, dialectical confusion, within the current habitus. Looking to resolve the discomfort often, but not always, led to new ways of enacting catholicity. The other element of agency, surprisingly, was the institutional Church. An alternative official Catholicity, more innovative than local congregations, is offered through events such as World Youth Day and Summer Camp, but also through institutional innovations such as the reinvention of Eucharistic Adoration, and on a parish level through leadership opportunities. Participants were largely able to resolve dialectical confusion without challenging their fundamental Catholic identity. This means, in Swidler's terms, that the type of catholicity the young people are looking for lies, not outside, but within their "cultured capacities" (Swidler 2001, 3064). These young people are not campaigning to change the Church but to change the kind of church they usually have access to.

---

[241] Interview D, #00:07:23-8#

However, questions remain as to the conditions for, and mechanisms of religious agency. Why is confirmation a significant moment for seven participants but not the rest? Why do some participants happily exist within a Catholic identity whereas others find it a challenge – the difference extending even to a brother and sister in the same family? Why do some young Catholics choose the work of accommodation and innovation rather than lessening their practice and identity? Bourdieu and Orsi's framings continue to offer lines of analysis. Orsi recognises the possibilities for improvisation within the constraints of institutional norms governing Catholic behaviour and belief. This allows for a day-by-day, minute-by-minute recreation of catholicity according to what is needed from what is at hand. In this way, new situations (Grandma is in hospital, I need good grades in case we need to move house) can be accommodated within an existing toolkit of response, and so form part of a religious repertoire into the future. Bourdieu's notion of cleft habitus, encompassing wholesale changes to patterns of behaviour, helps to explain larger-scale shifts and has been subsequently developed by scholars such as Abrahams and Ingram (2013) to accommodate the holding of multiple identities simultaneously. I will build on this work to develop the notion of cleft habitus from a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence arising from trauma to a natural process of establishing a personal religious identity in a rapidly changing world.

The question then arises as to the impact of these changes, whether micro or macro. To what extent do these changes allow the young people in the study to remain recognisably Catholic, and to what extent are new catholicities being formed (whether orthodox or not)? One example is the theological understanding of the group as a cohort. The stories they tell of their photos reveal a Catholic worldview which is imbued with hope and presence: God sensed in a shaft of light in a car window, in a grass seed, in the presence of friends and family, and in nature. This worldview is underpinned by a sense of being loved by an immanent God and a desire for relationship and community: both relationship with God and with one another. This is so powerful it can even reshape the central tenets of Catholic theology, at some points recasting communion as community rather than Eucharist. Less striking but just as important, contemporary morality (for example, attitudes to the LGBTQ community, women priests and even abortion) can be accommodated within a Catholic identity without feeling transgressive, indeed can be used to exemplify a Catholic sensibility. Just as Alana Harris (2013) tracks the ability of Lourdes pilgrims to blend a spirituality of illness and healing with twenty-first century notions of wellbeing and medicine, so these young Catholics can embrace secular morality as "another way to be Catholic" without losing their identity.

The nature of choice and agency within Catholic identity is key to understanding two important questions raised in this study. Firstly, on a micro-basis, what part does choice play in these young people's understanding of themselves as Catholic? How important is it to the transfer of religious identity and faith through the generations? Secondly, on a macro-basis, how does the Catholic Church manage processes of change while remaining recognisably Catholic? Beyond the structural mechanics of large-scale change in the Church such as the Second Vatican Council, Catholicism is recognisably different (while recognisably Catholic) across different times and places (Norget, Napolitano, and Mayblin 2017). This study proposes that the mechanism by which this happens is a series of micro-changes of belief, practice and understanding which allow accommodation for continuing to be Catholic within changing circumstances. Processes of innovation and tradition exist within a delicate balance of individual and institutional capacity for sameness and difference.

Holding Orsi's notion of "meaning-making in the moment" in conversation with Bourdieu's theory of cleft habitus, this chapter will chart the impact of choice and agency in the lives of my participants as they invest in their catholicity. Firstly, I will explore theories of religious agency in the work of Bourdieu and Orsi and will then examine themes of institutional and individual agency as found in the data. These will provide the framework for a detailed analysis of the process of habitus change, tracking accommodations and innovations across practice, belief and worldview, ending by mapping what happens when change is not sufficient. More broadly, these findings reveal processes of micro-innovation within the structuring structures of the global Church, which help adapt it to places and cultures while remaining distinctively Catholic.

7.1 Theorising Religious Agency

Many participants expressed the need to choose their religious identity while recognising that it had originated from their parents. As Ammerman writes, "Acting within and between structures, across time and space, we cumulatively build up a persona and collectively shape the solidarities of which we are a part. Those persona and solidarities are themselves, then, both structures that constrain future action and sites for continuous revision and improvisation." (Ammerman 2003, 212). Applying Ammerman's thinking to Catholic identity complexifies it beyond a single entity. As reviewed in Chapter Two, Leming's work on the labour of identity production and Swidler's work on constrained agency develop the notion further, and Dillon speaks of the co-production of catholicity across multiple sites. The rest of this section will focus on the contrasting notions of agency of Bourdieu and Orsi.

In Bourdieu's work, agency is less autonomous than Ammerman or Leming, and always constrained by a grammar of possibility (Bourdieu 2005). He does not really allow for "moments of choice" within his schemas of attaining practical and symbolic mastery, and accounts for change either as hysteresis (withdrawing into rigid practices to resist outside change) or cleft habitus (in which it is felt that one's childhood habitus no longer makes sense of the world in which one lives) (Bourdieu 2000). At the same time, Bourdieu describes a sense of dislocation and unease within an identity as "a dialectical confusion", particularly in relation to a field which may in itself be undergoing competition and struggle, resulting in "the confrontation between dispositions and positions, which are more often than not mutually adjusted, but may be at odds, discrepant, divergent, even in some cases contradictory" (Bourdieu 2005, 30). Such a sense of struggle could be seen in my data in both Patrick and Becca's story, with, in Patrick's case, two separate Catholic habitus (home/parish and the diocesan youth retreat) coming into conflict with the secular culture found at college. As Bourdieu writes, "Thus it can be observed that to contradictory positions, which tend to exert structural "double binds" on their occupants, there often correspond destabilized habitus, torn by contradiction and internal division, generating suffering" (Bourdieu 2000, 160).

Scholars have continued to develop Bourdieu's notion of habitus since his death, using his work as a theoretical framework in different fieldwork settings. McCloud, building on Reed-Danahay, feels that Bourdieu does not account for the kind of multiple or hybrid identities generated by rapid social change or geographical mobility (McCloud 2012; Reed-Danahay 2005). He suggests instead that individuals might contain "multiple habituated subjectivities that either blend or conflict when faced with different social situations." (McCloud 2012, 7). Abrahams and Ingram, investigating working-class university students and working-class boys in grammar schools, developed theories of tugged and chameleon habitus, in which a person feels "tugged" by several different realities but not really at home in one, or where a person can switch with ease between them (Abrahams and Ingram 2013). While Bourdieu frames both cleft habitus and hysteresis negatively, for Abrahams and Ingram a cleft habitus has positive potential, both in enabling a person to inhabit more than one reality, but also for the creative possibilities in resolving conflict:

> The position [of working-class students] provided a unique view of the two fields, allowing for reflexivity. Although the fields are somewhat incommensurable the habitus has found a way of internalising the structures of each to become attuned to both. In line with Bhabha's conceptualisation of the third space as a rearticulation that is neither the one nor the other we argue that the chameleon habitus is a rearticulation that contests the terms of both fields to create a new space. (Abrahams and Ingram 2013, 5.1)

Bhabha's "third space" is where competing identities can come together in what can be a generative process. Rather than a mid-way compromise, something entirely new can emerge (Rutherford 1990). This offers the possibility for new ways of being Catholic to emerge from the competing secular and faith identities. However, Reay's warning that once structuring structures can contain an improvisatory impulse, there is "a danger in habitus becoming whatever the data reveal[s]" is a fair one. (Reay 2004, 438). Therefore I would suggest a further category of a "cleaving" habitus in addition to Bourdieu's "cleft" habitus. "Cleft" suggests an analysis that happens after the fact, whereas "cleaving" is both the process by which dialectical confusion happens, and the struggle between constraint and agency that results. The process of growing up can then be seen as a habitus repeatedly cleaving, forcing moments of choice, and resolving either in a cleft or adapted way. This offers significant possibilities to explore the gap between agency and structure as manifested in the religious identities of this group of Catholic teenagers.

Orsi's work is helpful here in describing how religious production happens on a micro, quotidian level in the lives of ordinary Catholics, not so much looking to withstand the normative force of the institution on any particular topic, but accommodating their religiosity to their everyday experiences. Bender notes that Orsi's work "presses scholars to consider how religious agency – and indeed all social agency – is shaped in practice" (Bender 2012, 283). Orsi shows how agency is constrained by the expectations of the Catholic community while being expressed in the space created for individual meaning-making, for example in the life of his disabled uncle, whose self-understanding is both shaped by, and resists, Catholic notions of sanctity through suffering (Orsi 2005).

Unpacking the notion of religious agency as it presents in my data, Catholic identity is revealed not as fixed or stable, but as contingent, reacting in the moment to new challenges, and in need of regular re-creation. If intentionality is held as a spectrum ranging from "a definite choice" to "a subconscious but intentional impulse", the notion of religious agency helps to tease open the role of the young person in participating in the co-creation of their own religious identity. At the same time, using Bourdieu's work restrains this analysis from any notion of random creativity or agency, instead presenting powerful normalising forces of family, community and institution, within which there are spaces for both individual and communal innovation. Somewhat unexpectedly, these processes have also been recognised in Pope Francis's writings, for example in the document *Amoris Laetitia* where he writes of the faithful "who very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations, and are capable of carrying out their own discernment in complex situations." (AL §37).

7.2 What Kind of Catholics are These?

This study highlights moments of dialectical confrontation between a Catholic family habitus and the fields of secular and youth cultures and alternative catholicities. Adolescence is a time when the family doxa, in many cases, stops being taken for granted and so becomes visible. Childhood routines, stories, spaces and ways of relating are no longer suitable for the emerging adult, and new sense has to be made, both of "who we are" as a family, and of "who I am" as an individual. (Atkinson 2016). This process applies as much to Catholic identity as it does to other forms of identity. As young people move beyond their childhood Catholic habitus, there is, in Abrahams and Ingram's terms, an ongoing need for a "re-articulation that contests the terms of both fields to create a new space" (Abrahams and Ingram 2013, 5.1). These processes of Catholic identity creation and re-creation reveal participants wrestling to accommodate a normative Catholicism within a secular world. Through this wrestling, possibilities of different ways of being Catholic emerge. As Dillon shows, it is possible to hold a range of non-institutional understandings of Catholicism without degrading a central identity as a Catholic. (Dillon 1999). How do the concerns of wider secular and youth cultures inculturate participants' catholicities, and how is their theological and practical understanding of Catholicism changed as a result?

Chapter Five explored the worldviews and theological thinking of participants, as expressed through their photographs and stories. Three key areas of "dialectical confusion" emerge that might offer the possibility of religious agency.

Firstly, community was of such importance that it infiltrated conventional theological language. At many points in the data "communion" lost its usual Catholic meaning of "Eucharist", being used instead to mean "community". This is one of the most significant findings of the research. In the 1990s, Dillon found that the Eucharist was salient to both pro-change and conservative Catholics. However, Pew Research found a surprisingly low level of traditional belief in transubstantiation in the general Catholic population (Smith 2019). In my study, while there was reverence for the notion, and a concern for speaking about it correctly, there was little personal devotion either to the Eucharist, or to the person of Jesus, with language of intimacy and relationship instead expressed to God. When Jesus was spoken of, it was in abstract terms related to community. As Nancy says: "I [wrote] community because every Sunday we all come together, and we pray… Jesus, when I think of Catholic, I think of Jesus, and I put communion".[242] This was also the lens through which Group A participants were likely to see their relationship with God: "There wouldn't like be any point for you in believing in God, if you didn't have any relations… it feels like, inside of you, you'd be praying to no-one, or nothing."[243] However, the energy in a typical parish Sunday Mass tends to be directed towards reverence for the Eucharist, instead of building community.

Secondly, there was an emphasis on the affective nature of religious practice. Group A and B participants used the traditional prayers of their families, but often felt spontaneous prayer to be more effective. Mass was appreciated more when emotion was expressed or felt: Nancy and her mother make sure to notice a "spiritual feeling" at Mass; Lucy loves the way she feels when, in a crowd at Scripture Union Camp, all are singing together; and Natasha contrasts the positive experience of Mass with the Polish priest to her usual Sunday liturgy. Among Group C participants, there was a sense of belief being produced communally, particularly at large-scale events. The faith of other people acted to sustain and encourage that of participants across the board, whether that be Marco's parents, the crowd at the papal audience, a parish priest or a Muslim neighbour. Feelings could work both ways. Daily prayers said after Summer Camp were rejected because "you feel nothing". In order to be able to defend their identity and practice to curious classmates (and to themselves), it was important for some participants to feel that "it (religious practice) worked".

---

[242] Focus Group Q, #00:05:46-3#

[243] Focus Group X, #00:20:15-7#

Finally, with a reminder that being Catholic is not only about being religious, participants were able to make connections to the needs of their secular lives. The quality of friendship with other believing Catholics or Christians was particularly mentioned by Group C participants. Where those friendships were not present, participants spoke about the loneliness of not being able to share values (or perhaps a common worldview) with others. While no participant spoke of gaining social capital in purely secular terms, opportunities that arose through being an active young Catholic included travel, leadership, public speaking, and roles with significant responsibility. Some participants enjoyed the feeling of being special which their Catholic identity gave them. Nancy shared a photo of bright flowers saying that being Catholic made her stand out from other people. Pete felt the same: "Because where I live there are people who are Catholics, and there are lots of people who aren't. It's good to be different."[244] Kasha loved the "extra-ness" of being Ukrainian, enjoying the extravagant Ukrainian buildings and services. Above all, being Catholic provided a toolkit of resources for difficult times, and a way of framing the future.

7.3 Agency in the Institutional Church

One way to parse the processes of innovation and tradition in the data is to attribute innovation to the participants, and tradition to the Church. However, this is not the case. Amid the stories of accommodations and choices made by participants, strangely, there were no examples of young people setting up alternative worship sessions or petitioning their parishes for better youth provision. Instead, it was the institutional Church or associated official Catholic bodies that offered the possibilities of "third spaces". These included: diocesan youth retreats, diocesan confirmation retreats, camping in the woods, two parish youth groups, retreats for specific ethnic groups (Polish and Zimbabwean), trips to Lourdes, World Youth Day, parish leadership roles, and an inspiring Catholic school. There were also institutional innovations such as lively Masses and the re-invention of Eucharistic Adoration. Keeping in mind Orsi's stricture that everyday religion cannot exist outside of religious tradition and authority (Orsi 2012, 153), this section will unpack the role that the institutional Church plays in creating opportunities for religious agency. This allows the mapping of different levels of production of identity from cultural institution to individual as required by Swidler.

---

[244] Interview I, #00:06:41-3#

One of the most important results of this variety is that it offers catholicities beyond that of the family habitus. Parishes seem the most obvious alternative to families as a source of catholicity but were not featured in participants' accounts in this way. Only Nancy specifically mentioned Mass as a source of spiritual experience. It was schools and youth activities that offered the real alternative. School communities represented a particular daily experience of being Catholic and were where Catholic identity was most tested. Tom was mocked for serving at a school Mass in year seven, and Pete did not feel safe in a chaplaincy lunchtime activity. Other participants report being drawn into arguments about religion, including with atheist peers who knew more about the Bible than they did. Abrahams and Ingram describe the feeling of being out of place at school as "misaligned fields" (Abrahams and Ingram 2013). However, the rest of the participants in Catholic schools had more positive feedback, with some even identifying attending a Catholic school as something that helped them to stay Catholic. Class prayer time, year seven retreats and school Masses were all positive contributors, in one case serving as an alternative to Sunday Mass. Arguments could be enjoyable, even generating a sense of being an expert. Interestingly, the three non-Catholic students in the study were positive about their experiences, finding that their participation/non-participation in school liturgies was sensitively handled and that being in a Catholic school meant "you've got a little bit more respect for other people's opinions and views".[245]

While positive experiences at school were generally felt as an extension of, or recognisably similar to, family Catholicity, youth retreats were experienced as different. From descriptions of intense prayer times to late-night conversations about religion with friends, from being able to ask questions of adults to being in a room full of young people with the same values, youth retreats and residentials were generally described in contrast to other ways of being Catholic. Descriptions of positive experiences imply what is missing elsewhere: "I met a load of Christians that were my age, and I've kept the contact with them all";[246] "it's nice to have other people, how they sort their problems out, how they achieve things";[247] "if I stop coming I would lose faith…";[248] "you're meeting with all other people your own age, who are Catholic, and doing lots of prayerful things, and letting you question, and think about things."[249] These are moments of possibility when young people can work through some of the dissonances that arise from growing up Catholic in a secular Western society. Online spaces also have this potential, but were mainly used by participants to reinforce their familiar catholicity in a digital (otherwise secular) place rather than looking for innovative alternatives. Beth follows the Pope on Instagram and chats to her youth retreat friends on Snapchat. Barbara puts her novena on her phone and Lucy Googles Bible verses for her calligraphy.

---

[245] Focus Group Z, #00:07:03-5#

[246] Interview E, #00:12:42-5#

[247] Interview E, #00:18:04-3#

[248] Interview I, #00:04:37-2#

The opportunities offered by the institutional Church fall into two categories. On the one hand, parish and school catholicities often offer an extension of family life, with more community and a broader range of expression. On the other hand, youth retreats, residentials and large-scale events offer an alternative catholicity, one in which the desire for community, affective worship and connections to wider life are to some extent accommodated. By offering options (even rather limited options), the possibility for religious agency is created, while the limits for experimentation are maintained. Mayblin et al, pondering this process over a two-thousand-year time-scale, note both the Catholic Church's "paradoxical capacity for singularity and multiplicity to co-exist", and the Church's remarkable "capacity to contain dissent, even taking its strength from a range of divergent, sometimes wildly disarticulated practices" (Mayblin, Norget, and Napolitano 2017, 7). This suggests that difference is not just problematic to the Catholic Church, but is also essential to its continuing existence.

Building on this analysis, I suggest that there are two approaches to difference implied here: multiple catholicities contained and existing side by side without impact on each other or the centre; and occasions when dissent provokes the central institution to change. The first approach is what is seen in the data: multiple youth-focussed catholicities co-existing with parish life, but ultimately without impacting the experience of parish life. It is almost as if these groups act as a safety valve, releasing the pressure for change without change happening. This is seen elsewhere in the literature, for example, Leming's women's groups, the LGBTQ parish in Bagget's account, and those looking for specific theological changes in Dillon's research. Each of these diverges from normative Catholic teaching while being permitted in official Catholic spaces. Their impact is more debatable. The studies quoted were conducted in the 1990s and early 2000s. Whether alteration might eventually result from these groups – whether they may move from co-existence to change – will have to be measured over decades, and is not currently clear. Whether or not change happens, however, it is evident that the institution itself makes spaces for people to disagree with the Church and remain Catholic.

---

[249] Interview N, #00:09:12-6#

Not all change originates from dissent. The Church must change over time to accommodate the shifts in habitus and field happening in multiple ways and at multiple speeds across its population, and to make provision for the wide variety of tastes, ethnicities and spiritualities which exist in a global religious organisation, as seen in even my small data set. Orsi's account of the relationship between twentieth-century American culture, and the American-Catholic spirituality of the family shows these forces at work: the adaptation of European (especially Italian) catholicities to American society; the symbiotic reinforcement of societal and religious family norms; the safety valve, or court of last resort, provided by the Cult of St Jude. Orsi shows how the Cult became an arena in which alternative fictions of the Catholic family could be proposed, co-existing with the normative view. Despite the subversive nature of some of the Cult's activities, I suggest it could be seen as a permitted function of the institutional Church, which made notions of the Catholic family easier to enforce.

Co-existence can be a local policy, too. Bruce shows some bishops as being strategic in the placement of personal parishes to serve particular congregations, giving new life to churches falling into disuse, and providing official recognition to particular and alternative expressions of Catholicism (Bruce 2017). Baggett's description of the six distinctively different parishes in one part of the Bay Area, California, reveals a "something for everyone" approach to pastoral planning, similar to the range of youth activities in my data set. He shows that the variety of catholicities across parishes enables people to feel they have agency to "negotiate, reframe and innovate" their Catholic identity (Baggett 2008). The process of misrecognition allows for flexibility in how literal any particular choice has to be.

The question remains as to the mechanisms of change within the institution, beyond the actions of bishops or popes. Bourdieu, countering criticism of excessive determinism in his work, speaks of the "relative autonomy of the symbolic order" which enables the "political action aimed at re-opening of a space of possibilities". He proposes that within the structuring structures of a field, an institution

> can introduce a degree of play into the correspondence between expectations and chances and open up a space of freedom through which the more or less voluntaristic positing of more or less improbable possibilities… which the pure logic of probabilities would lead one to regard as practically excluded. (Bourdieu 2000, 234)

What is important here is that this process originates within the institution, which by its enabling, approves and validates an innovation as properly Catholic. This forces the question: what or who is the institution? The reality in the data is that the institutional Church is not monolithic, but a collective of normative and operant voices, enforcing, rejecting and enabling according to their own particular circumstances. In the list of alternative youth activities given above, such gatekeepers include bishops, priests, youth workers (both paid and volunteer), confirmation catechists, parents, parishioners and teachers, not forgetting the young people themselves. This means that institutional innovation can have a variety of origins: from a change in canon law to a parish prayer group, or, indeed, an individual. Far from a single strategic approach to change, the result is rather contingent, if not chaotic, but also reactive to local conditions. Mayblin et al.'s experimental definition of syncretism is helpful here: "explicitly formulated inculturation" combined with "implicit everyday practices of creative lenience" (Mayblin, Norget, and Napolitano 2017, 11). Tracking participants' stories of choosing, normalising and enacting through the data will reveal the relationship between explicitly formulated change, and the implicit everyday practices of creative lenience.

7.4 Religious Agency in the Data

The previous two sections have outlined how the competing forces of sameness and difference play out in religious agency, both in the lives of the participants in the study and in the institutional Church. This final section focuses on the precise mechanics through which these forces operate, through a careful study of the decisions, accommodations and innovations in the data. This is necessary to address the complexities that have emerged. While it was clear that the different kinds of family life impacted participants' Catholicity in different ways, there were no obvious patterns to help predict behaviour, including meeting institutional norms of praying regularly, attending Mass every week, or hoping to remain Catholic into the future. Even in the most positive/orthodox group, Group A, there was a committed mother and daughter pair who read the Bible regularly but did not go to Mass every week outside GCSEs (Nancy), and a young man who wished to develop his relationship with God, prayed every night and attended his parish youth group but felt that Mass attendance made little difference to his spiritual life (Michael). Results across the other groups were even more mixed. Family habitus was effective but not assured. One case illustrates this: brother and sister Sean and Lucy. They shared the same family practices of Mass going and Baptist service and youth group; both attended Scripture Union camps and visited Rome; both were part of the (Catholic) parish youth Alpha group. However, while Sean had some degree of confidence in his Catholicity and is planning to continue to practice as a Catholic into the future, Lucy did not enjoy attending Mass, and only called herself a Catholic because of her confirmation. Why is it that within one family, even one pair of siblings, one child accepts the parental habitus as healthy and normative, while it causes a sense of dislocation and unease for the other?

One answer to the conundrum is to return to Bourdieu. He uses the term "fish out of water" to describe the process of discomfort where habitus become visible (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 127). It is possible to divide my participants into three categories: "fish in water", where they do not question their Catholic identity; "fish out of water", where being Catholic causes ongoing discomfort and cannot be resolved; and innovators, where the young person has taken conscious steps to adapt their habitus to be able to remain Catholic. The "fish in water" set contains young people such as Red, Nancy, Sarah, Teresa, Kasha, and Immie, mostly from Group B families. The young people in this set do not seem to have had a life experience that has challenged their Catholicity. Their family routines go unchallenged and their identity does not seem to cause difficulties at school. Sarah's comment was typical of this group: "I've brought up being a Catholic, and I've been to Catholic schools and I believe in God and the faith and it's become like a part of me, that I can't really just take off."[250] Red and Nancy, Group A members, have a different way of being "fish in water". Their Catholicity seems deeply subsumed into their broader identity. Red says "[Church] makes me feel like I belong to somewhere… that you've got a reason to be there."[251] The set also contained the three non-Catholic participants who, although having very different religiosities ranging from atheist/agnostic to evangelical Christian, expressed no discomfort in their identity.

The "fish out of water" set contained three young people with the opposite experience, all from Group C families. Their Catholic identity seemed ill-fitting, causing a sense of dislocation on a daily basis. Lucy feels more at home in the Baptist church and only identifies as Catholic because she was confirmed. Becca struggles to make sense of her family Catholic identity and mandatory church attendance. Patrick is lonely, feels shame at his sense of sinfulness and cannot talk to his family about his feelings. All three of them have made a series of accommodations to their

---

[250] Interview J, #00:11:00-5#

[251] Focus Group X, #00:41:59-7#

Catholicity, such as attending youth retreats and camps, and being actively involved in their parishes, but at this point in their lives, the accommodations are not sufficient to resolve the dialectical confrontation. The third set, the innovators, contains the largest number of participants, and it is perhaps telling that they wanted to be involved in a research project such as this. The next section will concentrate on their experiences. Each of them described taking action in response to a moment of crisis or discomfort, making an accommodation or an innovation to their habitus. These responses were formed by their habitus, in a grammar of response that combined their family toolkit with innovations from the institutional Church, youth culture or their own “common sense”. In their own ways, they made changes to make present the affective, relational Catholicism that they desired.

7.4.1 Moments of Decision or Crisis

The easiest place to examine processes of habitus change is in the stories of crisis or decision told by participants. While there was always the danger that such moments could lead to a reduction in faith, they also were often the opportunity to claim an identity, especially when framed as such by parents or other significant adults. The change to a personal identity was often then related by the young people to a change in their behaviour, practice or attitude. In particular, these moments allowed for the realignment of the family habitus along more communal, affective lines, or as a personal choice, adapting catholicities without losing their distinctiveness. These adaptations might result in defending or claiming Catholic identity in other spaces, including among non-religious peers; interpreting, adapting or improvising present practices; and framing expectations of the future. In this way, rather than being points at which participants stopped being Catholic, these moments of crisis often caused the very modifications of habitus that allow these young people to remain Catholic. It is important to note that, due to the absence of non-practising Catholics in the study, there are no balancing stories where these moments of crisis led to a reduction or rejection of identity, but these are hinted at in the stories told of siblings or friends.

Portrayals of the Sacrament of Confirmation in the data show moments when minor irritations were overcome and when daily decision-making was collapsed into one larger decision. Beth is a good example of the kind of changes that Confirmation brought about. Mass going became something she chose to do each week, and she even became more confident in her underlying identity: “I think for me, confirmation was a turning point. Before that I was like, I didn’t really want to speak about [being Catholic}, but then after that, I was really open… I think I just went:

I can talk about it!"[252] There was also a reaction from her peers who, rather than teasing her for her catholicity, saw her as an expert in religious matters. Mariana and Lena both named Confirmation as a choice that they had made in order to continue be Catholic, relating their ongoing weekly Mass-going and prayer back to this moment. Seven of the participants pinpointed confirmation as significant, even if, for Lucy, it seemed to make permanent an identity she was not sure she wanted. In Bourdieusian terms, the dialectical confusion between the Catholic family habitus and the fields of school and secular culture is resolved, and a habitus in the process of cleaving becomes whole again, settling as a slightly new entity, with normative, and normatising force.

There were also accounts of significant crises in participants' lives. Lena's account of praying for a sick cousin was explored in Chapter Five, but the story was told in response to the question, "Why would you want to be Catholic into the future?". Lena's response shows this process of internal conflict and its resolution:

> even like when I've struggled, and there were some moments when I doubted God, cos I was just so sad, but then in the end I thought, reasons why he's doing this, why this is happening and I had like a moment of reflection, time on my own and it kind of helped me.[253]

Barbara has two crises in her account: a relationship with a boy that went wrong; and choosing to stop going to catechism class for a year. Both of these are framed by her as moments when she pulled away from the family habitus, only to return with fresh commitment: "I actually saw the difference in my life in that one year and now I'm, I'm getting closer and closer to the church, we go for Bible studies and stuff."[254] The illness and death of Marianna's mother is viewed through a Catholic lens: visits to Lourdes; prayer to and for her dead mother. These are accounts of the maturing of faith, the development of a resilience that is challenged by life's difficulties but can be resolved within the toolkit of catholicity that is to hand. This does not necessarily lead to an institutionally normative practice. Kasha feels her catholicity has been formed through practical application (for example resolving an argument with her mum) and she is happy with a habitus that involves praying every evening but rarely going to Mass. Patrick and Becca's crises impact their catholicity more profoundly and their cleaving habitus does not resolve so straightforwardly.

---

[252] Focus Group R, #00:33:15-3#

[253] Interview C, #00:12:06-0#

[254] Interview A, #00:05:28-9#

The choices made in response to crises were not random. Bourdieu suggests that field and habitus are both subject to contest and competition, and it seems that the choices made by participants involved accommodating their habitus to a more communal, affective and immediately applicable catholicity. These young people made choices and innovations or adaptations that not only met their needs but arose from the structuring structure of their habitus. Coming from a Group C family with a relatively weak home habitus, the only way Pete could imagine himself being Catholic into the future was to continue to go to the diocesan youth retreat as a volunteer. Barbara, from a Group A family with a significant Catholic home life and needing good exam results as her family circumstances changed, reached for the kind of traditional prayer familiar to her from her childhood, but adapted her Novena to St Jude by putting it on her phone. While there were a few mentions of the need to observe institutional norms (for example, Marianna's grandfather telling her that not going to Mass on Sunday was a sin), these did not concern participants much. The Catholic-ness of their accommodations arose from their habitus and the options available, rather than a specific concern for orthodoxy.

7.4.2 The Process of Habitus Change

Abrahams and Ingram, discussing how young people's habitus changes through adolescence, write:

> It could be argued that the dialectical confrontation between habitus and field (other than the field of origin) results in a degree of accommodation where the habitus accepts the legitimacy of the new field's structure and is in turn structured by it, thus enabling a modification in the habitus. Yet the habitus is still constrained by the structuring forces of the field of origin. (Ingram and Abrahams 2015, 146)

The work of moving from a family to a personal Catholic identity requires normalising that identity to new contexts, and enacting it in new or modified practices. In Bourdeusian terms, dialectical confrontation can cause a Catholic habitus to be questioned when it meets a new field, with resulting modifications, but still constrained within the structuring structure of the family identity. In these stories, it is possible to see a process of change which begins with initial discomfort and results in a range of accommodations and innovations to resolve that discomfort, including both modifying the institution and forming a modified habitus. Points of dialectical confusion in the data did not have to be single moments of decision or crisis but either a process happening over years, or still ongoing. I will explore this process firstly through the conversations about Mass-going, and then apply the model more widely. I will also examine when such accommodations have not been successful and why.

Mass-going as an Example

Although moments of dialectical confrontation arose in different contexts in the data, it can be seen clearly in conversations about going to Mass. In the stories of participants, the family habitus of regular Sunday practice conflicted with a growing sense of religious agency. For some, choosing to be confirmed resolved the conflict. For other participants, it was still a live debate, particularly among participants from Group B families. It did not fit their emerging habitus for two reasons. Firstly, they said that making Mass mandatory took away from its affective potential:

> Natasha: I feel like the repetativeness of it, the strictness of it, kind of made me not want to believe or go to church or something like that, because it was another like, school, you have to go to school, you have to go to church, it's like a rule, and it, kind of, took away the aspect…[255]

Secondly, being forced to go to Mass reduced the agency of participants to make choices for themselves:

> M: my brother [was] pushed away just by the constant kind of strictness that some Catholic people can impose onto their children. And that's the one thing that I feel can be a negative thing when it comes to Catholicness, and stuff like that.
>
> I: They get pushed away, they want to rebel against it.
>
> M: It's not that they want to rebel, it's more of the fact that they are constantly being forced to do something that they wouldn't mind doing, but just the negative idea of being forced to do it is pushing them away.[256]

Both Natasha and Marzena are active in pursuing their faith life. These comments show how the religious agency of young people can be resisted by the families of even the most religious young people.

The girls resolve this conflict by drawing on their desire for agency and affective practice. Natasha takes up her uncle's recommendation of an online Polish priest and persuades her parents to drive her to a Mass he is celebrating 20 miles away. Note the emphasis on feelings in her account: "[Fr Adam] talks about [faith] in a very, just like a friendly way, he's not like distant, you feel close to your faith. And songs that we sang weren't the traditional ones, we got to like clap along and it was really engaging".[257] On Fr Adam's recommendation, Natasha was also now attempting to read the Bible. Her innovation had led her to being more religious, not less. For Marzena, becoming the first girl altar server in her parish brought a range of benefits. Firstly, she was able to engage with her faith on a more affective level: "it kind of opened me to a whole new world of just worshipping God".[258] The teaching required to become a Polish altar server gave her the knowledge to hold her own in conversations about Catholicism at school and helped her feel more confident. Secondly, it provided the communal experience many of these young Catholics are looking for:

---

[255] Interview K, #00:12:39-7#

[256] Interview G, #00:31:17-9#

> we have prayers together, we sometimes even organise trips together because we have our own little budget and we, from cake sales and things at church. […] Now we have around 10 [girl servers], which I'm the head of because I'm the oldest[259]

Finally, it provided her with significant social capital, opening up leadership opportunities and giving her standing in the community. Through the innovation offered by the institution itself, with the strictest parents in the study and the community's approval, Marzena used the possibilities of the "third space" to create an affective and communal catholicity.

For some young people in the study, Mass going sat comfortably within their adolescent habitus. Beth was already planning how to sustain Mass going at university. Nancy feels better when she has been to church. Marco and Laura, planning for life after Summer Camp, were trying to work out how to fit Mass around their weekend work schedule. Mass at school was also valued by those in School Group D (this was not said by those attending other Catholic schools). These are all examples of young people's agency pinpointing which parts of their family habitus they wish to take on for themselves. Sean neatly brings together both the family habitus and his own power to choose when describing what helps him in his faith:

> Go to church weekly. It can change from Saturday to Sunday, but… I think that helps you stay close to faith. Without that you start to lose sight of it, and I guess, motivation from parents helps you get there.[260]

---

[257] Interview K, #00:04:56-5#
[258] Interview G, #00:09:29-7#
[259] Interview G, #00:15:51-4#
[260] Interview S, #00:08:24-8#

Not all participants would have chosen to go to Mass even if their parents were not requiring them to do so. For some Group B and C participants, weekly Mass-going was not felt to be necessary to be Catholic. Once again, it is necessary to remember that these young people are significantly more practising than most young Catholics, let alone their secular peers. This is a critique from the heart of the Church:

> Lena: I don't think you have to go to Mass and, practice it every day to be a Catholic, I feel like, if you have that belief, and you are sure of what you believe, then you are a Catholic.[261]

Not only was Mass not seen as necessary by some, for Michael, it is not sufficient for the thriving Catholicity he is seeking:

> it's just going to church on Sunday and that's about it. That's why my relationship with God isn't, wasn't that really good...But being [at the diocesan youth retreat] makes me realise that I need to do more, and in order to build up that relationship with God[262]

The ways these tensions were resolved vary across the participants. Orsi reminds us that religious worlds are created by men, women and children together. For many families in the study, the dialectical confrontation and subsequent accommodation was not between parents and children, but between the family and the institutional Church. The vast majority of young people went to Mass with their families, and at the same frequency as their families. Therefore, when Mass going was not regular, like Teresa or Nancy and their families, it was not the young people who were the accommodators, but their parents. Even families with regular church attendance exercised agency to match their family habitus. Sean and Lucy's family had evolved a pattern of attending both Baptist and Catholic services. The Polish families divided themselves between the Polish church and their local English parish, with parents exercising agency to choose a parish that either replicated their home church, or provided an opportunity to try a different Catholicity. (Gallagher and Trzebiatowska 2017b). Barbara's mother, removed from the ease of walking to daily Mass that she had in Kerala, watches the Vatican Mass on TV each day.

---

[261] Interview C, #00:17:00-8#

[262] Interview P, #00:05:22-5#

Changing Doxa – Normalising Catholicism for New Fields

Focussing on Mass-going reveals the many forces underlying one Catholic practice. This pattern of discomfort-accommodation-temporary resolution is repeated across the data as participants measured their childhood religious practices and beliefs against their ongoing desire for choice and emotional impact. Abrahams and Ingram argue that dialectical confrontation occurs when the habitus encounters a new field. This process can be seen in the data in the confrontation between Catholic and secular culture. However, it does not result in rupture (not in this group of highly religious young people, at any rate). The position is subtle and illustrates Dillon's distinction between misrecognition and recognition: participants still identified as Catholic even when they knew they disagreed with Church teaching. Sometimes this lay along expected cohort lines concerning abortion and the portrayal of women (Clements 2020). As Kasha says:

> I don't agree with a lot of the traditional Catholic teachings, so like even modern issues, kind of thing, stuff like abortion, stuff like that [...] So I don't really think it matters, cause I still identify as Catholic even though I still disagree with some of what they teach[263]

Marianna does not even see a division between "traditional" Catholic teaching and her own opinions: "some people will categorise all Catholics into believing the same thing, but people will interpret the Bible differently, I just have a different interpretation to other, more conservative people."[264] While such opinions undoubtedly are a barrier for some young people (including perhaps those who did not take part in this study), these young people have been able to accommodate misrecognition and recognition of difference within their catholicity. It was significant enough to be mentioned in the interview, but not enough to outweigh the benefits of being Catholic. As Tom said, "although I may not agree with everything, I do believe most of it, and I do think that it's a good thing to stand for."[265]

There are two points of significance here. Firstly, although topics of disagreement with orthodox Catholic teaching were mentioned in the interviews, it tended to be in passing, and mostly in the portmanteau way demonstrated by Kasha ("modern issues..stuff like abortion") and Tom ("although I may not agree with everything"). Nowhere in the interviews did participants expand their thinking or argue a point; instead, they were taken for granted positions. Some issues, such as sex before marriage and contraception, were not spoken of at all. Secondly, it is important to note that the opinions expressed by this group of young Catholics, for example, concerning sexual morality and supporting women priests, are representative of the wider Catholic community (Clemens 2020, Page 2014, Woodhead 2013). This suggests that the normalising of such perspectives is not peculiar to young people, but forms part of the doxa of many Catholic families, with each generation making their own micro-innovations according to local contexts and circumstances.

---

[263] Interview B, #00:19:27-4#

[264] Interview D, #00:07:23-8#

[265] Interview N, #00:07:41-5#

More unexpected was the lack of importance given to the Eucharist: not so much a rejection of Catholic teaching as an absence, or more accurately, a reframing from an abstract theological notion towards the concrete and communal (Baigent 2022). Participants praised communion as community not Eucharist. This makes the absence of lively community in parishes more problematic for young people: as their desire for community grows and the numbers of young people at church fall, parishes become less and less able to meet their needs.

Recognising the Misrecognition – Moving on from the Family Habitus

An important part of accommodating a habitus with a changing field is choosing which practices become part of an on-going toolkit (Atkinson 2016). This does not necessarily mean rejecting family practices, but requires not taking them for granted. The process can be seen particularly in some of the Group A and B participants in their attitude to the traditional prayers that form part of their family habitus:

> Lena: Obviously I believe in traditional prayers to be helpful, but I feel like individual ones speak bigger impact, cos they're more, more private and like, I feel like they have a deeper meaning. I feel that traditional prayer is also good, it's just that I feel that they're not as impactful.[266]

These comments reveal a gap between the family habitus and the new catholicity that Lena aspires to. She has had a moving experience of individual prayer (as she calls it) when she prayed for her sick cousin which has been transformative for her catholicity. However, she is also able to accommodate family practices in her thinking: her habitus is not cleaving but accommodating. Barbara, who manages a complex daily round of traditional prayer, says "I don't pray formally. So when anything's on my mind, I say a little prayer, more like a conversation".[267] In another place she describes saying a novena to St Jude, ticking the prayers off on her phone. Once again she is able to accommodate – and find use for – different kinds of prayer, drawing on both her inherited toolkit and what she is able to devise for herself.

---

[266] Interview C, #00:13:43-1#

[267] Interview A, #00:10:10-9#

For those not able to accommodate traditional prayer within their changing set of practices, the twin forces of choice and the need for emotional impact can result in innovation rather than accommodation. Among this group (drawn from Group C) it is possible to see religious meaning-making happening on the fly, drawing on what is to hand. Lucy finds calligraphy Bible verses on Instagram and uses that as inspiration to create her own images, comparing it to mindfulness. She wonders if this counts as prayer. Pete listens to Christian music on Spotify, and Laura and Marco intend to make this part of their prayer after Summer Camp. Becca and Patrick say they do not pray, but then recount stories of praying, both for themselves and for others. These micro-innovations and adaptations occur elsewhere in the data. They range from saying the rosary on the bus to feeling the presence of dead relatives; going to Mass regularly or irregularly; both intense and dry prayer experiences, with other people or in solitude. They also include ethnic practices such as Polish Easter baskets or Ukrainian Christmas dinners, or family practices such as bedtime routines or holidays. What any one Catholic does or might do is more difficult to predict than might be thought. The data also offered stories of adaptations and innovations in the wider Church, including Olympic athletes making the sign of the cross, teenagers clutching a humeral veil, Polish priests uploading video prayer reflections, and the Pope posting on Instagram. The choosing is not random, but both grounded in a habitus and directed at making sense of an emerging catholicity. However, the variety of response is a warning to researchers of religion not to assume a shared understanding of key research words, especially as illustrated here by the word “prayer”.

Enacting a Modified Habitus – Seeking Community

A sense of communion was important to all participants, but particularly so to Group C participants who describe not knowing many other Catholics, and to newly arrived immigrant families with few Catholic relationships. Developing Catholic relationships had the added impact of extending their habitus beyond their family. While parishes were generally spoken of positively within the data, they are not generally places where this type of communal Catholicity could be found. Instead, World Youth Day, the diocesan youth retreat, and Scripture Union camps were seen as places where a different catholicity/Christianity is expressed, both aligning habitus and field in a desire for an affective, communal, celebratory form of faith. One of the (few) benefits for Becca of being Catholic was the friends she had made at church, while for Pete, friends at the twice-yearly youth retreat made up for his lack of Catholic friends elsewhere. Laura is surprised and inspired to find Catholics of her own age at Lux and even brings a photo of her all-female small group to respond to the theme "This is Catholic". Beth and Lucy describe some of the conversations they have with the new friends they met on youth residentials: Lucy talks nearly every day to her friend, and together, they work out Christian solutions to their problems. Beth says of her Snapchat group that "it's nice to have people around me that I do have [being Catholic] in common with."[268]

Importantly, participants reached for the version of this which lay within their habitus: Marzena attends a camp with 1,000 Polish Scouts; Lucy and Sean (with a Baptist parent) go to a Scripture Union Camp; Barbara attended a youth retreat in Dubai, and catechist conferences with her parents; Leon took part in a residential for young Zimbabwean Catholics; Patrick, Marco, Beth, Laura, Red, Tom and Pete draw on institutional resources (and those of their parents) to attend the diocesan youth retreat. These retreats were not only where they met other young Catholics but were rare places where questions about faith could be posed (and answered), where older volunteers modelled being young adult Catholics, and where institutional innovations such as the reimagining of Eucharistic Adoration could be encountered. Outside formal retreats, participants were active in finding and even creating communal experiences: from the friendship found in a parish Alpha group of young people attending a non-Catholic school; to keeping in touch with friends met on an annual retreat to sustain relationships over the year; to, in one exceptional case, school friends praying together before their GCSE exams.

Such adaptations are not always successful. Those Group A and Group B participants with active Catholic home lives seem to have been able to cope with the misrecognition required to bridge the gap between such intense experiences and their everyday Catholicism. Some of the Group C participants, with a less evident Catholicity at home and either not attending a Catholic school or having had bad experiences there, did not have the resources to complement what they experienced at a youth retreat. Even though at Summer Camp thought was given to life back at home, including encouragement to take up regular prayer practices, for some participants there is a feeling that they "don't work" in comparison to the intense prayer experiences with others at the retreat. Their habitus has been modified to fulfil their own sense of being Catholic, but the dialectical confrontation with the realities of parish life cannot be resolved, leaving a sense of dissatisfaction or even disillusionment. This is an example of where “third space” creativity cannot heal the cleaving habitus.

---

[268] Interview T, #00:12:00-9#

Planning for the Future

All this work of habitus adaptation is brought together as participants think about their future lives as Catholics. Once again, the force of the structuring structure is clear. Marzena jokes that she will never step down from serving at Mass, even when she starts her own family. Sean sees the discipline of weekly Mass going at the heart of an ongoing catholicity, while Marianna hopes to be more involved as an adult. Pete can only envisage staying Catholic by continuing to attend diocesan youth retreats as an adult volunteer. Beth sums this up when she says: “at the moment [faith] is quite important, like when I’m going round looking at universities, I’m always making sure that there’s going to be a church on campus or nearby that I can go to so I can keep that up.”[269] Some participants can even imagine bringing their children up Catholic, taking the structuring structure to the next generation. At the same time, there is agency in the ways participants plan for the future. Beth is looking for a student expression of faith at university, not an exact representation of home life. Marco and Laura envisage re-creating something of the youth retreat habitus at home through playing the same worship music. However, almost all participants mention leaving home as a moment when they might not continue to practice as much, particularly weekly Mass-going. Becca sees her current ambivalence stretching into the future while Patrick cannot see how he can integrate any Catholic practices with working in the media.

7.4.3 When Change is Not Enough

Ingrams and Abraham acknowledge that sometimes the dialectical confrontation cannot be resolved:

> the internalisation of new experiences and schemes of perception can lead to the internalisation of conflicting dispositions. This can be conceptualised as a “habitus tug”, where conflicting dispositions struggle for pole position and the individual can at times feel pulled in different directions. This may create a “destabilised habitus” where the individual is not a “fish in water” in either field. In some cases the conflicted habitus causes division, leaving an individual alienated from the practices within a field. (Ingram and Abrahams 2015, 146)

---

[269] Interview T, #00:09:36-1#

The sense of "not a fish in water" in either field is recognisable in the accounts from Becca, Patrick and Lucy, all from Group C families. Patrick is haunted by loneliness at school and a feeling of sinfulness at church. He seems to describe the reality of a destabilised habitus:

> When I go to church I, I have the persona that I'm very religious, I'm holy, I'm all these things but then, that's just a front for me, I know that deep down I shouldn't be taking communion on a Sunday[270]

Becca struggles with the dissonance between her strict family habitus and what makes sense for her own identity: "have I chosen this, am I doing the right thing, are my parents like, making me do it?"[271] Lucy describes the mocking of Christians at school, while not also fitting into her Catholic community. All three participants have made considerable efforts to accommodate their cleaving habitus. Patrick has attended many youth retreats, is a young leader in his parish, and has been to World Youth Day. Becca gets up at 6am every three weeks to set up her church for Mass and takes part in her parish Youth Alpha course. Lucy attends two different church services and a Baptist youth group each week and has been to the Scripture Union Summer Camp. Despite these efforts, they had not been able to resolve the dissonances satisfactorily. Of the three, Lucy was nearest to resolving her conflicts, able to look back over recent years and perceive a change:

> when I was younger… I'd like tell my friends, no I'm just going to church for now, I don't believe any of it, I'm not going to go to church when I'm older but I think now that I probably will, and I think I'm a lot like stronger in my faith, but…[272]

These accounts show a consistent feeling of duality at the heart of the problem. Is Becca's catholicity her parents' or her own? Is Patrick religious or a sinner? Does Lucy believe in her faith, or not? From an outsider's perspective, it is possible to see that the answer to all the questions is "both", but in the moment, these dualities seem insurmountable. Somewhat surprisingly, after these interviews, some form of resolution was reached. Becca was one of two participants who were able to attend the exhibition of photos at the Cathedral. Eighteen months after these interviews, she was still a sacristan, and although over 18, was voluntarily still attending Mass and more positive about being Catholic.[273] Some time after the interviews, Patrick started work with the Diocesan Youth Office, managing their communications. Lucy is still seeking a faith home, particularly finding large-scale events for Christian women helpful. These movements show the contingent nature of the data: these three participants continued to engage with the Church despite the feelings expressed in their interviews. Conversely, there is no way of knowing how many of the other participants stopped attending Mass or identifying as Catholic over the same time period.

---

[270] Interview O, #00:11:17-2#

[271] Interview F, #00:13:33-9#

[272] Interview E, #00:16:27-4#

[273] Notes from exhibition groups.

7.5 Conclusion: Believing in Being Catholic

This chapter began by asking what part choice and innovation play in the formation of Catholic identity. Sociological (and theological) accounts of change in belief and practice have tended to chart changes as movement away from normative Catholicism (lapsing, non-practising, or becoming distant Catholics). Theories of religious agency, however, offer a positive theory of change, including the decision to maintain or develop religious identity. As the young people in the study recounted their personal histories, they showed how they and their families had used their agency to accommodate or innovate around the difficulties that arise, maintaining or adapting their Catholic identity. Drawing on notions of dialectical confrontation, habitus shift and religious agency, it is possible to unpack the complex relationship of sameness and difference in their lives, examining habitus change in real-time and being attentive to the processes of cleaving, accommodating and re-making of Catholic identities.

This study supports Dillon’s thesis that Catholic identity is multiply-produced, with families, schools, youth teams and young people responding to individual sets of circumstances by drawing on a range of official and unofficial sources. Teenage Catholic identity is revealed as contingent, not fixed, and in need of resources and support to be maintained through adolescence. This then highlights opportunities for creativity as well as dislocation, recognising young people as active co-producers of their faith. The stories told by participants showed them finding their way to being and acting as the kind of Catholic that fits their image of God and religiosity. If they do not feel that praying “works”, they do not do it, without any impact on their sense of being Catholic or belief in God. The normative expectations of scholars are upended by the reality of these young people’s lives: this is their logic, not ours. The logic is partly formed by habitus. The Polish girls in the study innovated in a Polish way, using the options open to them, just as white English families drew on their resources to access diocesan youth events.

No matter where participants had come from, however, there were interesting commonalities in the forms of Catholicism they sought. This cohort was more interested in relationship than doctrine, was actively engaged in maintaining their Catholicity and was at times unwilling to misrecognise the sufficiency of parish and even family religiosity. They were guided by a Catholic family doxa and the “fit” with their own emerging habitus rather than a concern for orthodoxy. While this might present as rebellion, they were often seeking to become more religious or to maintain existing patterns into the future. This is one unexpected finding of the study: that some young people dissatisfied with the Church will try to become more religious, not less; indeed, that innovation can lead to young people desiring to be more actively Catholic than their parish or family lives can support. However, for some in the cohort, dialectical confusion was not easily resolved, despite their best efforts. Religious agency is not a panacea for maintaining Catholic identity.

Another unexpected finding is that the institution is, to some extent, ready for them. Nearly all the innovations taken up by participants were officially sanctioned: from girl altar servers to World Youth Day. The Catholic Church (as multiply constituted, from canon law to parishioners) knows how to provide the type of affective, relational Catholicism participants were looking for. But even when creativity occurs, innovation is allowed only to coexist with the current practice and does not enable the Church to change. In the balance between sameness and difference, the parish experience is of sameness that does not meet the needs of young people to exercise agency or express emotion. If the purpose of sameness within the institution is to provide the still centre around which change can happen, it is difficult to see how preserving dull or rote Sunday liturgies can fulfil this role. Cultivating a propensity to micro-innovation might enable the Church to adapt better to a rapidly changing world. When Mayblin et al turn the usual question about decline of Catholicism on its head, and ask instead about the mechanisms of survival of the Catholic Church, the answer must lie in the combination of institutional and personal habitus shift that occurs as society changes and new ways to be Catholic develop.

At the end of the Apostolic Exhortation to Young People, *Christus Vivit,* Pope Francis writes “when you [young people] arrive where we have not yet reached, have the patience to wait for us”. (CV §209). In this striking statement, Pope Francis imagines young Catholics forging a new path for the wider Church. In their imagining of their Catholicity, are the participants in this study running ahead of the adult population, and if so, in what direction have they run? Some of what can be observed in the data, particularly in regard to the Eucharist, is startling. Where the Church exists only as Sunday Mass with optional extras, the disappearance of Eucharistic devotion among young people could be existential. However, in a world where loneliness is on the rise, and our public discourse is increasingly polarised, listening to young people's re-conceiving of Eucharist as community (an orthodox position) could enable the institutional Church to extend beyond its weekly Mass-goers to reach those longing for connection.

Above all, these are Catholic young people who, sometimes grudgingly and sometimes proudly, claim a Catholic identity and forge new ways of being Catholic largely, but not entirely, within the guardrails of their family habitus. This leads to a new conclusion. Drawing on Bourdieu's distinction between being a believing Catholic, and believing in being Catholic (together with Day's notion of sacred family), I suggest that, for this group, saying "I am Catholic" means "I belong as a Catholic" with a particular toolkit of relationships, practices, and beliefs. This is not to suggest that, for these young people, being Catholic is not a valued religious identity but that its fundamentals lie with community and not doctrine. In such circumstances, perhaps a more accurate description of their religious identity is: "I believe in being Catholic."

Chapter 8: Conclusion: Believing in Being Catholic

This thesis argues that the formation of Catholic identity is not exclusively an institutional nor an innate process, but is co-produced by families and young people in a complex relationship with the institutional Church. It highlights the expertise and labour of Catholic families to contextualise catholicity within specific family, social and cultural settings; the agency and persistence of participants as they seek out the relational, affective Catholicity required to maintain their identity; and the ambiguous role of the institutional Church in balancing forces of innovation and tradition. The study reveals the processes of inheriting or choosing, normalising, enacting and imagining this identity in cycles of adaptation and innovation, which have created resilient, relational catholicities, suited to a particular time and place. Developing a non-normative, Lived Catholicism approach over the course of the research, I have argued that Catholic identity is far more contingent, diverse and locally produced than either sociologists of religion or the Church itself usually acknowledge. The study makes an important contribution to understanding the production of catholicity across generations and provides an example of thriving teenage religiosity in the UK, complexifying the wider secularisation narrative.

This research arose from my experiences as a Diocesan Youth Officer. I was intrigued that many of the young Catholics I worked with had a resilient and even flourishing Catholic identity and practice, despite the non-religious nature of the culture they were growing up in. This seemed to contradict the usual narrative of the increasing secularisation of Western society. I was curious: if young people were still identifying as Catholic when older teenagers, why? Where did that identity come from, what difference did it make to their lives, and how did they feel about it into the future? When I began my literature survey, I realised that many studies did not relate to my experiences. Participants were measured for their distance from a gold standard catholicity and were assigned titles such as apostate, estranged and nominal, or arranged linearly from super-catholic to distant. This did not reflect the realities of the young people I had worked with. Youth ministry values grass-roots approaches, and is open to surprising revelations. I therefore decided to focus my research on Catholic identity rather than trying to measure elements of belief or practice, and to be open to the variety of ways this might be expressed. This was a key moment for articulating the research questions which have driven the thesis:

How can we understand and interpret the complexities of Catholic identity among Catholic teenagers?

With the associated sub-question “To what extent is Catholic identity among Catholic teenagers articulated:

1. as part of their sense of self, their worldview,
2. connecting with family and the wider community.
3. as lived through everyday practices,
4. as experienced at peak moments of stress or transcendence?”

The thesis locates itself within the study of lived religion in order to explore these questions. An ethnographical, narrated photography research tool was developed to capture an emic expression of catholicity embodied in the lives of young people, including on their bedroom walls and their Instagram feeds. I engaged participants as co-researchers by basing the interview process on their photos, allowing their self-understanding and expression of catholicity to come to the fore. This upset my research categories. Even at the fieldwork stage, I was unable to obtain the recommended differentials between groups. Instead of neatly arranged low-, mid-, and highly-religious sets, I encountered Mass-going Catholics who never prayed, daily-praying Catholics who rarely went to Mass, and young people who attended highly virtuosic retreats while practising very little the rest of the time. Focussing on this unruliness proved key for unlocking a non-normative examination of Catholicism as it played out across the lives of my participants.

This concluding chapter summarises the findings of the research, and proposes some practical outcomes. The findings contribute to the wider literature in three main areas. The first area of significance is the contribution to the study of Catholicism and the wider secularisation debate, in particular the intergenerational nature of the production of Catholic identity, and the role of religious agency in making sense of such an identity in a largely secular world. Secondly, there are some lessons for the Church, both for its ministry with families and young people, but more widely in understanding the relationship between tradition and innovation in the lives of everyday Catholics. Finally, I propose an emerging methodological and epistemological non-normative approach, Lived Catholicism, which focuses on catholicity over religiosity, and is interested in lived experiences, the relationship between individuals and the institutional Church, and questions of power, powerlessness and agency.

8.1 Lessons for the Academy

The picture that emerges from the research is of a diverse, contingent and often ambivalent catholicity, from seemingly illogical patterns of practice and belief (going to Mass but not praying, attending the youth retreat without weekly practice) to the absence of key doctrines such as the Eucharist. In this study, however, recognising the tension between similarity and difference was central to understanding the data. Many studies of Catholicism assume that difference is negative and leads to decline, as with Fulton worrying why his "super-Catholics" were so critical of Church teaching. Dissenting from Church teaching was the critical factor in Smith's typology which led to his empty category of "devout". Re-positioning difference as normative has enabled me to pivot away from sociological questions of secularisation and post-secularisation, to recognise difference as essential to the production of Catholic identity. The claim of this research is that the production of Catholic identity is not just an establishment process of sacramental preparation but is co-produced by young people and their families in a complex, but by no means dogmatic relationship with the institutional Church. Holding the tension between structure and agency, particularly as conceived by Bourdieu, throws light on three new findings: the importance of the lived and contextual in the creation of Catholic identity in young people; the significance of the structures of family life in conveying that identity; and the micro-innovations and agency required to hold the contextual and structural together.

This study demonstrates the centrality of lived experience to the production of Catholic identity – that is, what each family and person experiences as Catholicism. It complexifies the notion of catholicity beyond a single norm with a variety of expressions, capturing, instead, the variety of beliefs, attitudes, world views and practices across a single set of participants. Dillon showed the diversity of Catholic identity represented in Catholic campaigning groups and theological positions, including those at variance with Church teaching. I have built on her work to identify the two-step process by which Catholic identity is co-produced, first within the family, and then by individuals. It is revealed as contingent on local circumstances, the self- and communal understandings of catholicity arising in particular contexts and imaginaries. Digging into the data, it was possible to see that, while there was some concern about institutional norms and orthodoxy, this tended to be seen in older generations, such as grandparents. Most families were more concerned about replicating their family doxa – the particular combination of religious, cultural, and ethnic beliefs, practices, and worldviews drawn from their lived experience and making sense in their current context. Therefore, a key finding of the study is the diversity and breadth of catholicities among twenty-five teenagers drawn from one diocese.

At the same time, it is clear that catholicity is not a free-for-all. The data revealed boundaries (often blurred) between what was Catholic and what was not. What was not clear was how these boundaries were maintained, if not by direct action from the institutional Church. The repeated phrase, “I wouldn’t be Catholic if my parents weren’t”, provides answers to this question but repays some unpacking. It contains within it a sense that some people are Catholic and some are not, and that this is not entirely a matter of choice. More than a statement about belief or practice, it highlights the home as the place of the co-production of Catholic identity, but also the place where those boundaries are initially set. Bourdieu showed the importance of structuring structures in family life. This study reveals the structuring structures of family catholicity, which go far beyond domestic prayer practices or Mass attendance. Drawing on Atkinson’s work on the production of family identity, it can be seen in the inheriting, normalising, enacting and imagining of Catholic identity through the shaping of Catholic time and space, including daily routines, material items, bodily postures and family celebrations. It can be seen in the stories of faith that were part of family history as well as expectations of the future. It was present in the Catholic “common sense” of different families, what to do in difficult times, and the role(s) of the teenage members. It suggests that these families have co-created a Catholicism that is sufficient in its breadth and resilience to be an adequate response to the worlds in which these participants live.

Taken together, these findings demand recognition of the domestic labour and skill needed to pass on faith within families. Where this was seen most successfully in the data, it could be described as a spiritual apprenticeship often led by women, accompanying teenagers through adolescence. Families performed this labour differently according to their ethnic origins and catholicity, with the research identifiying three types of parents: spiritual masters, enforcers and enablers. Those from Catholic traditions with a high value on lay and family formation could function as spiritual masters, including, on occasion, interpreting church teaching convincingly to their teenagers. For those whose family catholicity was bound up with a national identity, attending Sunday Mass was more enforced, and Catholic identity and practice were more consequential, even fractious. White British parents recognised the importance of Catholic friends in maintaining Catholic identity, so they tended to enable those friendships by prioritising groups and retreats. The field of religious socialisation has struggled with the tension between determinism and agency in family life. This research highlights the interwoven and interdependent nature of that tension, playing out differently in different families. Importantly, across the diversity of provision, the quantity of catholicity any young person received did not seem as important as its salience to their parents.

The result of this co-produced family habitus was significant, whether beneficial or detrimental. The young people in the study often had a tool kit of practices to reach for in difficult times, alongside positive expectations of those practices – that prayer would in some way be efficacious, or that attending Mass is a helpful discipline. Many could describe a relationship with an immanent God, which gave them comfort and hope. Being Catholic was an important identity that they held even when challenged. They also had access to significant opportunities to improve their social capital through leadership, travel, and friendships. What was unexpected was the ambiguity of the effectiveness of any one factor. Parents who encouraged regular Mass going were strict in helpful or inflexible ways. Catholic school could be a place of encouragement or teasing. Retreats could provide some of the most impactful spiritual experiences in the study, but also seemed linked to a reluctance to pray or finding parish Masses uninspiring once back home. Some participants longed for Catholic friends while others never spoke about faith to theirs. The family habitus was not always effective. Some participants experienced feelings of shame when facing the cognitive dissonance of disagreeing with their parents. Practices did not always deliver the desired emotional effect, leaving participants saying, “I just don’t get a lot out of it.” It could also be lonely: more than one participant did not feel they could speak to their friends about their faith. All these experiences, good and bad, helped shape how participants felt about being Catholic. What did seem clear in this study was that a Catholic family life was important to becoming an adult Catholic but was not sufficient. Other factors were at play.

Thus far I have described a pair of opposing tensions: the contextual and highly contingent lived experience of a Catholic identity and the structuring structures of family and community Catholicism. While studies of Catholicism often disregard, or even reflect negatively upon agency and choice, this research demonstrated the role of agency in mediating between those two tensions, revealing micro-innovations at every level, from individuals and family to the institutional Church. The data showed that the contingent nature of Catholic identity became more significant through adolescence. Outside the family habitus, participants were exposed to other influences and attitudes, including encountering negative attitudes to Christians, and the struggle with alternative value sets. As they grew older, family insistence on Catholic practices largely fell away, leaving participants to choose whether to take these into adulthood. Through cycles of normalising and enacting new catholicities, participants found their way through the problems of growing up Catholic, assuming more responsibility for the ongoing production of their Catholic identity. This was aided by moments of decision which participants narrated as significant for their future Catholic identity and practice. Confirmation was one such moment for many of the group, but this could also happen at points of crisis, or more slowly over time. Peers were important, partly as challengers who might cause moments of doubt or crisis, but also as co-creators of religious identity. There were several accounts of participants working out how to live as a believing Christian or Catholic with friends over WhatsApp, or at a retreat weekend. Scaffolded by the structuring structures of their childhood, they narrated many instances of micro-adjustments of belief and practice, drawing on what was at hand to meet new situations.

The innovations and adjustments made by participants were subtle, and existed at many levels, from language to practice. They were not, by and large, looking for radical change from the Church. Instead they were seeking, and creating, a catholicity oriented towards relationship and emotional affect. This took many forms, including speaking of the Eucharist in terms of communion and community, seeking intense religious experiences with other young people, looking to priests and other adults as role models, taking pride in the communal experience of identifying as Catholic or expecting a response from prayer. This intensely relational perspective helped make connections between their experiences as Catholics and the values of the secular world. Positive attitudes to women's roles in the Church or to the LGBTQ community could be encompassed within that relational catholicity as "another way of being Catholic". Unlike Dillon's accounts of campaigning Catholics, there was no need to fight church teaching among this group of young people as such views were not seen as "un-Catholic". These findings help explain the variety of positions taken by scholars on religious agency. The importance of confirmation as a moment of decision supports Leming's notion of agency as significant choice. The degree to which participants looked to what already existed within the Church confirms Swidler's theory of constrained agency, while the importance of micro-innovation in family life substantiates Orsi's notion that meaning-making happens relationally. Above all, the data supports Sewell's idea of agency as an ongoing project in real-time. Complexifying the notion of religious agency beyond a single meaning would encourage scholars to examine it on both a micro and macro level, leading to more nuanced understandings of its ongoing role.

Finally, probably the most unexpected finding of the research is that the institutional Church not only tolerated these innovations, but was often the enabler and provider of them. The Catholic Church knows how to minister to young people. The accounts of participants showed this time and time again, through World Youth Day, quality school chaplaincy, diocesan and ethnic youth retreats, renewed practices such as Eucharistic Adoration, and opportunities for building social capital. The kind of catholicity that they encountered through these opportunities spoke to them of community, emotional connection, and an immanent God involved in their lives. The tragedy for the Church (and for many young people) is that these were rare opportunities, unevenly distributed, and requiring significant resources on the part of parents and young people to access.

Taken together, these findings present a complex, grounded and diverse picture of Catholic identity. I would argue that it is not possible to understand the faith lives of young people without also researching those of their families. Here, families are identified as responsible for understanding and interpreting catholicity for their context, strangely at one remove from the institutional Church. In a reversal of the typical image of an unchanging institution against which young people's orthodoxy can be mapped, this data reveals an elastic relationship between Church and individual, flexing to accommodate the challenges of modern life while holding the centre. What the centre consists of is harder to say. The language of doctrine was light, and the person of Jesus mostly on the periphery, but there was a powerful sense of belonging and a belief in a God who loves and cares for them. Like any aspect of family life, Catholic identity is not without problems, being also potentially a source of shame and argument. However, from many accounts came a strong and positive sense of belonging as a Catholic, not straightforward to shed despite the variety of practice and beliefs. A picture emerges of tailor-made catholicities that can sustain hope and offer practical resources to meet the needs of modern life.

Because of its granular and wide-ranging nature, this research contributes to other themes within the study of religion. As Mason notes, prayer remains significantly under-theorised by comparison with other aspects of the sociology of religion (Mason 2013, 9). This study complements the multifaceted approach to prayer proposed by Giordan and Woodhead (2016) while revealing a specifically Catholic set of dynamics: that Mass-going and frequency of prayer are not connected; that even within one tradition, experiences of prayer range from an individual rosary to a collective experience in a stadium; and that sharing about prayer forms an important part of co-creating a Catholic identity. However, mixed with undoubted feelings of transcendence and community is the same ambivalence as felt elsewhere: for a surprising number of participants, "you don't actually get anything back". Above all, these findings complicate narratives of the secularisation of British society (Brown 2009, Voas and Crockett 2005), and in a rapidly changing context, provide a vivid portrait of a group of ordinary, yet committed young Catholics.

8.2 Lessons for the Church

This study raises many questions for the Catholic Church in the UK, which is facing decades of declining membership, particularly among young people. I argue that taking these findings seriously will challenge assumptions that currently prevent the Church from responding to its realities. Firstly, the Church's current programmes suggest that once people have been baptised, they will continue the path through the sacraments with their Catholic identity and practice unchallenged, maintained by Sunday Mass-going. Parishes know that this is not the case but struggle to respond. Understanding the complexity and fragility of Catholic identity should cause a reassessment of many areas of parish life, from sacramental preparation to ongoing formation. Secondly, this study shows that Catholic identity transfers through the generations primarily through the skill and labour of parents and family members. More research is needed, but it seems likely that a lack of confidence and experience is hampering parents in sharing faith with their children. The Catholic Church in England and Wales must start to recognise the difficulties of this process and provide the support that parents need. Continuing to take the transfer of faith across the generations for granted represents a single point of failure as there are already very few teenagers and young adults at Sunday Mass. Thirdly, while this study has demonstrated places for youth catholicities within the Church, they tend to be siloed for a particular audience without affecting everyday life in parishes. How can those micro-innovations be allowed a broader impact, creating new possibilities for community and mission? Finally, the research offers some lessons for the wider Church.

Orsi's *Thank you St Jude* reveals a family romance of stable Catholic identity, practice and belief, which the institutional Church worked hard to maintain and from which only the heterodox and apostate strayed. I have demonstrated that, among this group of young people at least, Catholic identity is not fixed but contingent upon family, place and circumstance, varies from person to person, and requires ongoing re- and co-production. Michael Hornsby-Smith showed the variation from the norm in the 1980s, but attributed it to apathy and self-interest. I contend that recognising Catholic identity in this conditional mode helps unlock some of the puzzles of contemporary Catholicism. It would go some way to explain why many Catholics stopped going to Mass after the pandemic. It would help to unpack why families spend a year preparing their children for First Holy Communion, and then cease attending church. It would offer suggestions as to the dramatic drop-off rates in practice among the majority of children and young people, and why Catholic practice often does not survive across generations of immigrants. In the balance of sameness and difference that is a major theme of this study, the Church often fails to attend to difference in people's lives, and to offer them resources to accommodate it. The alternative is to frame significant moments (including baptism, confirmation, and crisis points such as death or illness) as fundamentally liminal, with the possibility either to lessen or strengthen catholicity. This would lend new urgency and purpose to sacramental programmes, but would also revive a pilgrimage narrative of the Christian life, requiring ongoing effort and support.

Secondly, I have established that bringing up young Catholics is problematic, more so than currently recognised. Even the most successful families in the study might contain members who were no longer practising. A common factor among many participants was a skilled, committed set of parents. Although inter-generational catechesis is gaining ground, there is little support from the institutional Church to help parents imagine a domestic catholicity with their children if they do not already possess it. Families from abroad bring daily practices and mindsets from their home culture, but these do not seem to spread, and in some cases are not continued by the immigrants themselves. The parenting types of spiritual master, enforcer and enabler developed in this study suggest some approaches that the Church could fruitfully explore: for example, forming and mentoring parents in passing on their faith; developing approaches to contemporary "tricky" questions that start from young peoples' concerns (*Christus Vivat 65-7)*; or providing more spaces for young people to be in community. Other denominations (such as Baptists) and other faiths (such as Islam) have significantly better rates of passing on faith than Catholics. In other parts of the Catholic world, there is more emphasis on lay formation. Just as I contend that it is difficult to examine the faith of young people without exploring that of their families, I also contend that children's and family ministry should be given equal standing with youth ministry, and that families should be recognised for, and supported in their role of faith creation.

Finally, this group of participants represents the tiny number of Catholic teenagers still practising. Every metric tells us that, except for in particular groups and circumstances, young people are increasingly absent from the Church. In order to find the two boys in parish group A, I spoke at nine Masses across four parishes, engaging with around a thousand people. It was shocking how few teenagers of this age were in church. Even among those who took part in the study, their future as Catholics was not certain. This was despite their engaged parents and good experiences of faith, their Catholic friends, and levels of practice that were far beyond that of either secular young people, or average Catholics. Even so, they were not sure how their catholicity would continue into the future. The *Christianity and the University Experience* research found that of the small number of eighteen-year-olds still attending Mass, a further fifty per cent would cease on leaving home for university (Guest 2013). The impact of this is currently masked by incoming immigration from Kerala, West Africa and the Philippines, but in the long term, is existential for the Church in the UK.

This study charts some of what kept these young people practising when many of their peers had stopped. Their relational, emotionally affective faith already described is not a dumbed-down version of Catholicism. Across descriptions of retreats, service at Church, daily prayer and defending themselves against peers, not to mention the attendant emotional load of shame and loneliness, these ordinary young Catholics dedicate significantly more energy and time to their faith than many of the adult population. Although for many participants, what they were doing was enough, or even more than enough, there were also stories of longing for more. From Natasha trying for the third time to read the Bible to Red talking about his faith with other young people for the first time, a group of the participants wanted to be challenged. Marzena and Becca mention how much they learned when they became sacristan and server. An obvious response is to offer the faith opportunities the participants in my study had access to to all young Catholics and beyond. If Catholic identity is unstable and requires ongoing re-creation, where are the resources and relationships to help young people do this?

Of all the problems revealed in this study, the loss of Eucharistic devotion is probably the most emotive, particularly in connection with declining Mass-attendance. Seen first in the controversial Pew survey of 2014, what is interesting in this data is that participants were tentative rather than dismissive of the Eucharist, and Eucharistic Adoration in the version at youth retreats was particularly impactful. Across a variety of surveys, regular weekly Mass-goers have higher scores for everything from orthodox beliefs to a regularity of prayer and volunteering. Learning from all that the Church has experienced with youth Masses and the re-invention of Adoration, it should be possible to experience a parish Sunday Mass as an intensely communal and community-building encounter. This suggests how the move to relational, affective religiosity can impact other areas of the Church. In a world where loneliness has been declared an epidemic, there are many opportunities for outreach and mission offered by leaning into the teenage desire for relationship and community. Every opportunity to build community across generations in congregations should be seized on. Sharing the Gospel should be re-thought as an opportunity for relationship as Pope Francis calls for in *Evangeli Gaudium*. Our churches should be known as places of sanctuary for the lonely and lost. However, one of the most unexpected findings of the research was that intense religious experiences such as the Eucharistic Adoration did not on their own lead to more regular Mass attendance and prayer. This challenges another assumption of current Church thinking: that if people have a personal encounter with Christ (*Evangelii Gaudium* §1) they will become active missionary disciples. Regular practice seemed rather to arise from the everyday example of parents, as Sean said "putting you in the car" for Mass. The lessons of this study would call both for affective experiences of faith, and for support for parents.

Widening the horizon from youth ministry, there are two more questions to consider. Firstly, the Church should be commended for accommodating, even in unofficial ways, the many expressions of catholicity that exist. However, keeping these in silos with uncertain status prevents change from having a wider impact. Although maintaining the balance between innovation and tradition is complex, a more intentional approach to difference would enable the Church to connect to a rapidly changing world, through the micro-innovations created on the ground in families and other communities. Prioritising ongoing formation would help preserve the distinctiveness at the centre of Catholicism, while allowing it to find new expressions.

Furthermore, it is very probable that not only teenage Catholic identity needs to be re-produced on an ongoing basis. People's lives bring transitions, joys and sorrows, new locations and responsibilities. Work such as Fowler's stages of faith suggest that faith lives are progressive. In reality, many people have times of stepping away from the Church. Casting our whole lifespan as in need of spiritual attention beyond that received at Sunday Mass requires the kind of approach of other denominations and Catholic communities in other parts of the world: house groups, ecclesial base communities, neighbourhood zones and other small faith communities. Recognising that Catholic identity is contingent could be transformative for our community and spiritual lives.

8.3 Lived Catholicism

In Chapter One, I identified a number of dangers in studying Catholicism: the temptation to over-focus on propositional belief; falling into normative traps, including seeing dissent as a marker of disengagement; smoothing over complexities in search of linear ranges or other simple analyses; and downplaying the agency of individuals. I propose the emerging term Lived Catholicism as an interdisciplinary answer to these dangers emanating from my experience of undertaking this research, and the two online conferences and special journal edition. Lived

Catholicism recognises catholicity as broader than religiosity, values the agency and expertise of people to create meaning in their lives, and appreciates the complex relationship of the institutional Church with individuals and communities.

Lived Catholicism starts from the lived experience of a person in a particular time and place. This rootedness or particularity allows for an emphasis on individual sense-making which includes complexity and nuance, stepping away from essentialist or “correct” definitions. At the same time, it recognises the significance of the institutional Church to the sites in which catholicities are produced or co-produced, each in their own way relating to or defining against institutional norms. This highlights lines of power, which stretch in complex webs between family members, parishes, schools, priests and bishops, peers, online sources and secular culture. Naming “power” as a dynamic brings to the fore the power of Catholicism to deform as well as to form. It allows for a range of readings of the word, including power to change, and the negative power to resist change, as well as power to allow or prevent.

This, then, emphasises the complexities of claiming a Catholic identity, an act which can mean anything from a sense of belonging to a family or nationality, to an act of resistance either against secular culture or the institutional Church itself. In recognising non-normative definitions of Catholicity, non-Protestant understandings of religiosity are brought to the fore. Recovering the hidden “other” of Catholicism as lived moves away from a concern with practices and beliefs alone, and brings to the fore embodiment, routines of daily life, food, family, patterns of migration, coping mechanisms, home decoration, gifts and giving, sex and gender, politics, social capital and hopes for the future. It does not have to be restricted to particular definitions of religious behaviour. Instead, catholicity is revealed as pooling in unexpected and diverse places in people’s lives: in pots on dressing tables; in photos taken out of airplane windows; in a family breakfast on holiday. Not only does this restore agency to individuals, it highlights how the study of Catholicism can be trapped in Protestant normative understandings of religion.

Although Lived Catholicism can be studied from a variety of disciplines, including literature, human geography, psychology, and colonial studies, as well as sociology, anthropology and theology, my research has drawn on sociological theory and ethnographical research methods (Baigent et al. 2022). The recent turn in the reflexivity of the anthropology of Christianity highlighted important methodological questions for Lived Catholicism:

> They were, for example, self-conscious that they were trying to get scholars working on Christianity to talk across boundaries of theoretical emphasis and regional ethnographic focus (see, e.g., Robbins, 2003c). They were self-conscious about trying to use the vantage point provided by ethnographic work on Christians to push anthropological theory in new directions (e.g., Tomlinson and Engelke, 2006). And they were self-conscious in exploring the ways anthropology as a discipline has been profoundly shaped by the Christian tradition (Cannell 2005, 2006b). Further, all of them were self-conscious about trying to explain why, at least as they saw it, anthropologists had relatively neglected Christianity in the past. (Robbins 2014, S159)

Applying these deliberate moves to Lived Catholicism means bringing together empirical and fieldwork studies of Catholicism across regions and disciplines; using the granular work to push theoretical boundaries; exploring how unnamed norms shape (and distort?) the study of Catholicism; and exploring why Lived Catholicism had not been named before. This then opens up new possibilities for the understanding of Catholicism. Understanding the breadth of experiences of Catholics around the world re-positions the Catholic Church as a global actor. As Harris writes in the round table "There is this inherent and inescapable dialogue between the experiential and the discursive, the individual and the corporate" (Baigent et al. 2022, 15). This can be seen in my research in the way that the lived experience of different families becomes a proxy for ethnic and national catholicities and ecclesiologies. Recognising unnamed norms allows institutional norms to be present as another lived expression of Catholicism, varying in its own way from place to place and person to person. In this study, as in Bruce and Baggett, the Church is revealed as living many official catholicities.

Why has Lived Catholicism not been named before? Bringing together the analysis of existing literature and this research, I suggest that there are two forces at work here. Firstly, when institutional notions of catholicity are confined to doctrine and practice, being Catholic is both measurable and categorisable (for example, the numbers of people at Sunday Mass; the orthodoxy of belief in the Eucharist). If comparisons are made only to an institutional norm, and when exploring difference is largely restricted to anthropological studies in remote places, the notion of a "practising" Catholic can be taken-for-granted. Linear ranges do not celebrate difference; neither does the institutional Church without controversy.[274] Naming Lived Catholicism could be seen as threatening normative understandings of Catholicism at a time when such normative understandings are themselves fiercely contested. However, this is to downplay the role of individual, family and community agency in creating the micro-changes necessary for Catholicism to continue to exist into the future.

---

[274] See the row over the Pachamama image at the Synod of the Amazon: https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/42644/analysis-why-pachamama-took-a-dip

At the same time, as Orsi notes in the *Roundtable*, Protestant scholarly understandings of religion have in the past categorised Catholicism as "'magic', 'cult', 'superstition'", leading to its impact not only being missing, but denied, in conversations about town planning, TV programmes, educational policy, family structures, local politics and in many other areas. Naming Lived Catholicism within the academy allows for the re-insertion of "Catholic" as a category that goes far beyond the religious, impacting understandings of family, ethnicity, nationalism, migration, popular culture and much more. This leads to the possibility of inter-disciplinary conversations. Using theoretical models of family to inform the transfer of faith in families may then throw new light on the multiplicity of family power dynamics in cultural production. As Bruce writes: "Studying agency and structure within Catholicism lets you see how people influence structure and how structure influences people." (Baigent et al. 2022, 27). Above all, Lived Catholicism presents catholicity as dynamic not static, rooted in traditions yet responding in the moment: "Religion is always religion-in-action, religion-in-relationships between people, between the ways the world is and the way people imagine or want it to be." (Orsi 2003, 172).

That this move was already happening within the study of Catholicism is clear. Lived Catholicism stands on the shoulders not only of the scholars named, but many more such as Andrew Greeley, and Michele Dillon, and those in the field of ecclesiology and ethnography, including Pete Ward and Sarah Dunlop. The first Lived Catholicism Conference in November 2020 attracted over 50 papers from around the world. More than one scholar working on the fringes of secular anthropology, sociology or history departments declared that they had "found their tribe". Naming Lived Catholicism recognises a turn that has already happened, but seeks to begin to apply epistemological and methodological thinking from across disciplines to open up new categories for research.

Summary

In conclusion, this study reveals that identity in Catholic teenagers is co-produced in families balancing the contingency of their local circumstances and history with a relationship to the institutional Church. Possibilities for agency arise from these contingencies, together with tensions between the family Catholic doxa and the need for individual meaning-making. Catholic families, especially mothers and grandmothers, are revealed as resourceful in meeting the needs of their teenagers, normalising, enacting and forming Catholic identity through activities as diverse as contextualising difficult teaching, organising for them to attend religious events, or having lunch with the grandparents. Rather than an orderly range of low, mid and high religiosity, this results in unruly catholicities, rooted in ambivalence, and requiring micro-innovations within families to meet specific realities. The result of this process is a group of active, engaged young people, endowed in some cases with significant religious and social capital. The surprising finding is that the Church is not opposed to such innovations, but has many ways of ministering effectively with young people. However these are concentrated in pockets, and far from widely available. Within a wider picture of declining attendance, especially among young people, this research demonstrates that it is possible to flourish as a Catholic teenager in late modernity.

Appendix A: Ethical Consent

Ethical Approval

Granted by email by Dr Marcus Pound, Chair of Durham University Department of Theology and Study of Religion Ethics Committee
Adult Interviews: 19/06/2017
Fieldwork with young people: 18/1/2018

Request for Access

“WE ARE CATHOLIC” - PHD RESEARCH PROJECT

St John’s College
3 South Bailey
Durham
DH1 3RJ
avril.c.baigent@durham.ac.uk

Dear n,

I am writing to you to request permission to carry out research in your school/deanery/diocese into the spirituality of young Catholics. This research is part of my PhD at Durham University, supervised by Professor Pete Ward and Dr Anna Rowlands, and has been approved by Bishop Peter Doyle and Monsignor Kevin McGinnell.

The research is titled “We are Catholic”, and aims to capture a range of views and experiences of growing up as a young Catholic in our diocese. Because it is not usual in British culture to talk about religion, I have put together a project that starts with the questions that young people themselves have, and which will hopefully be fun and interesting for them to get involved in:

1. 3 focus groups around the diocese: one in a school, one in a deanery, and one in a diocesan group.
2. The research process will involve a series of 4-5 sessions over a number of months with different activities to keep participants engaged.
3. As part of the research, each group will take part in a photo project to take photos of the things, people and places that are important for them. The groups will choose their favourite images that will then go on to be part of an exhibition to be shown at the Cathedral later in the year.
4. The exhibition will form part of the diocesan reflection on the lives of young people during the Synod on Youth and Vocation October 2018.

Ethical and legal compliance

The research has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Theology and Religion, and complies with UK Data Protection law, and safeguarding best practice. I hold a current DBS check completed through the Diocese.

All information provided will be anonymous. Names will be changed during the research and responses will be treated confidentially. Participants and their parents will be asked for their consent before taking part in the research.

Interviews and focus group sessions will be recorded and then transcribed, but only research names will appear on the transcripts. All the information from the research will be held on a secure, password-locked computer. Participants can request a copy of the transcripts if they wish.

Permission will be asked again before any photos go into the exhibition. It will not be possible to hide a particular identity on a photo, but those in the photos will be asked before that photo is used.

The results of the research will form part of my PhD thesis, and may be published in peer reviewed journals and conference presentations. No research participant will be identifiable from any publications except by prior agreement via the photos.

Outcomes

My hope for the research is:

1. That the participants themselves will find the process engaging and thought-provoking.
2. It will promote the spirituality of young people across the diocese.
3. That the photo exhibition will be a resource to the diocese during the Synod on Youth and Vocation in October 2018.
4. That the research will form part of a broader conversation about the part of religion in 21st century Britain, especially in the lives of young people.

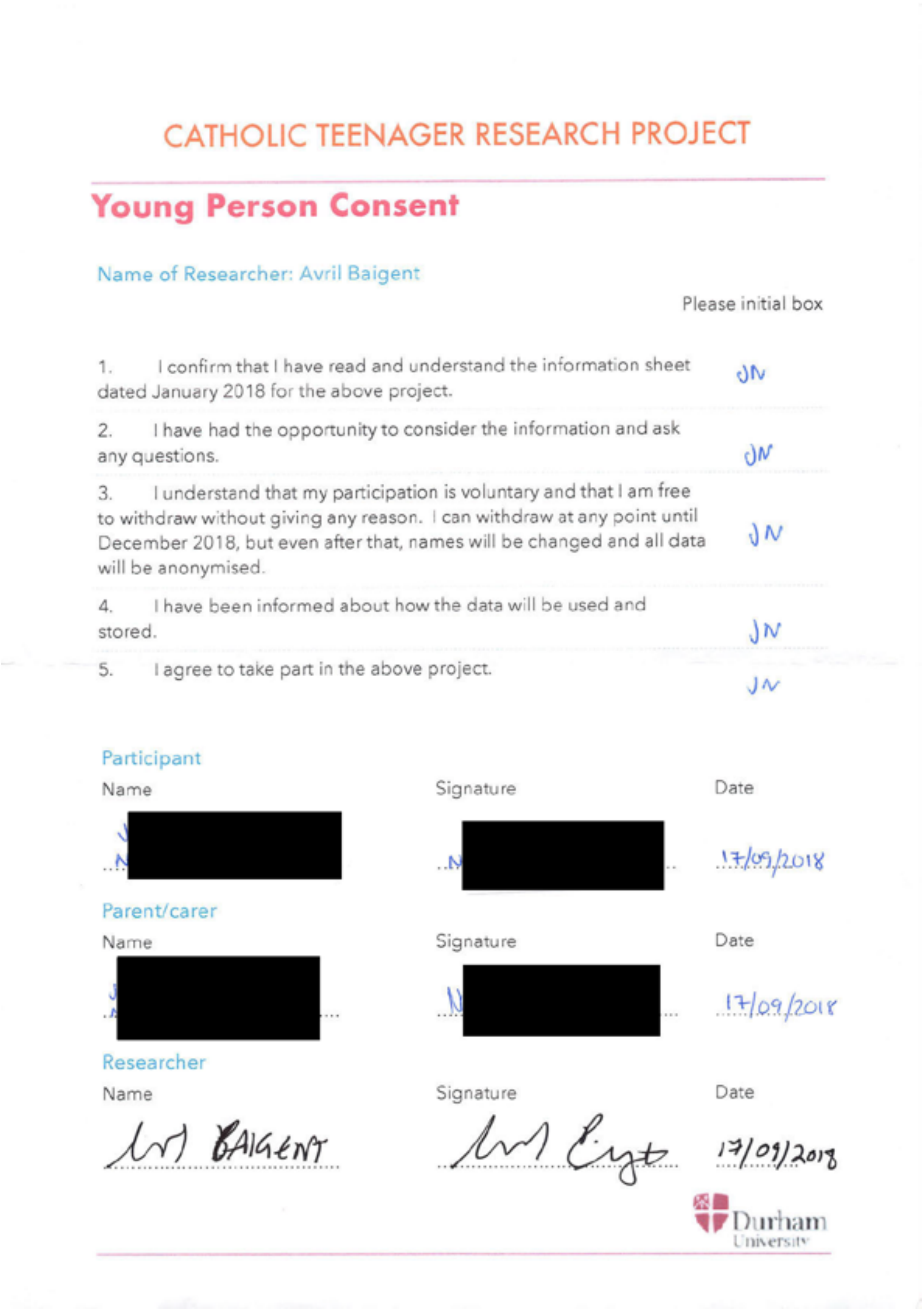
Further information

If you require any further information, please contact me on avril.c.baigent@durham.ac.uk. My supervisor can be contacted on peter.ward@durham.ac.uk.

Many thanks for your attention,

Avril Baigent

Example of Young Person Consent Form



CATHOLIC TEENAGER RESEARCH PROJECT

Young Person Consent

Name of Researcher: Avril Baigent

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated January 2018 for the above project. JN

2. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask any questions. JN

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without giving any reason. I can withdraw at any point until December 2018, but even after that, names will be changed and all data will be anonymised. JN

4. I have been informed about how the data will be used and stored. JN

5. I agree to take part in the above project. JN

Participant

Name	Signature	Date
[redacted]	[redacted]	17/09/2018

Parent/carer

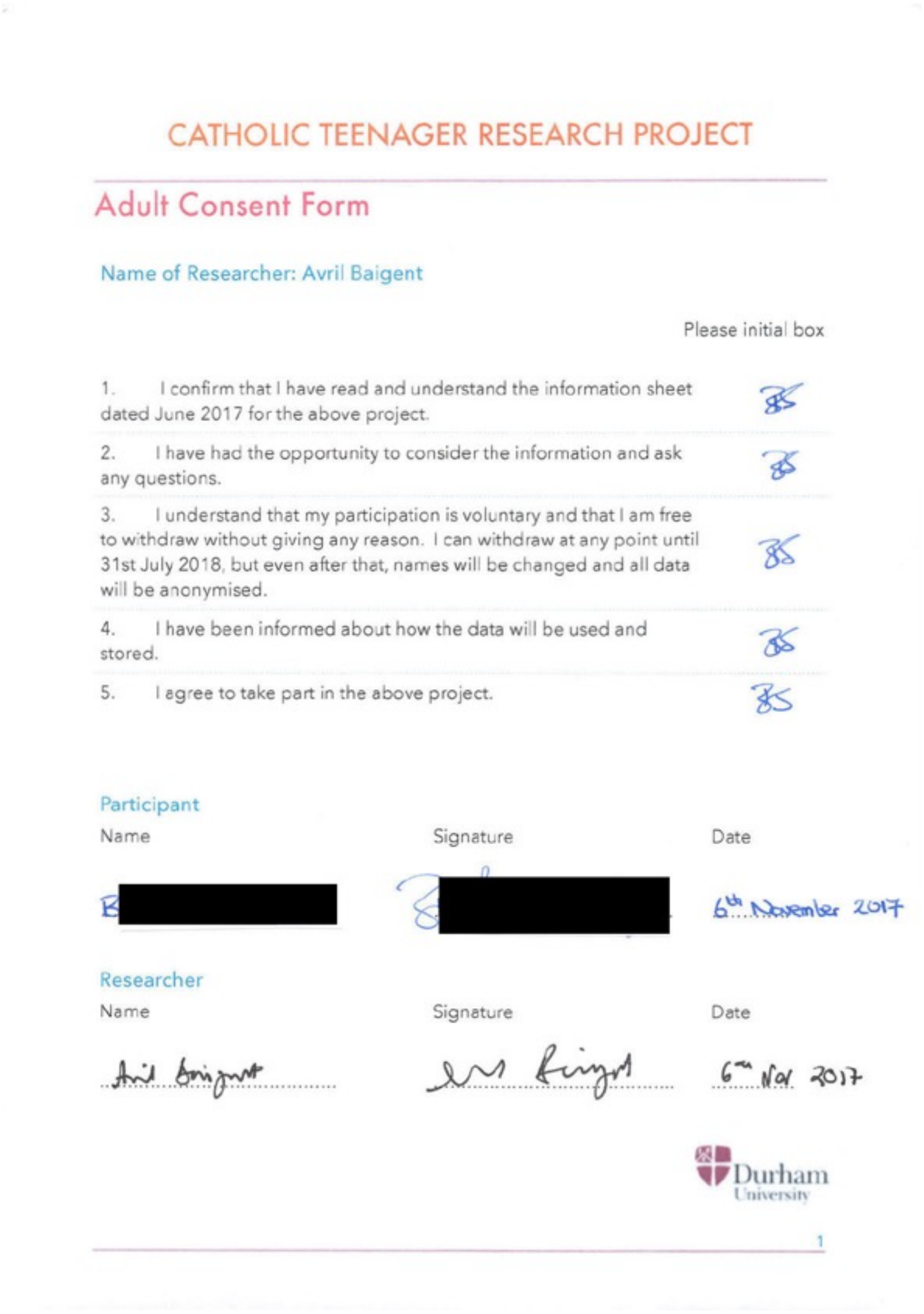
Name	Signature	Date
[redacted]	[redacted]	17/09/2018

Researcher

Name	Signature	Date
Av BAIGENT		17/09/2018

Durham University

Example of Adult Consent Form (redacted)



CATHOLIC TEENAGER RESEARCH PROJECT

Adult Consent Form

Name of Researcher: Avril Baigent

	Please initial box
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated June 2017 for the above project.	BS
2. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask any questions.	BS
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without giving any reason. I can withdraw at any point until 31st July 2018, but even after that, names will be changed and all data will be anonymised.	BS
4. I have been informed about how the data will be used and stored.	BS
5. I agree to take part in the above project.	BS

Participant

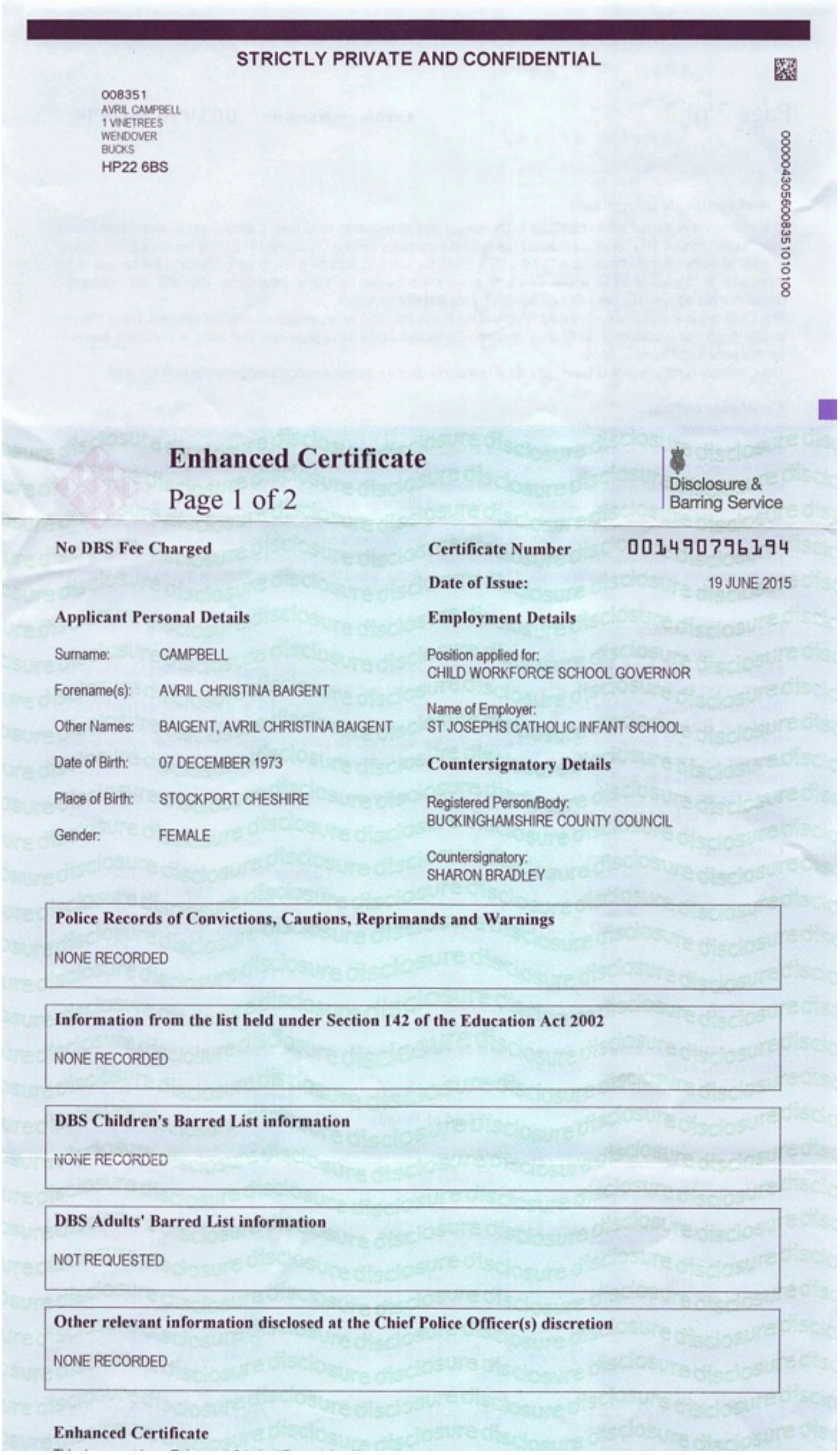
Name	Signature	Date
[redacted]	[redacted]	6th November 2017

Researcher

Name	Signature	Date
Avril Baigent		6th Nov 2017

Durham University

Copy of DBS



STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

008351
AVRIL CAMPBELL
1 VINETREES
WENDOVER
BUCKS
HP22 6BS

000004305600835101010 0

Enhanced Certificate

Page 1 of 2

Disclosure & Barring Service

No DBS Fee Charged

Certificate Number 001490796194

Date of Issue: 19 JUNE 2015

Applicant Personal Details

Surname: CAMPBELL
Forename(s): AVRIL CHRISTINA BAIGENT
Other Names: BAIGENT, AVRIL CHRISTINA BAIGENT
Date of Birth: 07 DECEMBER 1973
Place of Birth: STOCKPORT CHESHIRE
Gender: FEMALE

Employment Details

Position applied for:
CHILD WORKFORCE SCHOOL GOVERNOR

Name of Employer:
ST JOSEPHS CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

Countersignatory Details

Registered Person/Body:
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Countersignatory:
SHARON BRADLEY

Police Records of Convictions, Cautions, Reprimands and Warnings

NONE RECORDED

Information from the list held under Section 142 of the Education Act 2002

NONE RECORDED

DBS Children's Barred List information

NONE RECORDED

DBS Adults' Barred List information

NOT REQUESTED

Other relevant information disclosed at the Chief Police Officer(s) discretion

NONE RECORDED

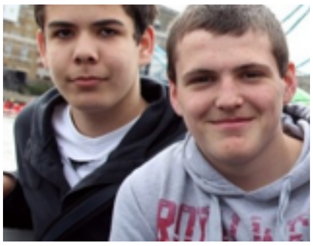
Enhanced Certificate

Appendix B: Interviews with Expert Adults

Participant Information Sheet

CATHOLIC TEENAGER RESEARCH PROJECT

Information for participants - June 2017



I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. It's really important that you understand what the research is for, and what it would involve for you. So please take the time to read this information sheet before you agree. If you choose to take part, I will arrange a time and location to meet that is convenient for you. You can decide at any time that you don't want to continue.

What's it all about?

The main aim of this research is to capture a flavour of what it means to be young and Catholic. As a Church we know that young people are vital to our future, but there has been very little research into what Catholicism means to young people. By doing research with young Catholics, I hope to be able to share their spirituality with the wider Church, to improve our understanding and create debate.

In the first part of my research, I am hoping to interview youth ministry experts around the diocese: chaplains, youth workers and priests. The main themes that come up in our discussions will feed into the research with young people. I will be asking about the spirituality that you see (or don't see) in the teenagers you work with, what it means to them to identify as Catholic, and if there are particular circumstances which seem to support a deeper Catholicity. If there are any questions you don't want to answer, you are free to pass. It should take about 30-45 minutes.

In a later phase of the research, I will be gathering a small group of practitioners to discuss my findings. Please let me know if you would be interested in taking part.

Why should I take part?

This is brand new research into the lives of young Catholics. You are being invited to share your expertise in order to shape the research to come. It is my hope that such research will also help to communicate with the wider Church, local parishes, funders and trustees about the importance of the young people in our community.

Will the info I provide be anonymous?

Yes. Names will be changed during the research and your responses will be treated with complete confidentiality. You will always be asked for your consent to check you are happy to go ahead with the interview and can withdraw at any point.

Interviews will be recorded and then transcribed onto a computer. All the data from the research, including the recordings, will be held on a secure computer. You can request a copy of the interview transcript if you wish. The results of the research will form part of my PhD thesis, and may be published in peer reviewed journals and conference presentations. No research participant will be identifiable from any publications.

Information and Complaints

For more information, you can contact me at avril.c.baigent@durham.ac.uk or write to me at

Avril Baigent
St John's College
3 South Bailey
Durham
DH1 3RJ

This research process is being overseen by the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Durham. If you have a complaint, please contact Professor Pete Ward at peter.ward@durham.ac.uk, or at the above address in Durham.

Topic Sheet for Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Round 1 Fieldwork

Aim: to map out the spiritual lives and lived-religion practices of young Catholics drawing on the wisdom of school chaplains and youth workers. To note particularly any areas of difference between Northampton young people and those they have worked with elsewhere.

Method: semi-structured interview
Introduction: to see the interviewee as an expert on the young people they work with, and to ask for their help in framing my project.
Consent form and switching on device to define interview from chatting.

Warm up questions

What is your current role in working with young people? In your opinion, what part does religion play in their lives?

Identity

What do you think it means for them to say that they are a Catholic? In what ways is it important to them?
Do you see a stronger faith identity in different age groups? What about gender?

Families and communities

How significant are Catholic families for this identity, would you say?
Are there particular communities where Catholic identity is stronger (eg ethnic groups, particular feeder schools or parishes? Is there an urban/rural split?)
What part do peer groups or friends play in this?

Lived religion

Do you see evidence of spirituality among your young people? Perhaps not just in the usual ways, but in their own ways?
What are the particular activities that you run that you think are most effective in connecting with your young people?

Do you find prayer times/retreats/Masses/reflections/justice and peace activities effective? (pick up whatever the interviewee hasn't mentioned yet)

Transitions

I am wondering about the particular events or points of life at which faith becomes owned by teenagers – not just something they've inherited from their parents. Have you seen this happen yourself? In what circumstances?
Do you think that special events, such as retreats and pilgrimages, have a different kind of impact on young people? Would this be long-term, or just temporary?

Concluding questions

Why does the interviewee do what they do? What more would they like to do? What do they find disappointing?
Have you worked with young people from a different diocese?
If yes, Are there any ways in which young people from Northampton are distinctive?

Is there anything else you'd like to add?
Would you be interested in being part of a focus group to discuss the results of my research?

Sample Extracts from Adult Expert Interviews

Fr B, 16/4/2017

Interviewer: how significant do you think Catholic families are around you know sort of them coming and that sense of identity?

Respondent: Yeah, I mean I think you know I remember when I was in seminary and I was hearing about you know how the family is the domestic judge and like it is not like a nice phrase, as they ask parents and stuff, like I think I totally know what I meant, but like I think being here in the parish and then reflecting on my own family upbringing, kind of actually puts kind of more flesh onto that phrase of you know the family is the domestic judge in terms of - it is where we learn about the love of God, we learn about mass, we learn about forgiveness, we learn about all those things in a familial setting. So I think – and certainly in my own experience, like family is extremely important, because it is kind of what provides us with the experience, the lived out experience of what it means to be in a relationship with God as well, because we know this whole thing of respecting others and then being tolerant of others, especially if you have siblings, because you can't have everything your own way all the time, you know you have to be kind of be able to give kind of let go and all that stuff. So to have all those things, I think the family is extremely important just in the life of the church anyway and especially in the life of these young people. That is why I think it is good for them to come along and explore what it means for example you know as I said the previous sessions on fatherhood, so what it means to be a father and stuff. And I think it is good for the young lads to understand what it means to be a good father, and because a lot of them would have the vocations to perhaps to married life and then perhaps to fatherhood, so like what it means to be a good catholic father, like what does that actually mean, and then the same with the ladies, you know like what does it mean to be again imagine a lot of them would have vocations to married life, so what does it mean to be you know a catholic woman, you know it does not mean kind of being submissive or anything, actually it means being very strong and confident and you know kind of following our lady, but what does that really mean in terms of I can live that [inaudible 12:52] today, and then what does motherhood mean, you know like what is it and like how does that take place and stuff, and then you know can we have motherhood apart from having children and so kind of like a spiritual motherhood, and all these sort of things, and spiritual fatherhood and like exploring these topics with them, you can see them kind of just like taking on board and then kind of you know then they are able to reflect on their own behaviours and even when they ask questions or they say of other experience or whatever, you can see how that's becoming part of them. So even the family I think it is extremely important in terms of helping transmit a faith and –

Interviewer: Sorry.

Respondent: No, no.

Interviewer: Would you say most of them are coming from strong Catholic families or not necessarily?

Respondent: Not necessarily, so not necessarily. So I know a few people who would only come to mass when the group is on. I mean so as I said following the newsletter, because the newsletter tells them it's on so I suppose I think they must be checking out like our website which is great and/or Twitter whatever that say. I mean some of them coming from one parent families and some of them coming from, can only come when they are with their mom because every other week they are with their dad, so it is just kind of a bit difficult that way, and you know for them in terms of practically getting there and so on, and I would say a good majority of them come from strong catholic families where the faith is very important and you know the family comes to mass together and you know they live out their faith together and so on, but I would say for some of them it would be kind of like different different family settings.

Interviewer: Sure, yeah. Do you think, do you see I mean the cathedral is really diverse in terms of their communities. Do you see particular groups or communities where the Catholic identity is stronger?

Respondent: Yeah, so I would probably say that in our Indian community the faith is very very strong, so the communities that come from Kerala, you know there is a great sense of community amongst themselves and there is also great living out the faith, it is kind of a vibrant faith. I mean I remember learning, I think, like they have like catechesis like for every year up until a certain I think like 17 or 18 that is quite a lot, and every single year as soon as like you cross you have to graduate from you know just kind of – so in terms of their knowledge and kind of spirituality you know might be slightly deeper than young people of the same age from different cultures and stuff, and then also in terms of they would get involved in the extracurricular activities like around the church, so not just mass, I mean obviously mass is essential, but like they wouldn't just come to mass on a Sunday, they would go to like the first Saturday or second Saturday of every month a lot of them go to Birmingham, for example there is a kind of a big conference up there where there is thousands of young people and like you would go in and stuff like that ---

School Chaplain J 4/12/2017

Interviewer: I see. What – for the young people that are here and there is obviously a big role to play, what role do you think religion plays in their lives?

Respondent: Here at the moment so kind of in Slough, I would say it's bigger than people realize. We're in the center of a hugely multicultural area. We've got a massive Sikh school round the corner, Sikh academy round the corner down that end. Down the other end is Slough's biggest mosque, down the end on Elliman Avenue. And yet we've got a huge Catholic particularly Polish community as well. So I think it's - if you were to ask our students that question, well, I know for a fact they would say it's not important, it's not that it doesn't play that big a part or it is not that obvious. But I think from a community point of view, it's incredibly evident and it's – and you know even the fact that we've got five, six Catholic schools in a four-mile radius I think as well speaks, speaks volumes. So I do think it's – and it's also got a huge influence. But it's not an obvious influence. I just think it's almost like they've – I think for our students in particular they've become a little bit blind to it because it's that idea of where – if you ask them what school you go to, it's St. Joseph's, it's not St. Joseph's Catholic School.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And you know a lot of other schools would be quite different. It would be you know it's - they'd kind of include that in their name if that makes sense. But they are – but at the same time, I wouldn't say that they were completely passive either. I think if you talk to them about experience and they might not be initially very forthcoming, but if you give them an example or kind of get them - get them talking, they realize that they have had those moments and they have had those experiences themselves where religion is part of their life whether they - you know they - I wouldn't say there's a huge percentage of churchgoers really – and not from like that kind of holy days and you know feast days kind of thing. But it's definitely there.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: It's definitely there. But whether it's completely evident to them, I'm not entirely sure, if that makes any sense whatsoever.

Interviewer: Yeah, it’s the underlying stuff that I am interested in really.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Lot of that is unspoken.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: How significant do you think the catholic families are in the kind of their faith identity kind of growing up?

Respondent: For the students or -?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I think it's - I think from my experience, in working through and particularly having done sacramental preparation and doing parents’ meetings and parents’ training and all of that kind of thing. I think you can’t - I do hinge on that aspect of you know catechesis starts at home, and I really do think that that is that's really true. I've been in this situation where families have wanted or have signed their children up for Holy Communion or for Confirmation and yet they're not churchgoers themselves or even Christians themselves. And so then you kind of go – well then why you put in and it's the idea that they want their child to have something that they didn't have.

Interviewer: Right, yeah.

Respondent: And I've seen that quite a lot you know and it is that and yeah that kind of aspect. And it's the same with you know why do you send your child to a Catholic School. It's that, that expectation if you like or that assumption that if they go to a religious school, they will be better behaved or the morals are there or, there are those values that kind of underpin, and I think that's true for families as well you know, it's that the idea that something else to hold on to, that something else to kind of – so I do think it's incredibly important and I don't think it's the be all and end all. I don’t think – and I could have a completely faith filled inspiring student whose family have never stepped inside a church, sat next to a student who goes to church three times a week, and there's nothing there, because it's - it doesn't mean anything to them because it's just – it's forced upon them rather than it becoming an experience for themselves. So yes I do think it is really important. But I don't think it's - I don’t think if it's not there, it's not, all is not lost.

Interviewer: What do you think makes the difference between those two students then? I mean if you have got one is going to church all the time but it doesn't mean anything to you, but one that it’s real. What is the difference?

Respondent: I honestly – I honestly believe it's about personal experience because - and it would be the same when we have - when we have mass here, you can always - so we have, we celebrate our house saints feast days, so they will have mass with 120 of them and then we have masses of whole school, so nearly a thousand people. And we also now have lunchtime masses where there's only kind of a handful of them and you can always – it's that you can always spot those who are – who were gaining something more than either what they expect or what they – and it's that experience, and I think if you have got someone who is not being made, well, they are being made to go to church. If you are like you know it’s that thing of every Sunday you are dragged out of bed and it becomes something that you have to do instead of what you want to do. And that eventually they are just going to get to a point where you know you have to sit through it and then you would be like I said this in assembly a couple of weeks ago – we were talking about our theme of the week was kind of active faith, and I said you know it's a little bit like me being made to watch the X Factor. I have never watched the X Factor in my life because I have no interest in it whatsoever. And it is that thing if someone puts it on or if I am in somebody's house and it's on, I can't say to them as their guest can you please turn it off because I'm not interested. I sit there, I look at it, but I'm not enjoying it, and yes I'll walk away having known what songs were sung and some judges had said. But I haven't made any connection to them and that’s - I feel that's what mass is, and that's what faith is to a lot of our young people that they are just – they are brought along, it is put on in front of them, and they tune into bits that they might find interesting or humorous or relevant to them. But for the rest of it, they switch off and they walk away without having gained any personal experience, whereas you know we have students here who – when they go to mass at school, it's the only mass they go to and so they absolutely cherish it because it's that experience.

Appendix C: Interviews with Young People

Information Sheet for Young People

"WE ARE CATHOLIC" PHD RESEARCH PROJECT

Information for participants - January 2018

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. It will involve talking about your faith and other sensitive issues. So please take the time to read this information sheet before you agree. You can decide at any time that you don't want to continue.

What's it all about?

Young people are a vital part of our Church and yet we don't very often listen to your hopes and dreams, your worries, and what your faith means to you. This research hopes to capture a flavour of what it means to be young and Catholic. At the heart of it is a photo project where you will be invited to take photos of the things, people and places that are important for you. The groups will choose their favourite images that will then go on to be part of an exhibition to be shown in the diocese. In total, there will be 4-5 sessions over a number of months, culminating in a group visit to the exhibition.

Through the research, I want to raise awareness of the importance of young people to the Church, and to give the adults a chance to look at the world through your eyes. I would love to have a wide range of opinions represented in the project, so you don't have to be going to church every week to get involved! As long as being Catholic is important to you, I'm interested in your thoughts.

Why should I take part?

This is brand new research into the lives of young Catholics. By taking part, you are helping to raise awareness of the lives of young people in the Church. We hope that the exhibition will be visited by hundreds of people. This is a real opportunity to get your voice heard. At the same time, the project will be an opportunity to explore what being a Catholic means to you, and to delve into questions you've always wondered about.

Will the info I provide be anonymous?	Yes. Everyone's name will be changed (you can even choose your research name). Interviews and focus group sessions will be recorded and then transcribed (written out), but only research names will appear on the transcripts. All the information from the research will be held on a secure, password-locked computer. You can request a copy of the transcript if you wish. Your permission would be asked again before any photos go into the exhibition. It will not be possible to hide your identity on a photo, but you will be asked before that photo is used. The results of the research will form part of my PhD thesis, and may be published in journals and conference presentations. You won't be identifiable from any quotes used, and if your photo is used, you will be asked in advance.
Information and Complaints	For more information, you can contact me at avril.c.baigent@durham.ac.uk or write to me at Avril Baigent St John's College 3 South Bailey Durham DH1 3RJ This research process is being overseen by the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Durham. If you have a complaint, please contact Professor Pete Ward at peter.ward@durham.ac.uk, or at the above address in Durham.

Information Sheet for Teachers and Parents

“WE ARE CATHOLIC” - PHD RESEARCH PROJECT

Information for parents and teachers - January 2018

I am a PhD researcher from Durham University, researching what it means for young people to say that they are Catholic. As a Church we know that young people are vital to our future. By doing research with young Catholics, I hope to be able to share their spirituality with the wider Church, to improve our understanding and create debate.

What’s it all about?

In my research I want to capture a range of views and experiences of being Catholic. At the same time, I know that it’s not usual in British culture to talk about religion. So I have put together a project that starts with the questions that young people themselves have, and which will hopefully be fun and interesting for them to get involved in.
I am looking to gather three focus groups of young people around the diocese to explore together what it means to say “We are Catholic”. At the heart of the research is a photo project where the young people will be invited to take photos of the things, people and places that are important for them. The groups will choose their favourite images that will then go on to be part of an exhibition to be shown at the Cathedral later in the year. In total, there will be 4-5 sessions over a number of months, culminating in a group visit to the exhibition.
Through the research, I want to raise awareness of the importance of young people to the Church, and to give us as adults a chance to look at the world through young people’s eyes. I would love to have a wide range of opinions represented in the project, so the young people involved don’t have to be going to church every week. As long as being Catholic is important to them, I’m interested in their thoughts.

Why get involved?

This is brand new research into the lives of young Catholics. By taking part, these young Catholics will be helping to raise awareness of the lives of young people in the Church. At the same time, the project will be an opportunity for participants to explore what being a Catholic means to them, and to delve into questions they’ve always wondered about.

Will the info provided be anonymous?

Yes. Names will be changed during the research and responses will be treated confidentially.
Participants and their parents will be asked for their consent before taking part in the research.
Interviews and focus group sessions will be recorded and then transcribed, but only research names will appear on the transcripts. All the information from the research will be held on a secure, password-locked computer. Participants can request a copy of the transcripts if they wish.
Permission will be asked again before any photos go into the exhibition. It will not be possible to hide a particular identity on a photo, but those in the photos will be asked before that photo is used.
The results of the research will form part of my PhD thesis, and may be published in peer reviewed journals and conference presentations. No research participant will be identifiable from any publications except by prior agreement via the photos.

Information and Complaints

For more information, you can contact me at avril.c.baigent@durham.ac.uk or write to me at

Avril Baigent
St John's College
3 South Bailey
Durham
DH1 3RJ

This research process is being overseen by the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Durham. If you have a complaint, please contact Professor Pete Ward at peter.ward@durham.ac.uk, or at the above address in Durham.

Topic Sheet for Interview Questions

1. Focus Group Session

Discuss consent forms and permission to record.

Introductions

Ask the young people to introduce themselves and tell us two interesting things about themselves.

“Before I say any more about the project, I’d like you to tell me what has brought you here today – what do you want to get out of it”

Introduce the project, context, connection to Youth Synod, hopes and outcomes. Idea of co-researching very important, so I am interested in the directions that the participants want to explore themselves.

Mapping exercise

Kick off by asking participants to sketch/write on piece of flip chart paper what they think about when they hear the word Catholic. To be encouraged to think as broadly as possible.

Follow up discussion:

- Questions about religious identity:
- What does a Catholic look like?
- What defines good Catholic, bad Catholic, former Catholic? In your opinion, who is and isn’t a Catholic?
- What difference does it make to you, being a Catholic?

Questions about lived belief:

- What does sacred/holy mean to you?
- Have you had an experience of something outside yourself? A religious experience, had a feeling of peace, seen a ghost?
- Is being Catholic something that is private for you, or something you do with other people?
- If being a Catholic is something that is important to you, what encourages and supports you?
    - Friends,
    - Family
    - A group or community
    - A particular person
    - An app or online community,
    - A particular experiences that you’ve had?
- (mention whichever doesn’t come up naturally in discussion)

- Are there things that you do or think about that feel particularly Catholic?
- Do you think that being a Catholic makes you different from people that are not Catholic?

Questions about transcendence:

(if these don't work in the pilot sessions, keep for interview stage)

- Are there points in your life when your faith has been particularly important to you?
- When times are tough, who or what do you turn to?
- Do you pray? If so, when, and what do you do?

Closing question of focus group section:

Is there anything we've talked about today that you would like to explore more?

Photography Element

With a photographer friend, I produced a booklet with some advice on taking interesting photos, which also included a section on the ethics of photography. We covered the following questions at the end of the focus group.

- What do the young people themselves think about taking and distributing photos?
- How photos taken in this context might be sensitive or revealing for the models (especially if exhibited).
- That it is important to gain consent for the use that the photo will be put to: eg in one-on-one interview, group discussion, public exhibition, conference presentation, national Catholic press. Discuss staged consent.
- That we will be happy to print/email a special photo that the model particularly likes.
- That if photos get into the public sphere, we have no control over their further use, so we have to be careful about how they are shared and with what consent.
- As young people live in a very visual context (esp social media) my approach was that they are well-informed and have useful experience in these matters. I aimed to reach a common ethical approach and understanding.

2. Semi-Structured Interview stage

The interviews were led by the photos that the young people had taken. Participants were asked to talk about their photos, why they had taken them, and what meaning and significance they find in them. Through these interviews I hope to cover:

- What sort of spiritual experiences they have?
- Why these particular photos are meaningful?
- Where they see their Catholic identity in their lives?
- What happens at key moments of stress and transcendence.

If not raised in the initial stage of discussing the photos, follow-up questions include

- Do you have a routine of any Catholic stuff that goes on over the week?
- Have you ever been on retreat or pilgrimage?
- Have you ever had a feeling of the presence of God?
- Do you think it's hard, being a Catholic?
- Are there any adults who've been important in your faith life?
- Was there a point when you switched from Catholic being something that comes from your family, to being something that's important for you?
- Does it help you to be Catholic?
- Into the future, do you think you might grow out of being Catholic?
- Is there anything else you'd like to add that's come up out of this project?

3. Second focus group

This group session focused on the set of images taken across the group (where participants were happy to share), with the purpose of choosing which (7-8) are going to make it into the exhibition. I hoped to capture the unstructured conversation about the different images, their meaning to the wider group, and therefore a broader understanding of Catholicism.

4. Exhibition visit and feedback

This is the final session, and is for the joint purposes of:

- Checking that my understanding of the images is that of the participants
- Seeing how individuals have changed over the course of the project.

Final questions for discussion will include:

- What they thought of the exhibition? Did they think about the images differently when they were framed and hung? Did they still represent the way they think about being Catholic?
- What they thought of the other images (from the other 2 groups)? Were there any that particularly stood out? What did those images mean for them?
- Had their views on being Catholic changed over the course of the project?

Sample Extracts from Interviews

Nancy, 16, School Group D, 26/9/2018 (Group A)

I: So, in a typical week then, erm, would you have a sort of routine around Catholic stuff that you might do? #00:07:06-8#

N: Yeah..what's it…Ok… we don't, it's like a routine, at night time I pray, and in the morning I pray. Sometimes, it's like, occasionally, I pray before I eat. Now I really want to get into praying before I eat, but the ones I definitely do do is pray before I sleep and pray when I wake up. #00:07:39-8#

I: And what sort of prayers do you do? #00:07:39-8#

N: Like, um, the night time would probably be personal, like something that happened that day, or in general, like I'd pray about stuff like my exams. And in the morning I'd pray to have a good day, and all of that, and I'll do a Hail Mary, and I'll look at, like, cos my mum, in her workplace she has these, you know those little cards that have prayers on? And sometimes I just read them. And she has a lot! And those are like Catholic routines. And obviously on Sunday I go to church, in the evening, cos in the morning we just don't wake up on time! #00:08:21-2#

<laughter> #00:08:21-2#

I: Sunday evening Mass. #00:08:26-0#

N: 6.30 Sunday evening Mass, St Benet's. #00:08:29-4#

I: Ahh, that's amazing. And do you pray, you've obviously got this great routine of praying morning and night. Do you pray, out and about? If something happens, or if you're stressed? Would you pray more? #00:08:43-1#

N: Um, yeah, especially when I'm like, sad, obviously I pray, but you're right, when I'm like, I'll pray a little bit more when I'm like, sad, and when I'm very, I don't know, lost… It just comes back and I don't know. #00:09:05-9#

I: It helps? #00:09:05-9#

N: It does help. Honestly. I think, prayer for me, it helps with, like the stress. It's like a weight come off, like we're off there praying, like why am I stressed out about this? It's good to have that private conversation with God. #00:09:29-4#

I: So what helps you stay Catholic then? #00:09:35-4#

N: I feel like commitment and consistency. For me, if you don't go to church like, now I won't say like every Sunday, but if you stop going to church, then you're like losing your faith, and all those, like, reading the Bible, like sometimes I will like read chapters of the Bible to help me learn more about Catholic life, erm… What else? I used to, I don't go anymore, I used to go church school <laughs> when I was little, and they used to tell us all the stuff like, stuff about Jesus, stuff we should do as Catholics, which kept my faith, that's why I'm at this age where I go to church on a Sunday and I pray in the morning and pray in the night and do all that stuff. And reading. Bible reading is an important thing, I think that's what my mum taught me. My mum would be like, Bible time! The weekend comes, you have to tell me something, any Bible chapter or verse, and you have to say what's the importance of it , so yeah, that's what's kept my faith, and also, stuff that, like God has done for me. Like, working, working hard for my GCSEs, working hard for my AS levels, it's kept my faith, because if I didn't have that faith I wouldn't be here, like, doing my A levels and education and going to uni. #00:11:03-2#

I: You feel like your faith helped you through your exams? #00:11:04-6#

N: It has, no, it definitely did, because, on GCSE days, I was like, Mom, we need to go church, in the morning, I think I went to church in the morning, and like I'd do that, and after GCSEs I would just stop, we need to go after, I can't do this all the time! #00:11:24-7#

<laughter> #00:11:24-7#

I: You were going to church every day during your exams? #00:11:30-7#

N: Not church every day, but every Sunday #00:11:32-7#

I: Right, yeah #00:11:35-2#

N: And we also went to the the priest to talk about my GCSE, obviously, what's stressing me out, obviously I would go, not once, but occasionally to talk about all of that stress. But church every day, I can't! #00:11:52-7#

I: I was going to say, that would be <laughter> #00:11:52-7#

N: Also, also, like, looking at other people's religion kept my faith stronger. My neighbour is Muslim, so obviously they would go like, to the mosque every single day, and put work into their faith and religion, and I was like, if they're doing that, I can do that too. Another thing, other people's religion and beliefs also kept my beliefs and faith stronger in God. #00:12:24-7#

I: And you've mentioned your mum. She's obviously been important in your faith #00:12:27-4#

N: *Very*, she's Catholic, but my dad's not, he wasn't baptised, confirmed or all of that. So, me and my mum, very keen on God. He goes to church, but not all the time, but I'll think whenever we come out, I don't know, me and my mum have one bond, like I don't know, when the priest is talking we actually listen to it, and we actually listen to the meaning of it. So like, my mum is an important part of my faith, cos, whenever I'm down, she always says pray to God, and hopefully it will turn itself around. #00:13:06-1#

Lena, 16, School Group D, 26/9/2018 (Group B)

I. So if you had to choose one [photo], which one would you choose? #00:05:45-2#

L: Probably the silhouette one, because I feel like it's the most representative, and I feel that it's quite unique, cos it's quite difficult to get this sort of effect, and I feel like… it has a lot of meaning. I feel like <incomp> it connects you. #00:06:10-6#

I: And what..tell me more about the meaning of that one, for you. #00:06:13-3#

L: Like I said previously, we are all important in the eyes of God, but especially in the 21st century, we don't care about others as much as we used to, and like ,we are sort of like silhouettes, we are essentially to others unimportant, so like, to a stranger, I could be like no-one, and they could treat me in any way they want to, even though we should respect each other, like God said, like, love thy neighbour, and also the light to me is Jesus and God, and brings hope, so that's like why I'm reaching towards him. #00:06:57-1#

I: Reaching towards the hope? #00:06:57-1#

L: Yeah. #00:06:58-5#

I: Mmm, ah that's lovely! We'll have to think of a good caption for that. So in your average week then, do you have a routine of Catholic stuff that you would do? #00:07:17-0#

L: Well, I go to church once a week, on Saturday or Sunday. I obviously pray, but I'm not that dedicated, cos I'm like, so focused on school right now, I can't put myself more forward. If I had more time I feel like I would, but… #00:07:39-6#

I: Ah but no, it's…It is what it is. Getting to church once a week is doing well. Do you go with your family? #00:07:46-0#

L: Yeah, #00:07:46-6#

I: Your whole family always go? #00:07:51-8#

L: Well, my sister's at uni right now, but yeah #00:07:53-2#

I: And…. Have there been some important people, important adults, could be anyone really, in that faith journey of getting you to where you are today? #00:08:10-7#

L: Being brought up as a Catholic is like ingrained in me, and I don't know if I'd be a Catholic if my family weren't, but I feel like my life has drifted me in that way because the sacrament of confirmation is based on you and how you feel. If you don't want to continue this, you don't have to. Like, communion is more forced by your parents <laughs> I'd say but I feel like the sacrament of confirmation is your own decision and I took that decision and I'm happy. #00:08:53-1#

I: When were you confirmed? #00:08:53-1#

L: I was actually, I was meant to do it in year 7, but I was confirmed in year 8. #00:09:02-9#

I: So, was that an important moment for you then? #00:09:05-7#

L: Yeah, yeah. It definitely showed my, technically possibly like, strengthened my relationship with God because it showed that I'm dedicated in me myself, it shows that I want to practice religion. #00:09:25-3#

I: Yeah yeah, sure. I mean, one of the interesting things, one of the things I'm interested in is how people start of, like you said with your family, you know, your Catholic identity comes from your family. What causes people to switch over so that it's important thing for themselves… #00:09:43-9#

L: I feel like, it's more based on the situation. So if you were put in a very bad environment, or like, being exposed to some really horrid event, situation, it could like, make you distrust God, or potentially believe that he's not there, simply because of what's happened. Or, like manipulation, like, you could turn for some reason because of other people, other people's influence. Cos, people say that they're independent, but the reality is that everyone conforms to society, and we just, we are easily influenced by others. I feel that that's a big factor. #00:10:40-4#

I: And what about for you? #00:10:40-4#

L: I don't think anyone can influence me to change my religion. Like, maybe in other aspects, but not my religion cos, I wouldn't be able to" #00:10:57-5#

I: It's really solid, for you #00:10:58-9#

L: I wouldn't be able to. #00:10:58-9#

Pete, 17, Youth Retreat Group C, 2/8/2018, 00:21mins - 06:41(Group C)

P: This is my photo. #00:00:21-8#

I: Go on, tell me about it so it ends up on…

P: I took it when we had the campfire, and it sort of represents like, the eternal flame, I thought, like they have in churches. I got it right at the the right moment too. #00:00:39-4# #00:00:37-6#

I: It's beautiful. If you were going to give that a caption, what would you call it? #00:00:43-5#

P: Light up! Or something like that #00:00:49-3#

I: And you've got all the people standing round the outside as well. #00:00:52-1#

P: Because I'm a bit late to the camp fire, I was sort of stood up a bit higher, on the edge, when I was walking down and I thought, looks good. #00:01:01-7#

I: Go on, tell me a bit about what that means to you then. #00:01:05-9#

P: I like fires, and this sort of, I dunno, it's good cos, lots of things which happen in the Bible and in church have fire in them, or like candles, like I say there's the eternal flame and the burning bush, and other things <tails off> But I just like… such a good photo! #00:01:35-2#

I: It's gonna look good in a frame, that one. #00:01:39-4#

P: Yeah? #00:01:39-4#

I: Look good on the wall. Mmm. So, have you had a good week? #00:01:44-8#

P: I have, it's been good. #00:01:44-8#

I: What have you enjoyed about this week? #00:01:47-5#

P: Probably Alton Towers. It's good. But I like adoration last night, was good. Quite dodgy on the knees tho #00:01:58-1#

<laughs> #00:01:58-1#

I: You were kneeling up for a long time? <laughing> #00:01:58-1#

P: It was good, it's been a good week. The best bit about this week, I dunno, it's hard to think, … the easiest time to be open about your faith is when you're with other Catholics like, your own age. When you're at home it's harder, like I went to a school where everyone said they were Catholic, but none of them were, like, practising, so it's harder. And there weren't even all that many Catholics in our school… Cos they take, have priority on Catholics, and fill up with everyone else. Lots of muslims… And… #00:02:48-6#

<pause> #00:02:49-9#

I: So it's been special this week? #00:02:55-0#

P: Yeah, it's been good. I really enjoyed it. #00:02:55-3#

I: So, you would describe yourself to be a Catholic then? #00:03:00-3#

P: Yeah. #00:03:00-3#

I: What does it mean to you? #00:03:00-3#

P: To be Catholic…is to believe in God. Cos God is always there, he loves you, even if you don't think he does, you've just got to have it in your mind. If you can tell that God doesn't loves you, he does, but it's your mindset rather than God's, I think. It's more of a personal thing. #00:03:31-3#

I: What do you think it brings to your life, being a Catholic, is it helpful? #00:03:32-9#

P: Brings a lot of joy, things like this, it's hard, it's not as easy to do this sort of thing at home, there isn't… but things like this, like the lux weekend we do in January, and we did like a camp, bloke called Will, there's about 20 of us that went, in Dorset-way or something, we went camping in the woods, it was really good, we were right on the beach, lots of talks. #00:04:07-9#

<pause> #00:04:05-4#

I: So something being around other Catholics? #00:04:06-4#

P: Yeah, it's a lot easier, a lot. So much easier. #00:04:12-8#

I: So what do you think, do you think being a Catholic's something you might grow out of? #00:04:23-5#

P: I don't think so, I don't think so. I think as long as I keep going to things like this, and eventually when I'm 18 I'll be coming to help here, well if they need me. I think that would help, because if I stop coming I would lose faith… #00:04:37-2#

I: Right, it's that important to you then? Yeah… What about when you go home? What sort of stuff do you do when you go home? #00:04:41-7#

P: I don't go to church that much, but I do when I can, because I'm so busy. I have lots of cricket, I play lots of cricket, I've lots of football and I work a lot, I work A LOT. It's like, every day I'm working. #00:04:57-0#

I: Wow #00:04:57-0#

P: Cos I work, I do landscaping in the week, then at weekends I'm car washing, I'm down the farm, or painting, something like that. Everything. #00:05:08-7#

I: Are you saving up for something in particular then? #00:05:11-4#

P: Just saving up.   #00:05:13-4#

I: So, would you pray, is there anything else that you would do? #00:05:17-9#

P: I think, praying is easiest to do in Adoration, I think. Morning prayer's pretty good and evening prayer. But I don't, I'm not a big goer of just kneeling, and just, like in Adoration, yeah, but I dunno, there's something about I think that's better than just kneeling and praying. #00:05:40-2#

I: Do you pray at home at all? #00:05:43-2#

P: I do, but not as much as I should., I think. I think I'm going to start doing morning and evening prayer. I'm going to try anyway, cos that was really good. #00:05:52-4#

I: What do you think that will help, what do you think that will do?

P: I think it will bring me closer to God, if I can do it. #00:06:12-9#

I: And what, apart from this kind of thing, what helps you stay a Catholic? #00:06:19-0#

P: I think it's about being different. I don't like following the crowd. I'm not a bing go-er of that. Because where I live there are people who are Catholics, and there are lots of people who aren't. It's good to be different. It makes you stand out, which I like. #00:06:41-3#

Becca, 16, Parish Group B, 09/06/2018, Exception

I: Yeah, yeah. <pause> Have you had times of kind of, real significant, something special that happened to you because of your faith? #00:06:56-6#

P: Um…<pause to think> I suppose there's been times when I've prayed, can't remember what it was for, but I think someone was poorly in my family, and I think I prayed for them and kept on praying for them because, well, I could see how much it made my parents upset, and I kept on praying for them and praying for them because I felt bad for my parents and that impacted on me. And then eventually it's like, whatever I prayed for happened, came true, so that kind of made me feel good about myself. Maybe God really is up there like, watching over us, listening to us. But then there's also been some times when I've prayed, but it hasn't happened… Ok, I'll believe in God and all, I believe in God, but then when it doesn't come true, is there an actual God, is there someone actually up there, or am I just being told all lies… But when it does come true, I'm like, ok it's all, he is up there, watching over us… <pauses to think> Hmm, it's kind of impacted on my faith. But it just depends what the outcome is… #00:08:14-2#

I: So, it wouldn't be something that you would be dead, 100% about? #00:08:20-6#

P: I'm still about 50/50%, definitely. I think, once it's happened probably enough, and then I realise, ok yes someone is up there, but as it's happened more negative than positive, I'm on the other end of the scale. I think it's got to happen enough times for me to believe it, so I'm just going with my gut and it's like, oh maybe he isn't up there, or maybe it isn't true, or maybe I've just been told my whole life's a lie… yeah… I don't know. It's a hard question. #00:09:01-5#

I: Going into the future, do you think that being a Catholic is something that you do while you're growing up, and you might grow out of it, or do you think it's always want to be. #00:09:14-1#

P: I don't think I'll grow out of it. But I'll probably won't have as much strong a faith as what I am now. But I probably won't go to church every Sunday, but I'll try and go church, but I'll definitely pray, if something bad happens in my life, I'll definitely pray for it. But I probably won't think about it as much…or…say I am to people as much. I'll probably isolate myself and try and forget about it, but still have a connection with him. Have that connection that there is someone watching over me and I'm not alone. But just try and not show it as much. #00:09:59-5#

I: And why do you think that? Is it a pain at the moment? #00:10:00-9#

P: No… I think because of being 50% 50%, I'm not 100% there, but I'm not 100% not going to be there. I think it's because of where I am - I could, in 10 years time, I could be at 75% there, and then I'll be like, yeah, I'm going to carry on my faith and stuff. But at this point in time, it's just like, I'm not not going to, I'll never say I'm not going to be Catholic, but at this point I'm just going to say, I'm kind of, like, I'm Catholic, but I'm not a strong faith. I think it's because of what I've experienced and stuff. It's kind of made me double think my life, and stuff. #00:10:47-5#

I: And… do you think you're still, like, I'm Catholic because of my family, or, you know, because it's your own choice. How does that feel, that balance? #00:10:59-9#

P: I'll probably say, 75% of it is because of my parents. They taught me from a young age, and all of this. Because my brother's getting confirmed, and he had to write to the priest to say why he wants to be confirmed. And he didn't actually know, he said to my parents, because you made me, because… My dad's like, you can't say that, and my mum said, yes it is true, we have brought them up as, you've got to do these things, so of course I'm like, I'm Catholic because my parents have told me, and they've told me to be good and to follow the 10 commandments, and they've told me to get confirmed and all this lot. But the other 25% is like, I've chosen to do this, you know, a lot of good things have come out of it... Like making friends and stuff. A lot of good things have come out of it. But the majority of it is because from a young age, my parents took me to church, they taught me the good things, I don't know any other life apart from, go to church, be good, do all this, can't be bad, can't betray and stuff... <pause> My parents probably have made me affected, affected the decisions I've made. I don't think if I wasn't a Catholic, I don't think I would 100% chose to become a Catholic. If I didn't know about it and I didn't know what was out there, and what opportunities it could be to you, I probably wouldn't chose it as much. But I'd probably look into it and consider it. But I probably wouldn't be where I am today. #00:12:31-3#

I: Do you think it helps you? #00:12:37-0#

P: <pause> In some ways, yes, because like I've said, it has opened up a lot of doors. I've become a sacristan and I've enjoyed doing that. And I've learned more, I've learned interesting things and I've met new people and that's just led to new opportunities and I can go with my dad and stuff. But then... Sometimes I do debate, am I just doing this to make my parents proud? Am I just doing it because, oh, I said I'd help with my dad, and now I'm like, I'm too pretty afraid. But I don't feel that. But my brain's still kind of mixed up with...have I chosen this, am I doing the right thing, are my parents like...making me do it. I don't know. I think quite like, 50-50. #00:13:33-9#

Extracts from Focus Group Sessions

Focus Group 1, School Group E, 18/01/2019 02:26mins - 08:12mins

I: So, although you're not Catholic you've been around Catholic stuff for a long time. So, grab a pen, choose a colour and scribble on there anything that comes to mind. Now, one thing I want to say about this is there are no right or wrong answers in this, ok, and sometimes when people, have you guys all done GCSE RE? #00:02:26-3#

All: yeah #00:02:26-6#

I: Yeah? Thought so. So, obviously there's right and wrong answers in GCSE stuff, but that doesn't apply here, so don't worry about it, so it's just people's opinions I'm interested in rather than the right or wrong stuff. #00:02:41-2#

So, come on, jot down on there, what comes to mind when people say the word Catholic? #00:02:52-4#

<writing> #00:02:52-4#

I: Oh, have you got a non-functioning one, Macie, sorry. Nice colour, though, I think that's my favourite colour out of the lot. #00:03:06-1#

<writing> #00:03:09-5#

I: We've got priests… #00:03:11-2#

H: Priests here and nuns… order #00:03:15-5#

I: Order? mmm What do you mean by order? #00:03:16-1#

H: As in the fact that, because I'm Christian, so we… of course we've got the, this is how the Church that, that in Christian it's very strict, it's very like, you can't really express yourself very much in the Catholic religion, of course you can express yourself in prayer, but beyond that you can't really express yourself cos it's got Mass, that's here, it's here, so it's #00:03:49-7#

Macie?: Strict #00:03:49-7#

H: It's very like, ordered out, like, you start with the prayer, so you've got the log (?), is it the log, where you read it out from the start till the end of Mass, so that's very strict in a way, and very like, orderly. #00:04:02-4#

I: What church do you go to, Hanna? #00:04:02-4#

H: Well, I'm Christian, but I do go to a like, to a Christian, like a Catholic Church #00:04:08-9#

I: Ah cool #00:04:10-7#

H: Just because it's the one close to my house, and with me, I believe that, as long as you're praising God you're praising God, so yeah, because my church is quite far, so I just go to the one that's close to my house and as long as I'm praising God and I'm keeping that, erm, relationship going, and yeah, that works for me. #00:04:32-7#

I: What've you got on there, Rhianna? What are some of your things? #00:04:37-6#

R: The church, God, worship, religion, gospels, prayer, Mass and peace. #00:04:50-1#

I: Lots of good words. What've you got on there Macie? You've got religion, Christian, communion, God. #00:05:02-3#

<teacher brings in cup of tea for me. Chats about how the heater in the car wasn't working and how cold I am> #00:05:12-1#

I: So, being in a Catholic school, what's it like being in a Catholic school then if you're not Catholic? #00:05:19-4#

Macie, what's that like? #00:05:24-0#

M: Er…. #00:05:27-6#

I: What's the Catholic stuff like? #00:05:27-6#

M: I don't like, you have to pray every morning in assembly, but I never do it. #00:05:38-6#

I: You join in? #00:05:38-6#

M: I don't join in. #00:05:40-4#

I: You don't join in with it… Do you think it makes a difference being in a Catholic school? #00:05:47-4#

M: Erm, I mean, you have to do religious as a GCSE, so… #00:05:57-1#

I: What about you, Rhianna? #00:05:58-2#

R: Oh, it's just kind of like a normal school, but we do like prayers, and we learn things about religion and we do religious, you learn a little bit more. #00:06:13-0#

I: So how would you describe yourself then? #00:06:13-0#

R: I don't *not* believe in somethings, and then, I just don't have a religion, I believe in different things. #00:06:20-4#

I: Mmm. And do you think you get influenced by being in a Catholic school, or is it not particularly? #00:06:28-3#

H: I think it's eye opening. Because I've got people that are non-religious or that are non-Catholic or stuff like that. Being in a Catholic school it does change a lot of things because you are more informed, and you've got a little bit more respect for other people's opinions and views, and you understand where it comes from, for example, if I asked Macie, I'm pretty sure if I asked her before she came to Thomas Becket about Catholics, she'd just be like, ok, and then what? But now, I'm pretty sure she would have respect for religion and she understands more things, doesn't necessarily mean you believe all this, but you understand where our belief comes from, because you've had to learn it since, what? Year 7? #00:07:03-5#

M: Yeah #00:07:04-4#

H: So you, you know, you're not clueless, like when people ask you why do they believe in this, you're like, do they believe in this because of this, that and the other? Because it's all backed up, we're not just learning stuff, it's backed up by the Bible and all this, and for people who don't believe they get to get a better understanding and respect for the world a little bit more. And even though some people may say it doesn't influence you, you can't help but let it influence you, cos you're always around like, prayer, like today the assembly we had today was like to be more Jesus like and be more thoughtful and blah blah blah, you may think that I'm not being more Jesus like, but you find yourself being a bit more thoughtful, which was influenced by that assembly, like you wouldn't realise it, you get where I'm coming from? #00:07:42-0#

I: What do you reckon, Macie, do you think that's right? Do you think you picked that up, or do you just let it wash over? #00:07:47-9#

M: You do, you do like, have more respect for people who are Catholic, cos before I started if someone said to me like, you're Catholic, I'd just come straight out and say, I'm not so why are you actually Catholic, like where's the proof? #00:08:08-1#

I: Yeah #00:08:09-5#

M: Whereas now I just let them explain it #00:08:12-3#

Second Focus Group School Group D 10/10/2018 12:31mins - 23:30mins

I: I'm interested, what do you see in each others' photos, what do you see that's important, that comes out of the different photos? #00:12:31-8#

Barbara: The sense of peace in everybody's photos, like everything in their photos is very calm, very still, still water, flowers, trees. #00:12:44-8#

Nancy: Like, for some of us there's like some similarities, which means we understand what our faith means to us. #00:12:56-7#

I: What similarities do you see? #00:12:56-7#

Nancy: like with nature, peace, and like… connection, when you see these kind of pictures you can understand they are like a connection with God. #00:13:13-7#

<chatting> #00:13:28-9#

Marianna: I thought it's all about like, our experiences, and what we see around us. It's very based on each, like our personal lives, and how they view the world. #00:13:43-5#

I: What else did you see in each other's photos? <silence> #00:13:57-4#

Well, I saw some sort of culturally home-y stuff. There were lots of Polish baskets and the Polish priest, and the church… So Polish culture is important to you? <pause> #00:14:13-1#

All the Polish girls looking at me! <laughter> #00:14:13-1#

Marzena: I mean, we do grow up in it as mentioned before, we tend to be Catholic. If you choose to continue to be Catholic it's up to you obviously, but we have a lot of places of worship which from a young age we go to and stuff like that so I guess it's incorporated into our lives from a young age but it's more of a sense of community that you have there because it's everyone worshipping together rather than just looking, obviously nature is important because it's God's creation, but that's more of a personal feeling how we connect to earth, rather than the community around us. #00:14:49-6#

I: There's something about community, and there's something about family, people had family, Barbara, you had a wedding photo… #00:14:54-8#

Barbara: One photo is of my mum and dad on their wedding day, erm, they were best friends before they got married, it was like six months difference between their age, and they, my mum had kept him at a distance for ten years, more than ten years before they got married, and it shows me that they were happy before they got married and how happy they are to be in communion with each other and with God at that moment. It was pretty refreshing. And another picture was of a random baby that I met… I went to the Portuguese consulate in London and there was this kid, a big smart fellow and he was crying and he was really irritated with everything that was happening because he was waiting for quite a while so I started playing with him and eventually I started picking him up and walking with him - not too far, I was still with the parents <laughter> But it, it shows how, erm <confused chat> family doesn't only extend to the people you're with, it can go with strangers, cos, like he was pretty irritated at that point and I saw his need and I chose to help him. So that was another thing. There were two other pictures. One is of the sunset, and one is of a tiny grass flower, and it shows the vastness of the, like, how tiny and how big God can be. God orchestrated the whole sunset, and then he orchestrated the tiny grass flower, and if you've seen grass flowers they're really really tiny and to make reproductive organs and to make it pretty and this and that, it is marvellous. #00:17:22-5#

I: If you were going to choose one of your photos to go in the exhibition - well, I might as well get you lot to do the work <laughter> We might well put more than one in, I've got to figure out, I've got to design it… but I want to make sure everyone gets one in. #00:18:05-1#

<chatting among themselves about the choosing process> #00:18:10-8#

#00:19:56-9#

Nancy: I think I like that one the most. #00:19:56-9#

I: Which one? #00:19:56-9#

Nancy: I love buildings, sorry #00:19:59-0#

<laughter> #00:19:59-0#

I take pictures of anything, like, buildings, <cross chatting> Do you know how many cathedrals I went to? <cross chatting> #00:21:08-6#

I: Don't sweat this, don't over think it! #00:21:33-6#

Which one do you like? #00:21:42-4#

Marzena: the scouts and the… #00:21:46-7# #00:21:47-3#

<lots of chatting, laughter, earnest conversation>

I: I've stressed you all out now! #00:21:47-3#

<More chatting, laughter>

#00:22:38-7#

Barbara: wedding photo #00:22:56-8#

Nancy: Do you realise she's recording this? <laughs> #00:23:01-9#

<loud laughter> #00:23:01-9#

I: I'm going to be forever writing this down. "Much giggling" #00:23:09-1#

<laugher> #00:23:09-1#

Nancy: I'm going to go for, erm, I don't know what this thing's called. #00:23:15-1#

Barbara: The lightbulb

Nancy: the light bulb. Even though it's broken… then we called it… #00:23:25-1#

Barbara: Convergence #00:23:25-1#

Nancy: Call it 'convergence' #00:23:30-6#

Description of the Cases

Parish Group A – Pilot Group

Young people in Catholic parishes, no secondary school. This was the most difficult to recruit as there was no existing group. Speaking at nine local Masses to around 1,000 people only resulted in two participants, both African young men from different churches who did not know each other. Focus group held in presbytery of local Catholic church. High level of engagement from participants, but impossible to arrange follow-up sessions due to busy-ness and family commitments of participants.

Parish group B

Parish group B was an existing group run by one of the school chaplains I had interviewed, consisting of five young people, including two of her own children. They had completed the Youth Alpha course together, had known each other for a long time, and all went to the same non-Catholic state school. They were all white, with a mixture of Irish/English backgrounds and one South African. Sessions happened in the parish hall, where the group usually met. Despite GCSEs, I was able to run the full process with this group.

Diocesan Youth Retreat Group C

Group C was based at the diocesan youth retreat, which takes place twice a year and was supposed to be my high-religiosity group. Various members of the diocesan youth team had been among my adult interviewees. Having worked at the youth office, I felt this would be a good place to discuss belief and practice. I had hoped for six participants but gained ten, which caused problems with timetabling, especially as the second session took place on the final morning as the young people were preparing to leave. I was able to conduct the initial focus group and then interview all ten participants, but there was no time for the final focus group. Unfortunately, although I had been promised that the consent forms would be handled internally, for various reasons, this did not happen, and in the end, I was only able to use the data from six of the participants. It was also not possible to bring any members of this group to the exhibition: with the oldest profile of any of my groups (17-18), many of them had moved on by the time the exhibition was staged.

This was the most surprising of all the groups. Although the participants were taking part in what could be described as virtuosic religious practices (for example, a lengthy Adoration service), in their usual daily life, they were among the least “practising” of all my participants. Three of them rarely went to Mass or prayed. This threw the notion of “high religiosity” into question.

School group D

School group D was enabled by the second school chaplain I had interviewed. The chaplain had good relationships with the young people in the school, and was keen for the research to take place. However difficulties with her own illness, an Ofsted inspection, a change of Head of Sixth Form, and the school flooding (!) meant that it took eleven months from initial contact with the Headteacher to holding the group. I had done some chaplaincy work in the school many years previously when working in a nearby parish and was expecting it to be my low-religiosity group. However, I had not taken into account two important factors: firstly, the influx of Catholic immigrants, mainly Polish but also from Kerala and Africa, which had taken place since I was last in the school; secondly, a new Head and SLT following a poor Ofsted, with a mission to use the catholicity of the school as a positive factor in changing values and behaviour. This meant that the school was significantly more religious than it had been. I recruited participants by speaking at the Sixth Form Assembly and handing out information and consent forms afterwards. Unfortunately, the boys were held back at the end of the Assembly to be reprimanded, so by the time they emerged, they were late for their next class. This led to a girl-only group of year twelve students coming from a wide variety of backgrounds, including Dubai, Kerala, Poland, Ukraine and Nigeria. Three of them had achieved the highest grade in Religious Education GCSE, and in general, their level of practice was higher than among the other groups. My "low religiosity" group turned out to be very devout. With the assistance of the Head of Sixth Form, I was able to conduct the group sessions and interviews in their Wednesday afternoon "extra-curricula" slot, and so was able to complete the full set of focus group; photo-taking; interviews and final focus group. Unfortunately, the chaplain subsequently left with ill health, and there was no-one who could bring the group to the exhibition.

School Group E

Realising that I had not managed to capture any really non-practising young people to date, I decided to try a further school group to see if I could broaden the range of my participants. The second school was very different from the first. I knew from the local clergy that few students attended weekly Mass. Like School D, I made an appeal at the Sixth Form Assembly for participants to explore what it meant to be Catholic and participate in an exhibition. Coming back a few days later to run School Group E, I was excited to discover three girls had accepted the invitation – until I discovered none were Catholic. I ran the group anyway, to honour the enthusiasm of the group to take part, but was concerned whether any of the data would be usable. Talking this over with my supervisor, we decided that this was a good chance to have a non-Catholic control group of young people in a Catholic school. Would the religious language of the school and compulsory RE homogenise the religious language of the young people themselves even if they did not identify as Catholic? In the end it was a fascinating group, and well worth running, throwing light on the data from other groups, and even suggesting other research projects for the future.

Table of Information of Fieldwork Process

	No of participants	Focus group 1	Interviews	Focus group 2	Present at Exhibition
Parish Group A	2	Focus Group X 42 mins	n/a	n/a	n/a
Parish Group B	5	Focus Group R 33 mins + 20 mins photos	E Lucy 18mins F Becca 25 mins S Sean 14.27 mins T Beth 14.45 mins U Immie 11.37 mins	Focus Group V 18.46 mins	Sean and Becca
Youth Retreat C	6	Focus Group Y 46 mins + 20 mins photos	I Pete 13.44 mins N Tom 15.35 mins O Patrick 23.03 mins P Michael 9.15 (rushed by timetable) W Marco and Laura 23 mins	Not time within retreat timetable	n/a
School Group D	9	Focus Group Q 32 mins + 15 mins photos (school timetable)	A Barbara 24 mins B Kasha 20.27 mins C Lena 23.03 mins D Marianna 14.25 G Marzena 27.30 mins H Nancy 22.24 mins J Sarah 16.05 mins	Focus Group M 29.29 mins	n/a

			K Natasha 19.19 mins L Teresa 9.19 mins (end of school day		
School Group E	3	Focus group Z 29mins + 15 mins photo (school timetable)	A1 Rhianna 22.09 mins B2 Macie 21.57 mins C2 Hanna 28.01	Not possible because of A level mocks	n/a

Extract from Fieldwork Journal – Beginning the process at School D

15th Sep 2018

Head of 6th Form at School D rang today about the assembly on Monday. For the first time did not sound as though my project was a pain in the neck, but honestly interested in it. We were able to sort out to hold the focus group and interviews in enrichment time on Wed 2-3pm, rather than in lunch time or after school. Really felt made up afterwards as has been such a slog to get to this point (11 months…). Fingers crossed some young people want to do it.

The way Graeme talked about it has given me the idea to appeal to them academically - eg if anyone is interested in sociology, psychology, or theology they would find it interesting. Will have to see how that plays.

17th Sep 2018

Visited St Joseph's today. A real difference from all those years ago. Students very orderly and polite, filed into the assembly in silence. Prayer to start the day was a real prayer and reflection on the Sunday Gospel. Head of 6th form not entirely convincing about the prayer, but the content was good. Got round of applause when I stood up to speak, most students engaged with me (eye contact etc). In order to get as mixed a group as possible, pitched the project as a sociology of religion project around religious identity, and helping to answer the question, why is religion important to young people? Also (as it was UCAS form time of year) pitched it as a chance to be a co-researcher in a project with Durham University. Took in 10 forms, these quickly ran out, and chaplain had to do a whole load more. Gave out 23 in total. Will have to see how many turn up but may have to have 2 groups.

Boys held back for a telling off, so rushing off after assembly to get to class, and not in the mood to come along to a group. Has led to all girl group.

Focus Group 19th Sep

After wondering how many would turn up, got 8! Also had a male RE teacher (head of RE) sit in with me. He was early 30s, chatting with the girls, so good connection with them. Not sure how much that changed the dynamic.

Girls obviously v bright, good girls, very quiet coming in. (Later found out that at least 3 of them were level 9 at GCSE RE). Didn't know each other as a group, particularly. Did ice-breaker, "just jot down on the paper anything that comes into your mind when you hear the word "Catholic". Deathly silence resulted, girls all looking at me like rabbits in the head lights. Tried again "There are no right answers in this research, I'm really interested in your ideas, so anything, anything at all…" Still long silence. Had to say "could be candles, could be your grandma, could be the Pope" before they started to write. Even by the end, only 3 girls would talk without first being asked by name. Pressure for "right answers" means that I was right to go for an open methodology. Compare to the final focus group.

Note from afterwards: in the interviews, it turned out that lots of these girls were in the same friendship group. However, in this setting (with the teacher?) it didn't seem that they knew each other at all (contrast with focus groups at Summer Camp and Flitwick).

Appendix D: Photos

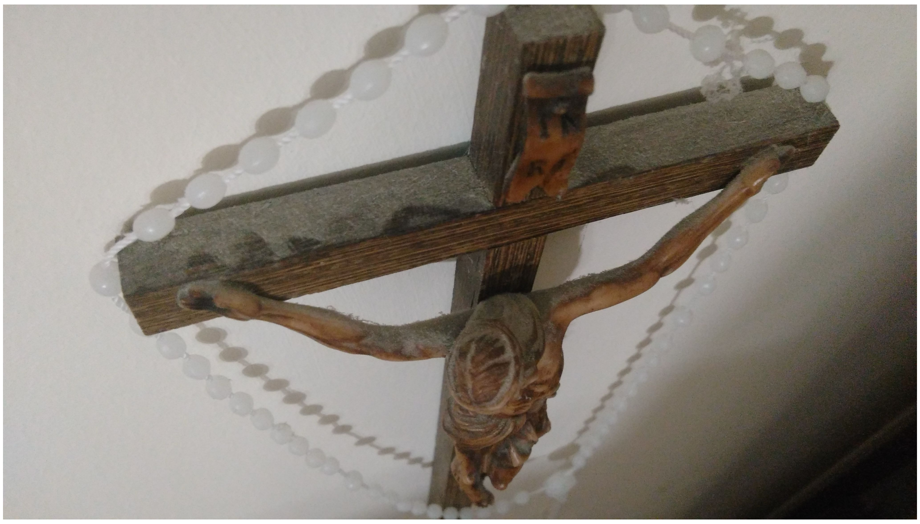
Each young person who submitted photos to the project chose a photo to form part of the exhibition.

Here are each of the exhibition photos, together with photos of the exhibition itself and the young people and local school group visiting it. All photos were taken by participants. Consent was given for the photos taken at the exhibition. The captions are either the titles given by participants or relevant extracts from the interviews.

Barbara

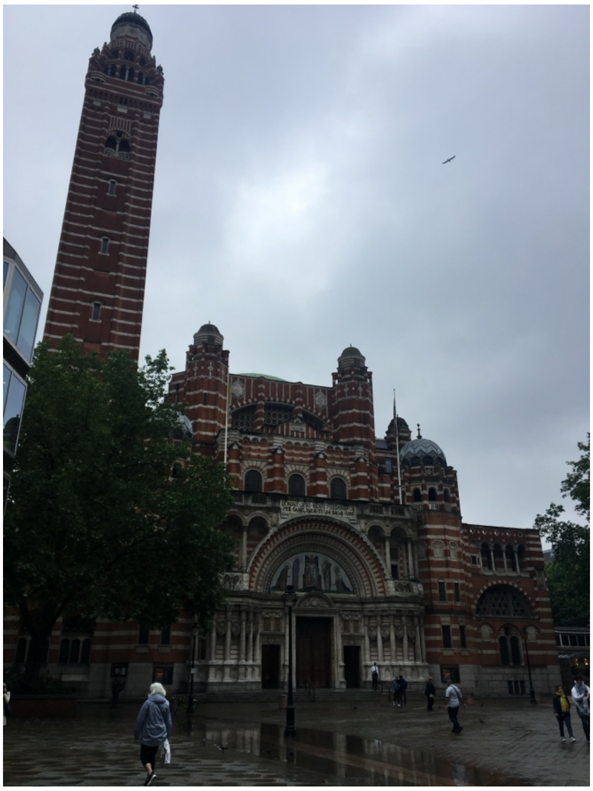
that is the range in which God works – he has the power to orchestrate something so huge as a sunset and the little tiny parts inside a grass flower

Becca



Holy Bond

Beth



there's lots of things going on at the same time,
but that's always there, the Church is always there

Bethany

A little light to represent Jesus and God. I've always believed someone's there, like, in the heavens, watching us and guiding us through.

Lena

This is me reaching out to God

Lucy

A Song of Praise*
92 How good it is to give thanks to you, O LORD,
to sing in your honour, O Most High God,
2 to proclaim your constant love every morning
and your faithfulness every night,
3 with the music of stringed instruments

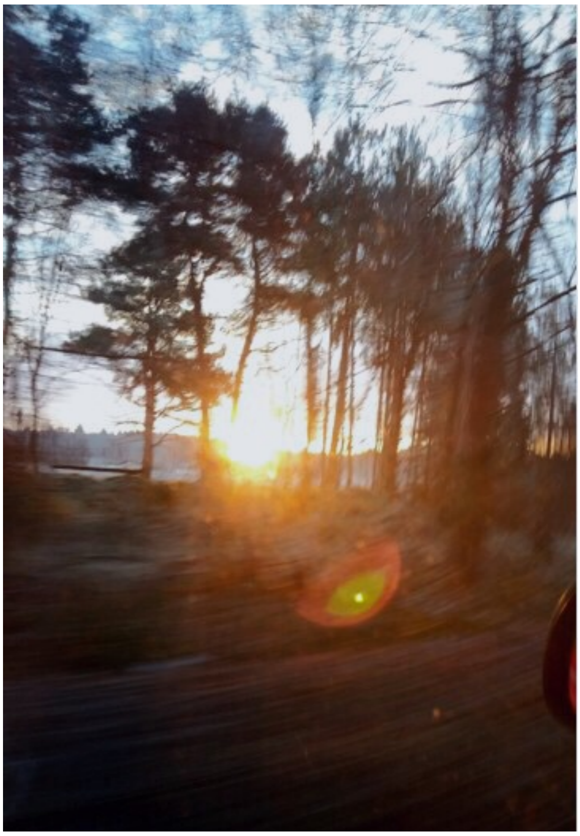
"A Song of Praise"
God gives us talents and skills to use for his worship

Macie

Boy of 15 is cancer blast bid pioneer
BLEEDIN' DEADLY
Raises risk by 4
TRAGEDY
I was so close to suicide
MY GIRL SUICIDE

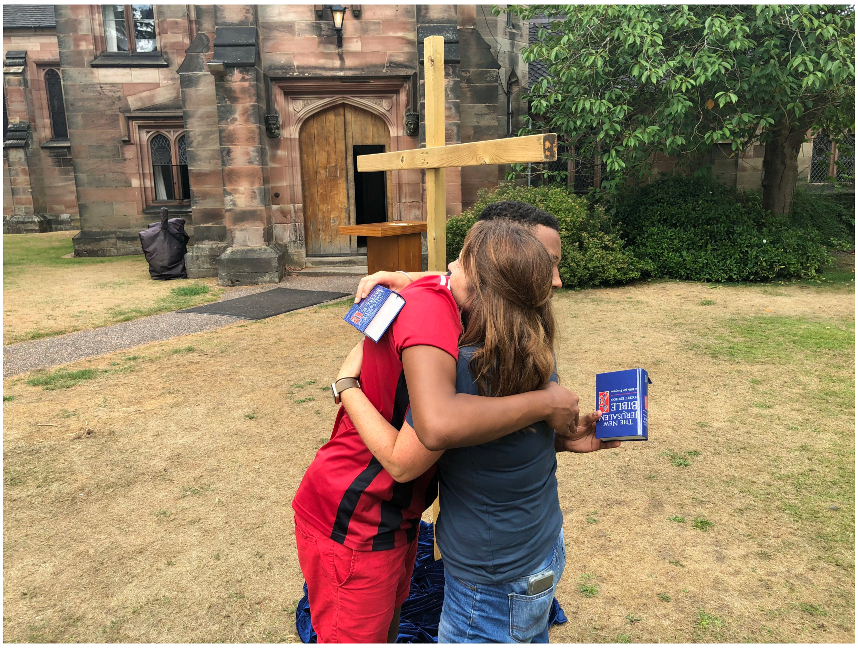
tragedy, and natural disasters…

Marianna



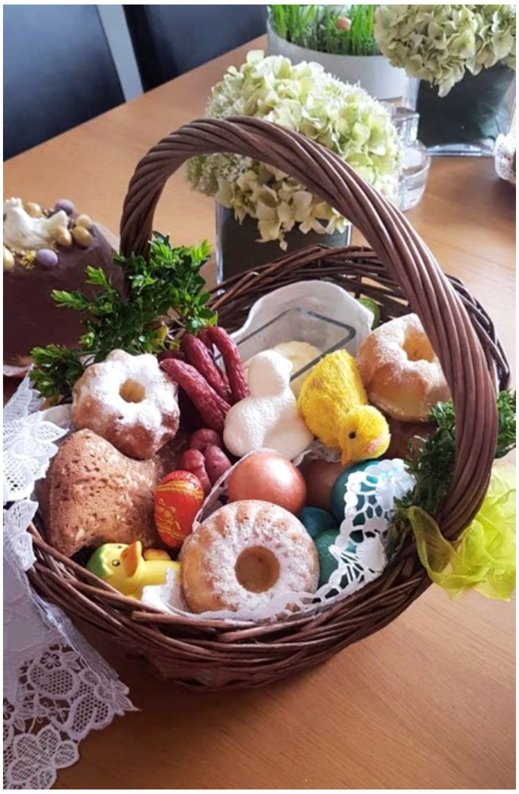
God’s light will shine through in specific moments where you need it

Michael



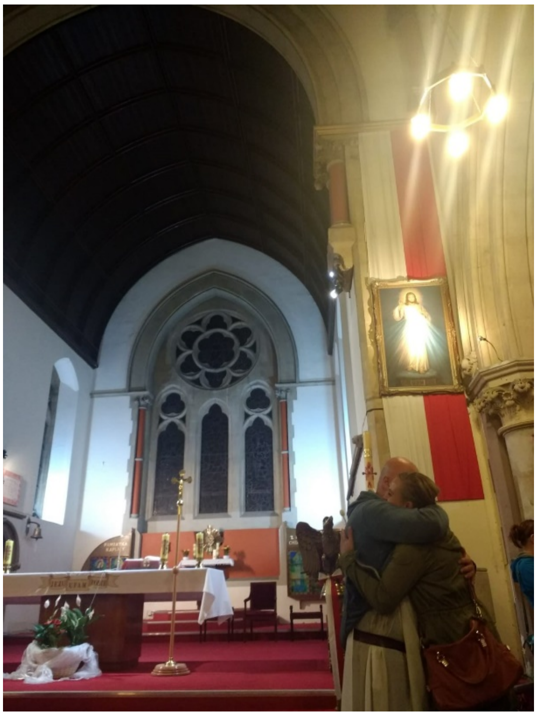
The picture is meant to describe how young people and adults
can connect through faith at these religious events, in front of the cross

Marzena



Polish Easter Basket

Natasha



This isn't actually a normal priest… he's actually a Polish person, he's called Adam…
he's a vlogger and he travels around the world

Pete

The easiest time to be open about your faith is when you're with other Catholics, like, your own age…brings a lot of joy

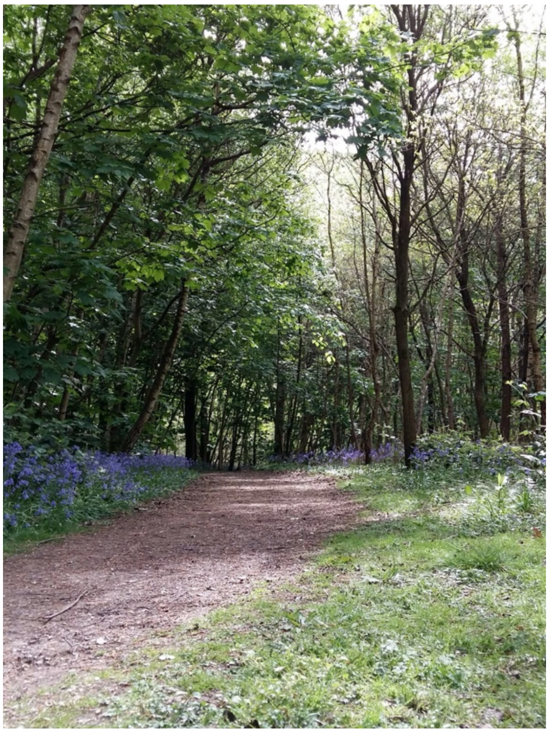
Sarah

You're born, either you're born into the faith or you grow up and then you decided to be a Catholic… and it's all part of a long journey, that you are Catholic

Sean

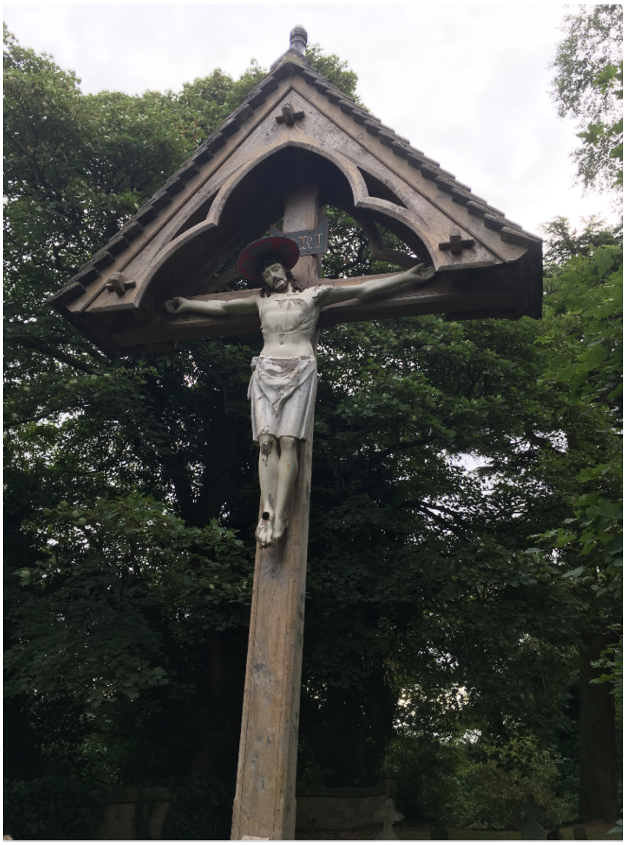
Pope Francis - Decent Geezer

Teresa



you kind of just have to have faith and keep walking

Tom



The crucifix in the graveyard over there. What I thought it was,
it's what happens to our faith when we don't keep up with, keep up with that?
Keep praying, keeping it strong, it starts getting a bit tattered??

Exhibition in Cathedral

Bibliography

Aitken, Stuart C. 2001. 'Fielding Diversity and Moral Integrity'. *Ethics, Place & Environment* 4 (2): 125–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/713665936.

Alderson, Priscilla. 2004. *Ethics, Social Research and Consulting with Children and Young People*. Rev. and Updated. Ilford: Barnardo's.

Ammerman, Nancy T. 2003. 'Religious Identities and Religious Institutions'. In *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, by Michele Dillon, 207–24. Cambridge: University Press.

———. 2007. *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2013. *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes: Finding Religion in Everyday Life*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2016. 'Lived Religion as an Emerging Field: An Assessment of Its Contours and Frontiers'. *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 1 (02): 83–99. https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1890-7008-2016-02-01.

———. 2020. 'Rethinking Religion: Toward a Practice Approach'. *American Journal of Sociology* 126 (1): 6–51. https://doi.org/10.1086/709779.

Andersen, Karen. 2010. 'Irish Secularization and Religious Identities: Evidence of an Emerging New Catholic Habitus'. *Social Compass* 57 (1): 15–39. https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768609355532.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2018. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity*. Profile Books.

Armstrong, Michael. 2013. 'Extraordinary Eschatology: Insights from Ordinary Theologians'. In *Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church*, edited by Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis, 97–105. Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology. Farnham, Surrey, UK ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Arnett, Jeffrey Jensen, and Lene Arnett Jensen. 2002. 'A Congregation of One: Individualized Religious Beliefs among Emerging Adults'. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 17 (5): 451–67. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558402175002.

Arweck, Elisabeth, and Eleanor Nesbitt. 2010. 'Young People's Identity Formation in Mixed-Faith Families: Continuity or Discontinuity of Religious Traditions?' *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 25 (1): 67–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537900903416820.

Asad, Talal. 1993. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

———. 1999. 'Religion, Nation-State, Secularism'. In *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, edited by Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann, 178–96. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

———. 2003. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Cultural Memory in the Present. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Astley, Jeff, and Leslie J. Francis, eds. 2013. *Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church*. Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology. Farnham, Surrey, UK ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Atkinson, Will. 2016a. *Beyond Bourdieu: From Genetic Structuralism to Relational Phenomenology*. Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity.

———. 2016b. *Beyond Bourdieu: From Genetic Structuralism to Relational Phenomenology*. Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity.

Atran, Scott, and Joseph Henrich. 2010. 'The Evolution of Religion: How Cognitive By-Products, Adaptive Learning Heuristics, Ritual Displays, and Group Competition Generate Deep Commitments to Prosocial Religions'. *Biological Theory* 5 (1): 18–30. https://doi.org/10.1162/BIOT_a_00018.

Bader, C. D., and S. A. Desmond. 2006. 'Do as I Say and as I Do: The Effects of Consistent Parental Beliefs and Behaviors upon Religious Transmission'. *Sociology of Religion* 67 (3): 313–29. https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/67.3.313.

Baggett, Jerome P. 2008. *Sense of the Faithful: How American Catholics Live Their Faith*. Oxford University Press.

Bagnoli, Anna. 2004. 'Researching Identities with Multi-Method Autobiographies'. Text.Article. 31 May 2004. http://www.socresonline.org.uk/9/2/bagnoli.html.

———. 2009. 'Beyond the Standard Interview: The Use of Graphic Elicitation and Arts-Based Methods'. *Qualitative Research* 9 (5): 547–70. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109343625.

Bagnoli, Anna, and Andrew Clark. 2010. 'Focus Groups with Young People: A Participatory Approach to Research Planning'. *Journal of Youth Studies* 13 (1): 101–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260903173504.

Baigent, Avril. 2002. 'Y Church Report'. Diocese of Northampton.

———. 2022. 'Who Is Right? A Lived Catholicism Study of the Mass-Going of Catholic Teenagers'. *Ecclesial Practices* 9 (1): 28–46. https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-bja10035.

Baigent, Avril, and Marcus Pound, eds. 2022. *Ecclesial Practices [Special Issue]: Lived Catholicism*. Vol. 9, Issue 1. Leiden/Boston: Brill. https://brill-com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/journals/ep/9/1/ep.9.issue-1.xml.

Baigent, Avril, Marcus Pound, Tricia Bruce, Stephen Bullivant, Alana Harris, and Robert Orsi. 2022. 'Lived Catholicism: A Roundtable Discussion'. *Ecclesial Practices* 9 (1): 9–27. https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-bja10033.

Baker, Rachel, and Rachel Hinton. 1999. 'Do Focus Groups Facilitate Meaningful Participation in Social Research?' In *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, edited by Rosaline S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger, 79–98. London: SAGE.

Banks, Marcus, and Howard Morphy. 1999. *Rethinking Visual Anthropology*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press.

Barbour, Rosaline S., and Jenny Kitzinger. 1999. *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*. London: SAGE.

Barker, Chris. 2000. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: SAGE.

Barker, John, and Fiona Smith. 2001. 'Power, Positionality and Practicality: Carrying out Fieldwork with Children'. *Ethics, Place & Environment* 4 (2): 142–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/713665949.

Barley, Ruth, and Lisa Russell. 2019. 'Participatory Visual Methods: Exploring Young People's Identities, Hopes and Feelings'. *Ethnography and Education* 14 (2): 223–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2018.1441041.

Barrett, Jennifer B., Jennifer Pearson, Chandra Muller, and Kenneth A. Frank. 2007. 'Adolescent Religiosity and School Contexts'. *Social Science Quarterly* 88 (4): 1024–37. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2007.00516.x.

Barry, Carolyn McNamara, Jason M. Prenoveau, and Colter L. Diehl. 2013. 'The Value of Walking the Walk: The Relation between Family Faith Activities and Emerging Adults' Religiousness'. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 32 (3): 206–21.

Basch, C. E. 1987. 'Focus Group Interview: An Underutilized Research Technique for Improving Theory and Practice in Health Education'. *Health Education Quarterly* 14 (4): 411–48.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1996. 'From Pilgrim to Tourist - or a Short History of Identity'. In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, by Paul Du Gay and Stuart Hall, 18–36. Los Angeles, Calif: Sage.

Beaudoin, Tom. 2011. 'Secular Catholicism and Practical Theology'. *International Journal of Practical Theology* 15 (1): 22–37. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijpt.2011.024.

Beaudoin, Tom, and J. Patrick Hornbeck II. 2013. 'Deconversion and Ordinary Theology: A Catholic Study'. In *Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church*, edited by Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis, 33–44. Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology. Farnham, Surrey, UK ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Beckford, James A. 2003. *Social Theory and Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beckford, James A., and Jay Demerath. 2007. *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. SAGE.

Bell, Nancy. 2008. 'Ethics in Child Research: Rights, Reason and Responsibilities'. *Children's Geographies* 6 (1): 7–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/14733280701791827.

Bellah, Robert. 1991. *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religon in a Post-Traditionalist World*. New Ed edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bender, Courtney. 2012. 'Practising Religions'. In *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, edited by Robert A. Orsi, 273–95. Cambridge University Press. bulli.

Benedict XVI. 2009. 'Address: Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome on the Theme: "Church Membership and Pastoral Co-Responsibility"'. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2009/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20090526_convegno-diocesi-rm.html.

Bengtson, Vern L., Norella M. Putney, and Susan Harris. 2017. *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down across Generations*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Bergunder, Michael. 2014. 'What Is Religion?: The Unexplained Subject Matter of Religious Studies'. *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 26 (3): 246–86.

Black, Stephanie Winkeljohn, Patrick Pössel, Benjamin D. Jeppsen, Afia Tariq, and David H. Rosmarin. 2015. 'Poloma and Pendleton's (1989) Prayer Types Scale in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Praying Adults: One Scale or a Family of Scales?' *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 7 (3): 205–16. https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000018.

Bodovski, Katerina. 2015. 'From Parental to Adolescents' Habitus: Challenges and Insights When Quantifying Bourdieu'. In *Bourdieu, Habitus and Social Research: The Art of Application*, edited by Cristina Costa and Mark Murphy, 39–54. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137496928_3.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 16. Cambridge: University Press.

———. 1985. 'The Genesis of the Concepts of Habitus and Field'. *Sociocriticism* 2 (2): 11–24.

———. 1987. 'What Makes a Social Class? On The Theoretical and Practical Existence Of Groups'. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 32:1–17.

———. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Polity.

———. 1991. 'Genesis and Structure of The Religious Field'. In *Religious Institutions*, edited by Craig Calhoun, 13:1–44. Comparative Social Research: A Research Annual. London: JAI Press Inc. https://www.scribd.com/document/400808660/Bourdieu-1971-Genesis-and-structure-of-the-religious-field-1991-pdf.

———. 1993. '"Youth" Is Just a Word'. In *Sociology in Question*, 94–102. Theory, Culture & Society. London: Sage.

———. 1996. 'On the Family as a Realized Category'. *Theory, Culture & Society* 13 (3): 19–26. https://doi.org/10.1177/026327696013003002.

———. 1998a. 'Appendix: The Family Spirit'. In *Practical Reason : On the Theory of Action*, 64–74. Polity Press. https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/primo-explore/fulldisplay/oxfaleph012234716/SOLO.

———. 1998b. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

———. 2000. *Pascalian Meditations*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

———. 2005. 'Habitus'. In *Habitus: A Sense of Place*, edited by J. Hillier and E. Rooksby, 27–34. Aldershot: Ashgate. https://eprints.ncl.ac.uk.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loïc J. D. Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity.

Boyatzis, Chris J., David C. Dollahite, and Loren D. Marks. 2006. 'The Family as a Context for Religious and Spiritual Development in Children and Youth'. In *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, by Eugene Roehlkepartain, Pamela King, Linda Wagener, and Peter Benson, 297–309. 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks California 91320 United States: SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412976657.n21.

Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2019. 'Reflecting on Reflexive Thematic Analysis'. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 11 (4): 589–97. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806.

Brierley, P. W, and Kim Tainio. 2008. *UKCH Religious Trends. No. 7, British Religion in the 21st Century*. Swindon: Christian Research.

Brown, Callum G. 2009. *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000*. 2nd edition. London ; New York: Routledge.

Bruce, Steve, and David Voas. 2010. 'Vicarious Religion: An Examination and Critique'. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 25 (2): 243–59. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537901003750936.

Bruce, Tricia C. 2020. 'Efficacy, Distancing, and Reconciling: Religion and Race in Americans' Abortion Attitudes'. *Religions* 11 (9): 475. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11090475.

Bruce, Tricia Colleen. 2017. *Parish and Place: Making Room for Diversity in the American Catholic Church*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Bullivant, Stephen. 2016. 'Contemporary Catholicism in England and Wales': Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society.

———. 2018. 'Europe's Young Adults and Religion'. Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society. https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/centres/benedict-xvi/europes-young-adults-and-religion.aspx.

———. 2019. *Mass Exodus: Catholic Disaffiliation in Britain and America Since Vatican II*. Oxford: OUP.

Burawoy, Michael. 1991. *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis*. Berkeley ; London: University of California Press.

Byrne, Bridget. 2018. 'Qualitative Interviewing'. In *Researching Society and Culture*, by Clive Seale, 4th edition., 218–34. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Cahill, Caitlin. 2007. 'Doing Research with Young People: Participatory Research and the Rituals of Collective Work'. *Children's Geographies* 5 (3): 297–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/14733280701445895.

Cairns, David. 2015. 'Learning to Fly: Entering the Youth Mobility Field and Habitus in Ireland and Portugal'. In *Bourdieu, Habitus and Social Research: The Art of Application*, edited by Cristina Costa and Mark Murphy, 111–25. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137496928_3.

Casson, Ann. 2011. 'The Right to "Bricolage": Catholic Pupils' Perception of Their Religious Identity and the Implications for Catholic Schools in England'. *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 32 (2): 207–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2011.600819.

Casson, Ann E. 2014. 'Challenges and Opportunities for the New Evangelisation: A Case Study of Catholic Primary School Parents in England and Wales'. Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. https://familyofsites.bishopsconference.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2019/07/research-paper-cath-parents-new-evang-051114.pdf.

Catholic Bishops of England and Wales. 2021. 'Day of the Lord'. CBCEW. 23 April 2021. https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/04/Day-of-the-Lord-220421.pdf.

Catto, Rebecca. 2014. 'What Can We Say about Today's British Religious Young Person? Findings from the AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme'. *Religion* 44 (1): 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2013.844740.

Certeau, Michel de. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley ; London: University of California Press.

Chanzà, Josep Almudéver. 2022. 'Praying in the Streets: Re-Traditionalisation of Public Spaces in Contemporary Spain'. *Ecclesial Practices* 9 (1): 86–100. https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-bja10036.

Charmaz, Kathy. 2014. *Constructing Grounded Theory*. 2nd ed. Introducing Qualitative Methods. London: SAGE.

Christensen, Pia Haudrup. 2004. 'Children's Participation in Ethnographic Research: Issues of Power and Representation'. *Children & Society* 18 (2): 165–76. https://doi.org/10.1002/chi.823.

Cipriani, Roberto. 1984. 'Religion and Politics. The Italian Case: Diffused Religion'. *Archives de Sciences Sociales Des Religions* 29 (58-- 1): 29–51.

———. 2003. 'Invisible Religion or Diffused Religion in Italy?' *Social Compass* 50 (3): 311–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/00377686030503005.

Clanton, Thomas, Corliss Outley, Kyle Woosnam, and William McIntosh. n.d. 'How Adolescent-Parent Relationships Effect Adolescent Religiosity'.

Clark, Andrew. 2012. 'Visual Ethics in a Contemporary Landscape'. In *Advances in Visual Methodology*, edited by Sarah Pink, 17–35. London: SAGE.

Clements, Ben. 2020a. 'Catholics and Church Attendance in Britain – Catholics in Britain'. Catholics in Britain. https://catholicsinbritain.le.ac.uk/resources/catholics-and-church-attendance-in-britain/#.XrKsRxNKhQJ.

———. 2020b. 'Catholics' Attitudes towards Social Issues: Same Sex Relations, Abortion and Euthanasia – Catholics in Britain'. Catholics in Britain. 2020. https://catholicsinbritain.le.ac.uk/resources/catholics-attitudes-towards-social-issues-same-sex-relations-abortion-and-euthanasia/#.XrLfhhNKhQI.

Clements, Ben, and Stephen Bullivant. 2022a. 'Why Younger Catholics Seem More Committed: Survivorship Bias and/or "Creative Minority" Effects among British Catholics'. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 61 (2): 450–75. https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12791.

———. 2022b. 'Why Younger Catholics Seem More Committed: Survivorship Bias and/or "Creative Minority" Effects among British Catholics'. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* n/a (n/a). https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12791.

Clifford, James, George E. Marcus, and Kim Fortun. 2010. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. 25th anniversary edition / with a new foreword by Kim Fortun. Berkeley, Calif. ; London: Berkeley, Calif; London : University of California Press.

Cnaan, Ram A., Richard J. Gelles, and Jill W. Sinha. 2004. 'Youth and Religion: The Gameboy Generation Goes to "Church"'. *Social Indicators Research* 68 (2): 175–200. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:SOCI.0000025592.60815.37.

Cockerham, William, and Brian Hinote. 2009. 'Quantifying Habitus: Future Directions'. In *Quantifying Theory: Pierre Bourdieu*, edited by Karen Robson and Chris Sanders, 201–10. Berlin: Springer.

Coleman, Simon. 2002. 'But Are They Really Christian?: Contesting Knowledge and Identity in and out of the Field'. In *Personal Knowledge and beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*, by

James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire, 75–87. New York ; London: New York University Press.

———. 2017. ‘We’re All Catholics Now’. In *The Anthropology of Catholicism: A Reader*, edited by Kristin Norget, Valentina Napolitano, and Maya Mayblin, 273–81.

Collier, John. 1957. ‘Photography in Anthropology: A Report on Two Experiments’. *American Anthropologist* 59 (5): 843–59.

Collins-Mayo, Sylvia, and Pink Dandelion. 2010. *Religion and Youth*. Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Routledge.

Collins-Mayo, Sylvia, Bob Mayo, Sally Nash, and Christopher J. Cocksworth. 2010. *The Faith of Generation Y*. London: Church House Publishing.

Conway, Brian. 2011. ‘Catholic Sociology in Ireland in Comparative Perspective’. *The American Sociologist* 42 (1): 34–55.

Cornelio, Jayeel Serrano. 2016. *Being Catholic in the Contemporary Philippines: Young People Reinterpreting Religion [Electronic Resource]*. Routledge Religion in Contemporary Asia Series. London: Routledge.

Costa, Cristina, Ciaran Burke, and Mark Murphy. 2019. ‘Capturing Habitus: Theory, Method and Reflexivity’. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education* 42 (1): 19–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2017.1420771.

Crapanzano, Vincent. 2010. ‘Hermes’ Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description’. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, by James Clifford and George E. Marcus, 25th anniversary edition / with a new foreword by Kim Fortun., 51–76. Berkeley, Calif. ; London: Berkeley, Calif; London : University of California Press.

Creswell, John W. 2014. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Fourth edition, International student edition. Los Angeles, Calif.: Los Angeles, Calif: SAGE.

Crockett, Alasdair, and David Voas. 2006. ‘Generations of Decline: Religious Change in 20th-Century Britain’. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45 (4): 567–84.

Cunningham-Burley, Sarah, Anne Kerr, and Stephen Pavis. 1999. ‘Theorising Subjects and Subject Matter in Focus Group Research’. In *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, edited by Rosaline S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger, 186–99. London: SAGE.

Curran, Charles E. 1997. ‘The Catholic Identity of Catholic Institutions’. *Theological Studies* 58 (1): 90–108. https://doi.org/10.1177/004056399705800106.

Davidman, Lynn. 2002. ‘Truth, Subjectivity and Ethnographic Research’. In *Personal Knowledge and beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*, by James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire, 1–14. New York ; London: New York University Press.

Davie, Grace. 1994. *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging*. Making Contemporary Britain. Oxford: Blackwell.

Davie, Grace. 2015. *Religion in Britain : A Persistent Paradox*. 2nd ed. Chichester: John Wiley & SonsLtd.

Davies, Charlotte Aull. 1999. *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. ASA Research Methods in Social Anthropology. London: Routledge.

Day, Abby. 2009. ‘Believing in Belonging: An Ethnography of Young People’s Constructions of Belief’. *Culture and Religion* 10 (3): 263–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610903279671.

———. 2010. ‘Propositions and Performativity: Relocating Belief to the Social’. *Culture and Religion* 11 (1): 9–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610903528812.

———. 2011. *Believing in Belonging : Belief and Social Identity in the Modern World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2013. *Social Identities between the Sacred and the Secular*. Ashgate AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Series. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate.

Day, Abby, and Lois Lee. 2014. ‘Making Sense of Surveys and Censuses: Issues in Religious Self-Identification’. *Religion* 44 (3): 345–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2014.929833.

Day, Abby, and Gordon Lynch. 2013. ‘Introduction: Belief as Cultural Performance’. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 28 (2): 199–206. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2013.783315.

De Vaus, D. A. 2001. *Research Design in Social Research*. London: Sage.

Dean, Kenda Creasy. 2004. *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Demerath, N. J. 2000. ‘The Rise of “Cultural Religion” in European Christianity: Learning from Poland, Northern Ireland, and Sweden’. *Social Compass* 47 (1): 127–39. https://doi.org/10.1177/003776800047001013.

Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 2018. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Fifth edition. Los Angeles ; London: SAGE.

Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis. 2012. ‘Called to a Noble Adventure’. Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis.

Desmond, Scott A., and Rachel Kraus. 2014. ‘The Effects of Importance of Religion and Church Attendance on Adolescents’ Moral Beliefs’. *Sociological Focus* 47 (1): 11–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/00380237.2014.853282.

Desmond, Scott A., Kristopher H. Morgan, and George Kikuchi. 2010. ‘Religious Development: How (and Why) Does Religiosity Change from Adolescence to Young Adulthood?’ *Sociological Perspectives* 53 (2): 247–70. https://doi.org/10.1525/sop.2010.53.2.247.

Dianteill, Erwan. 2003. ‘Pierre Bourdieu and the Sociology of Religion: A Central and Peripheral Concern’. *Theory and Society* 32 (5/6): 529–49.

Diaz Andrade, Antonio. 2009. ‘Interpretive Research Aiming at Theory Building: Adopting and Adapting the Case Study Design’. *Qualitative Report* 14 (March):42–60.

Dillon, Michele. 1999. *Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason, Faith, and Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511752728.

———. 2001. ‘Pierre Bourdieu, Religion, and Cultural Production’. *Cultural Studies ↔Critical Methodologies* 1 (4): 411–29. https://doi.org/10.1177/153270860100100402.

———. 2018. *Postsecular Catholicism: Relevance and Renewal*. New York: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190693008.001.0001.

Dollahite, David C., Loren D. Marks, and Michael A. Goodman. 2003. ‘Families and Religious Beliefs, Practices, and Communities Linkages in a Diverse and Dynamic Cultural Context’. In *Handbook of Contemporary Families : Considering the Past, Contemplating the Future*, edited by Marilyn Coleman and Lawrence Ganong, 411–31. Thousand Oaks, UNITED STATES: SAGE Publications, Incorporated. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/durham/detail.action?docID=1995273.

Dowling, Teresa. 2000. ‘Young Adult Catholics in Ireland’. In *Young Catholics at the New Millennium: The Religion and Morality of Young Adults in Western Countries*, edited by John Fulton, 50–69. Dublin: University College Dublin Press.

Droogers, André. 2007. ‘Beyond Secularisation versus Sacralisation: Lessons from a Study of the Dutch Case’. In *A Sociology of Spirituality*, by Kieran Flanagan and Peter C Jupp, 81–99. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=438421.

D’Souza, Rinald. 2022a. ‘The Lived Contestations of Adivasi Catholic Identity-Making’, July. https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-bja10039.

———. 2022b. ‘The Lived Contestations of Adivasi Catholic Identity-Making’, July. https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-bja10039.

Duggan, Kate, and Jennifer Owens, eds. 2009. *From the Pews in the Back: Young Women and Catholicism*. Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press.

Dulles, Avery. 1987. *The Catholicity of the Church*. Oxford: University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/0198266952.001.0001.

———. 2002. *Models of the Church*. 2nd ed. Crown Publishing Group.

Dunlop, Sarah, and Philip Richter. 2010. ‘Visual Methods’. In *Religion and Youth*, by Sylvia Collins-Mayo and Pink Dandelion, 209–16. Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Routledge.

Dunlop, Sarah, and Pete Ward. 2014. ‘Narrated Photography: Visual Representations of the Sacred among Young Polish Migrants in England’. *Fieldwork in Religion* 9 (1): 30–52. https://doi.org/10.1558/fiel.v9i1.30.

Dunn, Mary. 2016. ‘What Really Happened: Radical Empiricism and the Historian of Religion’. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 84 (4): 881–902. https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfw011.

Dutton, Christine. 2014. ‘Unpicking Knit and Natter’. *Ecclesial Practices* 1 (1): 31–50. https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-00101002.

Duyvenbode, Matthew van. 2018. ‘Complex Catholicism: The Life and Faith of Youth Catholics in England and Wales Today’. Camino House. https://www.caminohouse.com/complexcatholicism.

Eade, John. 2016. ‘Parish and Pilgrimage in a Changing Europe’. In *Migration, Transnationalism and Catholicism*, edited by Dominic Pasura and Marta Bivand Erdal, 75–92. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-58347-5_4.

Engelke, Matthew. 2002. 'The Problem of Belief: Evans-Pritchard and Victor Turner on "The Inner Life"'. *Anthropology Today* 18 (6): 3–8.

Farquhar, Clare, and Rita Das. 1999. 'Are Focus Groups Suitable for "Sensitive" Topics?' In *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, edited by Rosaline S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger, 47–63. London: SAGE.

Farrell, Ann. 2005. *Ethical Research with Children*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Ferraro, Thomas J. 1997. *Catholic Lives, Contemporary America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Flanagan, Kieran, and Peter C Jupp. 2007. *A Sociology of Spirituality*. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=438421.

Foucault, Michel. 1988. *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. London : Amherst: Tavistock ; University of Massachusetts Press.

Fowler, James. 1992. 'Perspectives on the Family from the Standpoint of Faith Development Theoy'. In *Christian Perspectives on Faith Development: A Reader*, edited by Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis, 320–26. Leominster: Gracewing.

Francis. 2016. '"Amoris Laetitia": Post-Synodal Exhortation On Love in the Family'. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html.

Francis, Leslie J. 2002. 'Catholic Schools and Catholic Values? A Study of Moral and Religious Values among 13-15 Year Old Pupils Attending Non-Denominational and Catholic Schools in England and Wales'. *International Journal of Education and Religion* 3 (1): 69–84. https://doi.org/10.1163/157006202760182445.

Francis, Leslie J. 2008. 'Self-Assigned Religious Affiliation: A Study among Adolescents in England and Wales'. In *Religion, Spirituality and the Social Sciences: Challenging Marginalisation*, by Basia Spalek and Alia Imtoual, 149–61. Bristol: Policy Press.

Francis, Leslie J., and Ann Casson. 2019. 'Retaining Young Catholics in the Church: Assessing the Importance of Parental Example'. *Journal of Religious Education* 67 (1): 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40839-019-00076-4.

Fulton, John. 1999. 'Young Adult Core Catholics'. In *Catholics in England 1950-2000 : Historical and Sociological Perspectives*, by Michael P. Hornsby-Smith, 161–81. London: Cassell.

———. 2000. *Young Catholics at the New Millennium: The Religion and Morality of Young Adults in Western Countries*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press.

Furrow, James L., Pamela Ebstyne King, and Krystal White. 2004. 'Religion and Positive Youth Development: Identity, Meaning, and Prosocial Concerns'. *Applied Developmental Science* 8 (1): 17–26. https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532480XADS0801_3.

Gallagher, Kerry, and Marta Trzebiatowska. 2017a. 'Becoming a "Real" Catholic: Polish Migrants and Lived Religiosity in the UK and Ireland'. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 32 (3): 431–45. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2017.1362883.

———. 2017b. 'Becoming a "Real" Catholic: Polish Migrants and Lived Religiosity in the UK and Ireland'. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 32 (3): 431–45. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2017.1362883.

Ganiel, Gladys. 2019. 'Religious Practice in a Post-Catholic Ireland: Towards a Concept of "Extra-Institutional Religion"'. *Social Compass* 66 (4): 471–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768619868418.

Garnett, Jane, and Alana Harris. 2013a. *Canvassing the Faithful: Image, Agency and the Lived Religiosity of Devotion to the Divine Mercy*. *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion*. Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004260498_006.

———. 2013b. *Rescripting Religion in the City Migration and Religious Identity in the Modern Metropolis*. Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate. http://site.ebrary.com/id/10740219.

Gauntlett, David, and Peter Holzwarth. 2006. 'Creative and Visual Methods for Exploring Identities'. *Visual Studies* 21 (1): 82–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725860600613261.

Gazda, Imrich. 2017. 'The Communication Style of Pope Francis'. In *teorie komunikacji i mediów 10*, edited by Mariusz Wszołek and Marek Graszewicz Wydawnictwo LIBRON. Wrocław]; Kraków: Instytut Dziennikarstwa i Komunikacji Społecznej Uniwersytet Wrocławski : Wydawnictwo Libron.

Gerring, John. 2004. 'What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?' *The American Political Science Review* 98 (2): 341–54.

Giordan, Giuseppe. 2011. 'Toward a Sociology of Prayer'. In *Religion, Spirituality and Everyday Practice / Edited by Giuseppe Giordan, William H. Swatos, Jr.*, edited by Giuseppe Giordan and William H. Swatos, 77–88. Dordrecht ; London: Springer.

Giordan, Giuseppe, and William H. Swatos, eds. 2011. *Religion, Spirituality and Everyday Practice / Edited by Giuseppe Giordan, William H. Swatos, Jr.* Dordrecht ; London: Springer.

Giordan, Giuseppe, and Linda Woodhead. 2016. *A Sociology of Prayer*. Ashgate AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Series. Routledge.

Glaser, Barney G. 2006. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Aldine Transaction a division of Transaction Publishers.

Golo, Ben-Willie Kwaku, Måns Broo, Sławomir Sztajer, Francis Benyah, Sohini Ray, and Mallarika Sarkar. 2019. 'Primary Religious Socialization Agents and Young Adults' Understanding of Religion: Connections and Disconnections'. *Religion* 49 (2): 179–200. https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2019.1584350.

Goss, Jon D., and Thomas R. Leinbach. 1996. 'Focus Groups as Alternative Research Practice: Experience with Transmigrants in Indonesia'. *Area* 28 (2): 115–23.

Greeley, Andrew. 2000. *The Catholic Imagination*. Berkeley ; London: University of California Press.

———. 2004. *The Catholic Revolution: New Wine, Old Wineskins, and the Second Vatican Council*. Univ of California Press.

Greenstein, Michael. 2016. 'The Evolution of the U.S. Catholic Hospital: From Sisters in Habits to Men in Suits'. College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University.

Griffin, Christine, Andrew Bengry-Howell, Chris Hackley, Willm Mistral, and Isabelle Szmigin. 2009. 'The Allure of Belonging: Young People's Drinking Practices and Collective Identification'. In *Identity in the 21st Century: New Trends in Changing Times*, edited by Margaret Wetherell, 213–30. Identity Studies in the Social Sciences. Basingstoke ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Groen, Sanne, and Paul Vermeer. 2013. 'Understanding Religious Disaffiliation: Parental Values and Religious Transmission over Two Generations of Dutch Parents'. *Journal of Empirical Theology* 26 (1): 45–62. https://doi.org/10.1163/15709256-12341253.

Gross, Toomas. 2012. 'Changing Faith: The Social Costs of Protestant Conversion in Rural Oaxaca'. *Ethnos* 77 (3): 344–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2011.595811.

Gubrium, Aline, and Krista Harper. 2013a. *Participatory Visual and Digital Methods*. Developing Qualitative Inquiry ; v. 10. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.

———. 2013b. *Participatory Visual and Digital Methods*. Developing Qualitative Inquiry ; v. 10. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.

Guest, Mathew. 2013. *Christianity and the University Experience: Understanding Student Faith*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

———. 2019. 'The "Hidden Christians" of the UK University Campus'. In *Young People and the Diversity of (Non)Religious Identities in International Perspective*, edited by Elisabeth Arweck and Heather Shipley. Cham, SWITZERLAND: Springer International Publishing AG. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/durham/detail.action?docID=5826034.

Hackett, Conrad. 2014. 'Seven Things to Consider When Measuring Religious Identity'. *Religion* 44 (3): 396–413. https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2014.903647.

Halafoff, Anna, Andrew Singleton, Gary Bouma, and Mary Lou Rasmussen. 2020. 'Religious Literacy of Australia's Gen Z Teens: Diversity and Social Inclusion'. *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 41 (2): 195–213. https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2019.1698862.

Hall, David D., ed. 1997. *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*. Princeton University Press.

Hall, Stuart. 1992. 'The Question of Cultural Identity'. In *Modernity and Its Futures*, by Stuart Hall, David Held, and Anthony G. McGrew, 273–326. Understanding Modern Societies 4. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

———. 1996. 'Who Needs Identity?' In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, by Paul Du Gay and Stuart Hall, 1–17. Los Angeles, Calif: Sage.

Hammersley, Martyn. 2007. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0710/2007005419.html.

Hancock, Laura. 2016. 'Youth On Religion: The Development, Negotiation and Impact of Faith and Non-Faith Identity'. Youth For Christ. https://www.routledge.com/Youth-On-Religion-The-development-negotiation-and-impact-of-faith-and/Madge-Hemming-Stenson/p/book/9780415696708.

Harding, Susan. 1991. 'Representing Fundamentalism: The Problem of the Repugnant Cultural Other'. *Social Research* 58 (2): 373–93.

Harris, Alana. 2010a. 'A Place to Grow Spiritually and Socially': The Experiences of Young Pilgrims to Lourdes'. In *Religion and Youth*, edited by Sylvia Collins-Mayo, 139–48. Theology and Religion in Interdisciplinary Perspective. Theology and Religion in Interdisciplinary Perspective Series in Association with the BSA Sociology of Religion Study Group. Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub.

———. 2010b. 'First Communion: Ritual, Church and Popular Religious Identity'. *Ecclesiology* 6 (3): 395–99. https://doi.org/10.1163/174553110X526587.

———. 2013a. *Faith in the Family: A Lived Religious History of English Catholicism, 1945-82*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

———. 2013b. 'Lourdes and Holistic Spirituality: Contemporary Catholicism, the Therapeutic and Religious Thermalism'. *Culture and Religion* 14 (1): 23–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2012.756411.

———. 2019. 'Bone Idol? British Catholics and Devotion to St Thérèse of Lisieux'. In *The Sixties and Beyond: Dechristianization in North America and Western Europe, 1945-2000*, edited by Nancy Christie and Stephen J. Heathorn, 429–52. University of Toronto Press. https://null/view/title/539818.

Harris, Alana, and Jane Garnett. 2003. 'Church without Walls: Mapping the Sacred in East London'. In *Rescripting Religion in the City*, by Alana Harris and Jane Garnett, 115–30. Farnham: Ashgate.

Hatchman, Daniel James. 2013. 'Family and School Influences on the Religious Practice and Spiritual Lives of Catholic Adolescents'. Southern Cross University.

Healy, Nicholas. 2013. 'Ordinary Theology, Theological Method and Constructive Ecclesiology'. In *Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church*, edited by Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis, 13–21. Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology. Farnham, Surrey, UK ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Heelas, Paul. 2007. 'The Holistic Milieu and Spirituality: Reflections on Voas and Bruce'. In *A Sociology of Spirituality*, by Kieran Flanagan and Peter C Jupp, 63–80. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=438421.

Heelas, Paul, and Linda Woodhead. 2004. *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion Is Giving Way to Spirituality*. 1 edition. Malden, MA: WB.

Hemming, Peter J., and Nicola Madge. 2012. 'Researching Children, Youth and Religion: Identity, Complexity and Agency'. *Childhood* 19 (1): 38–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568211402860.

Henrich, Joseph. 2009. 'The Evolution of Costly Displays, Cooperation and Religion: Credibility Enhancing Displays and Their Implications for Cultural Evolution'. *Evolution and Human Behavior* 30 (4): 244–60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2009.03.005.

Hervieu-Léger, Daniele. 1994a. 'Religion, Europe and the Pope: Memory and the Experience of French Youth'. In *Religion in Contemporary Europe*, edited by John Fulton and Peter Gee, 125-139. Texts and Studies in Religion, v.64. Lewiston, NY ; Lampeter: Mellen.

———. 1994b. 'Religion, Memory and Catholic Identity: Young People in France and the New Evangelisation of Europe'. In *Religion in Contemporary Europe*, edited by John Fulton and Peter Gee, 125–38. Texts and Studies in Religion, v.64. Lewiston, NY ; Lampeter: Mellen.

Hervieu-Léger, Danièle. 2000. *Religion as a Chain of Memory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hervieu-Léger, Daniele. 2006. 'In Search of Certainties: The Paradoxes of Religiosity in Societies of High Modernity'. *The Hedgehog Review* 8 (1–2): 59–68.

Hoge, Dean R. 2002. 'Core and Periphery in American Catholic Identity'. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 17 (3): 293–301. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537900220000008226.

Hoge, Dean R., William D Dinges, Mary Johnson, and Juan Gonzales. 2001. *Young Adult Catholics: Religion in the Culture of Choice*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

Holz, Dominic. n.d. 'The Challenge of Faith, Practice, and Values in Catholic Universities and Colleges in the United States of America'. Oikonomia:Rivista Di Etica e Sciencza Sociali/Journal of Ethics and Social Sciences. Accessed 8 August 2024. https://www.oikonomia.it/index.php/it/oikonomia-2011/giugno-2011/734-the-challenge-of-faith-practice-and-values-in-catholic-universities-and-colleges-in-the-united-states-of-america.

Hopkins, Peter E., and Nancy Bell. 2008. 'Interdisciplinary Perspectives: Ethical Issues and Child Research'. *Children's Geographies* 6 (1): 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1080/14733280701791785.

Hopkins, Peter E. 2007. ‘Thinking Critically and Creatively about Focus Groups’. *Area* 39 (4): 528–35. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2007.00766.x.

Hopkins, Peter, Elizabeth Olson, Rachel Pain, and Giselle Vincett. 2011. ‘Mapping Intergenerationalities: The Formation of Youthful Religiosities’. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36 (2): 314–27. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2010.00419.x.

Hornbeck, J. Patrick. 2011. ‘Deconversion from Roman Catholicism: Mapping a Fertile Field’. *American Catholic Studies* 122 (2): 1–29.

Hornsby-Smith, Michael P. 1991. *Roman Catholic Beliefs in England : Customary Catholicism and Transformations of Religious Authority*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1992. ‘Believing without Belonging? The Case of Roman Catholics in England’. In *Religion: Contemporary Issues : The All Souls Seminars in the Sociology of Religion*, by Bryan R. Wilson, 125–34. Canterbury Papers (London) ; 5. London: Bellew.

———. 1999. *Catholics in England 1950-2000 : Historical and Sociological Perspectives*. London: Cassell.

Hout, Michael, and Claude Fischer. 2014. ‘Explaining Why More Americans Have No Religious Preference: Political Backlash and Generational Succession, 1987-2012’. *Sociological Science* 1:423–47. https://doi.org/10.15195/v1.a24.

Howell, Brian M. 2007. ‘The “Repugnant Cultural Other” Speaks Back: Christian Identity as Ethnographic `standpoint”. *Anthropological Theory* 7 (4): 371–91. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499607083426.

Inglis, Tom. 2007. ‘Catholic Identity in Contemporary Ireland: Belief and Belonging to Tradition’. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 22 (2): 205–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537900701331064.

Ingold, Tim. 2010. ‘Ways of Mind-Walking: Reading, Writing, Painting’. *Visual Studies* 25 (1): 15–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725861003606712.

Ingram, Nicola, and Jessica Abrahams. 2015. ‘Stepping Outside of Oneself How a Cleft-Habitus Can Lead to Greater Reflexivity through Occupying “the Third Space”’. In *Bourdieu: The Next Generation: The Development of Bourdieu’s Intellectual Heritage in Contemporary UK Sociology*, edited by Jenny Thatcher, Nicola Ingram, Ciaran Burke, and Jessie Abrahams, 140–56. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/durham/detail.action?docID=4218354.

John Paul II. 1995. ‘Youth: Sent to Proclaim True Liberation’. Presented at the World Youth Day, Philippines.

Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony. 2019. ‘THEOLOGICAL MODELS OF YOUTH IN CHRISTUS VIVIT’. *Nnadiebube Journal of Religion, Culture and Society* 1 (1). https://acjol.org/index.php/njrcs/article/view/njrcs_v1_n1_1.

Kaufman, Tone Stangeland. 2015. ‘Normativity as Pitfall or Ally?’ *Ecclesial Practices* 2 (1): 91–107. https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-00201006.

Kesby, Mike. 2000. ‘Participatory Diagramming: Deploying Qualitative Methods through an Action Research Epistemology’. *Area* 32 (4): 423–35. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2000.tb00158.x.

Kieran, Patricia M., and Aiveen Mullally. 2022. ‘Blending Catholicism with Chi, Chakras and Crystals’, July. https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-bja10037.

Kießig, Sebastian. 2019. ‘Synod of Bishops on Young People: From Preparatory Document to Apostolic Exhortation Christus Vivit’. *Bogoslovska Smotra* 89 (5): 1065–81.

King, E. Frances. 2010. *Material Religion and Popular Culture*. Routledge Studies in Religion. New York ; Abingdon: Routledge.

Kitzinger, Jenny, and Clare Farquhar. 1999. ‘The Analytical Potential of “Sensitive Moments” in Focus Group Discussions’. In *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, edited by Rosaline S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger, 156–72. London: SAGE.

Klingenberg, Maria, and Sofia Sjö. 2019. ‘Theorizing Religious Socialization: A Critical Assessment’. *Religion* 49 (2): 163–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2019.1584349.

Knibbe, Kim. 2020. ‘Is Critique Possible in the Study of Lived Religion? Anthropological and Feminist Reflections’. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 35 (2): 251–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2020.1759904.

Kupari, Helena. 2020. ‘Lived Religion and the Religious Field’. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 35 (2): 213–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2020.1759901.

Lamb, Christopher. 2018. ‘Cardinal Nichols on the “shock of Reality” at Youth Synod’. *The Tablet*, 5 October 2018. https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/10824/cardinal-nichols-on-the-shock-of-reality-at-youth-synod.

Lamontagne, Kathryn G. 2022. '"Our Three Selves:" Radclyffe Hall and Mabel Batten's Lived Catholicism', July. https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-bja10038.

Landres, J. Shawn. 2002. 'Being (in) the Field: Defining Ethnography in Southern California and Central Slovakia'. In *Personal Knowledge and beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*, by James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire, 100–112. New York ; London: New York University Press.

Landy, Thomas M. n.d. 'Introduction: Ireland Still Catholic, but No Longer Religious | Catholics & Cultures'. Catholics and Cultures. Accessed 12 July 2024. https://www.catholicsandcultures.org/ireland/introduction.

Lee, Lois. 2015. *Recognizing the Non-Religious : Reimagining the Secular*. First edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Leming, Laura M. 2007. 'Sociological Explorations: What Is Religious Agency?' *Sociological Quarterly* 48 (1): 73–92. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2007.00071.x.

Lincoln, Yvonna S., Susan A. Lynham, and Egon G. Guba. 2018. 'Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences, Revisted'. In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, Fifth edition., 108–50. Los Angeles ; London: SAGE.

Linhorst, Donald M. 2002. 'A Review of the Use and Potential of Focus Groups in Social Work Research'. *Qualitative Social Work* 1 (2): 208–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/147332500200100262 0.

Luckmann, Thomas. 1970. *The Invisible Religion: The Problem of Religion in Modern Society.* 1st Macmillan paperback ed. New York: Macmillan.

Mandes, Slawomir, and Maria Rogaczewska. 2013. '"I Don't Reject the Catholic Church - the Catholic Church Rejects Me": How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings in Poland Re-Evaluate Their Religion'. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 28 (2): 259.

Manglos, Nicolette D. 2010. 'Born Again in Balaka: Pentecostal versus Catholic Narratives of Religious Transformation in Rural Malawi'. *Sociology of Religion* 71 (4): 409–31. https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srq021.

Mannion, Gerard. 2020. 'The Pilgrim Church: An Ongoing Journey of Ecclesial Renewal and Reform'. In *The Cambridge Companion to Vatican II*, edited by Richard R. Gaillardetz, 1st ed., 115–35. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108698610.007.

Mark, Olwyn. 2016. 'Passing on Faith'. London: Theos Thinktank. https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/archive/files/Reports/Passing%20on%20faith%20combined%20(1).pdf.

Mason, Michael C. 'Making the Sacred Real'. *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion.* 4 (2013): 9–25. https://doi-org.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/10.1163/9789004260498_003.

Mayblin, M. 2010. *Gender, Catholicism, and Morality in Brazil: Virtuous Husbands, Powerful Wives*. Springer.

Mayblin, M., Kristin Norget, and Valentina Napolitano, eds. 2017. 'Introduction: The Anthropology of Catholicism'. In *The Anthropology of Catholicism: A Reader*, 1–32.

McCloud, Sean. 2012. 'The Possibilities of Change in a World of Constraint: Individual and Social Transformation in the Work of Pierre Bourdieu'. *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 41 (1): 2–8.

McDonough, Graham P. 2019. 'Pluralizing Catholic Identity'. *Religious Education* 114 (2): 168–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2018.1560744.

McFarland SJ, Michael C. n.d. 'Catholics & Cultures'. Centre for Religion, Ethics and Culture, College of the Holy Cross. Accessed 12 July 2024. https://www.catholicsandcultures.org/.

McGrail, Peter. 2007. *First Communion: Ritual, Church and Popular Religious Identity*. Liturgy, Worship and Society Series. Aldershot: Ashgate.

———. 2016. 'Display and Division: Congregational Conflict among Roman Catholics'. In *Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a Post-Christian Context [Electronic Resource]*, edited by Mathew Guest, Tusting. Karin, and Linda Woodhead, 85–98. Ebook Central. London, [England] ; New York, [New York: London, England ; New York, New York : Routledge. https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=4817036.

McGuinness, Margaret M. 2005. 'Let Us Go to the Altar: American Catholics and the Eucharist 1926-76'. In *Habits of Devotion*, 187–235. Cornell University Press. https://www-degruyter-com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/document/doi/10.7591/9781501726668-005/html.

McGuire, Meredith B. 2008. *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McKinnon, Andrew M., Marta Trzebiatowska, and Christopher Craig Brittain. 2011. 'Bourdieu, Capital, and Conflict in a Religious Field: The Case of the "Homosexuality" Conflict in the Anglican Communion'. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 26 (3): 355–70. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2011.616033.

Mead, Margaret. 1995. 'Visual Anthropolgy in a Discipline of Words'. In *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, by Paul Hockings. De Gruyter.

Michell, Lynn. 1999. 'Combining Focus Groups and Interviews: Telling How It Is; Telling How It Feels'. In *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, edited by Rosaline S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger, 36–46. London: SAGE.

Miller, Maureen C.-- (Maureen Catherine). 2015. 'Introduction: Material Culture and Catholic History'. *The Catholic Historical Review* 101 (1): 1–17.

Mitchell, Claire. 2016. *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland: Boundaries of Belonging and Belief*. London ; Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315244709.

Mitchell, Claudia. 2011. *Doing Visual Research*. Los Angeles, Calif. ; London: SAGE.

Morgan, David. 1999. *Visual Piety: History and Theory of Popular Religious Images*. New Ed edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Moschella, Mary Clark. 2008. *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice : An Introduction*. Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press.

Muller, Chandra, and Christopher G. Ellison. 2001. 'Religious Involvement, Social Capital, and Adolescents' Academic Progress: Evidence from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988'. *Sociological Focus* 34 (2): 155–83. https://doi.org/10.1080/00380237.2001.10571189.

Myers, Scott M. 1996. 'An Interactive Model of Religiosity Inheritance: The Importance of Family Context'. *American Sociological Review* 61 (5): 858–66. https://doi.org/10.2307/2096457.

Neitz, Mary Jo. 2002. 'Walking between the Worlds: Permeable Boundaries, Ambiguous Identities'. In *Personal Knowledge and beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*, edited by James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire, 33–46. New York ; London: New York University Press.

Norget, Kristin, Valentina Napolitano, and Maya Mayblin, eds. 2017. *The Anthropology of Catholicism: A Reader*.

Nowicka, Magdalena. 2015. 'Habitus: Its Transformation and Transfer through Cultural Encounters in Migration'. In *Bourdieu, Habitus and Social Research: The Art of Application*, edited by Cristina Costa and Mark Murphy, 93–110. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137496928_6.

Obodo, Ernest. 2022. 'Forms of Assigning Pastoral Care: Its Application in the Nigerian Context in the Light of the Instruction of the Congregation of the Clergy, "The Pastoral Conversion"'. *JORAS - Nigerian Journal of Religion and Society* 11 (October). https://www.acjol.org/index.php/joras/article/view/3019.

Olson, Elizabeth, Peter Hopkins, Rachel Pain, and Giselle Vincett. 2013. 'Retheorizing the Postsecular Present: Embodiment, Spatial Transcendence, and Challenges to Authenticity Among Young Christians in Glasgow, Scotland'. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103 (6): 1421–36. https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2012.702516.

Orsi, Robert A. 1996. *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.

———. 1997. 'Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religion'. In *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, by David D. Hall, 3–21. Princeton University Press.

———. 2002. *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950*. 2nd ed. New Haven ; London: Yale University Press.

———. 2003. 'Is the Study of Lived Religion Irrelevant to the World We Live in? Special Presidential Plenary Address, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Salt Lake City, November 2, 2002'. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42 (2): 169–74.

———. 2005. *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them*. Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press.

———. 2007. 'When 2 + 2 = 5: Can We Begin to Think about Unexplained Religious Experiences in Ways That Acknowledge Their Enstence ?' *The American Scholar* 76 (2): 34–43.

———. 2012a. ‘Everyday Religion and the Contemporary World: The Unmodern, or What Was Supposed to Have Disappeared but Did Not’. In *Ordinary Lives and Grand Schemes: An Anthropology of Everyday Religion*, edited by Joska Samuli Schielke and Liza Debevec, 145–61. EASA Series ; 18. New York ; Oxford: Berghahn.

———. 2012b. ‘Introduction’. In *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, edited by Robert Orsi. Cambridge University Press. https://www.cambridgebookshop.co.uk/products/the-cambridge-companion-to-religious-studies.

Pace, Enzo. 2007. ‘Religion as Communication: The Changing Shape of Catholicism in Italy and Spain’. In *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives*, by Nancy Tatom Ammerman, 37–49. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Page, Sarah-Jane. ‘Sexuality and Christianity: Understanding the Attitudes and Negotiations of Young Adults in the UK’. In *Christianity in the Modern World: Changes and Controversies*, by Elijah Obinna, Giselle Vincett, Afe Adogame, and Elizabeth Olson, 95–118. Oxford, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/durham/detail.action?docID=1763123.

Pain, Rachel, and Peter Francis. 2003. ‘Reflections on Participatory Research’. *Area* 35 (1): 46–54. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-4762.00109.

Pink, Sarah. 2012. *Advances in Visual Methodology*. London: SAGE.

———. 2013. *Doing Visual Ethnography*. 3rd edition. London: SAGE.

———. 2021. *Doing Visual Ethnography*. 4th edition. London: SAGE.

Poloma, Margaret M., and Brian F. Pendleton. 1991. ‘The Effects of Prayer and Prayer Experiences on Measures of General Weil-Being’. *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 19 (1): 71–83. https://doi.org/10.1177/009164719101900107.

Portmann, John. 2009. *Catholic Culture in the USA: In and Out of Church*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Radley, Alan, Darrin Hodgetts, and Andrea Cullen. 2005. ‘Visualizing Homelessness: A Study in Photography and Estrangement’. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 15 (4): 273–95. https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.825.

Reay, Diane. 2004. ‘“It’s All Becoming a Habitus”: Beyond the Habitual Use of Habitus in Educational Research’. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 25 (4): 431–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569042000236934.

Reed-Danahay, Deborah. 2005. *Locating Bourdieu*. New Anthropologies of Europe. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Rivas, Carol. 2018. ‘Finding Themes in Qualitative Data’. In *Researching Society and Culture*, by Clive Seale, 4th edition., 429–53. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Rivière, Claude, and Albert Piette. 1990. *Nouvelles idoles, nouveaux cultes: dérives de la sacralité*. Mutations et complexité. Paris: L’Harmattan.

Robbins, Joel. 2014. ‘The Anthropology of Christianity: Unity, Diversity, New Directions: An Introduction to Supplement 10’. *Current Anthropology* 55 (S10): S157–71. https://doi.org/10.1086/678289.

Roberts, Tyler. 2006. ‘Between the Lines: Exceeding Historicism in the Study of Religion’. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74 (3): 697–719. https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfj092.

Robson, Elsbeth. 2001. ‘Interviews Worth the Tears? Exploring Dilemmas of Research with Young Carers in Zimbabwe’. *Ethics, Place & Environment* 4 (2): 135–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/713665943.

Roof, Wade Clark, and Richard B. Perkins. 1975. ‘On Conceptualizing Salience in Religious Commitment’. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 14 (2): 111–28. https://doi.org/10.2307/1384735.

Ruel, Malcolm. 2005. ‘Christians as Believers’. In *Ritual and Religious Belief: A Reader*, edited by Graham Harvey, 242–64. Critical Categories in the Study of Religion. London: Equinox.

Rutherford, John. 1990. ‘The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha’. In *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by John Rutherford, 207–21. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Ryan, Louise. 2014. ‘“Islam Does Not Change”: Young People Narrating Negotiations of Religion and Identity’. *Journal of Youth Studies* 17 (4): 446–60. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2013.834315.

Rymarz, Richard. 2007. ‘Who Goes to World Youth Day? Some Data on Under-18 Australian Participants’. *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 28 (1): 33–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/13617670701251405.

Rymarz, Richard, and Anthony Cleary. 2016. ‘Some Religious Beliefs and Behaviours of Australian Catholic School Students’. *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 37 (1): 68–77. https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2016.1141530.

Sack, Kevin. 2011. 'Nuns, a "Dying Breed," Fade From Leadership Roles at Catholic Hospitals'. *The New York Times*, 20 August 2011, sec. U.S. https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/21/us/21nuns.html.

Schielke, Joska Samuli, and Liza Debevec. 2012. *Ordinary Lives and Grand Schemes: An Anthropology of Everyday Religion*. EASA Series ; 18. New York ; Oxford: Berghahn.

Scott, David, and Charles Hirschkind. 2006. *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors*. Cultural Memory in the Present. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0512/2005013565.html.

Scourfield, Jonathan, Sophie Gilliat-Ray, Asma Khan, and Sameh Otri. 2013. *Muslim Childhood: Religious Nurture in a European Context*. OUP Oxford.

Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops. 2018. 'Final Document of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment'. Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops. http://secretariat.synod.va/content/synod2018/en/fede-discernimento-vocazione/final-document-of-the-synod-of-bishops-on-young-people--faith-an.pdf.

Sewell, William H. 1992. 'A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation'. *American Journal of Sociology* 98:1–29.

Shapiro, Susan P. 2005. 'Agency Theory'. *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (1): 263–84. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.31.041304.122159.

Sherkat, Darren E. 2003. 'Religious Socialization: Sources of Influence and Influences of Agency'. In *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, edited by Michele Dillon, 151–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511807961.012.

Shippee, Tetyana Pylypiv. 2009. '"But I Am Not Moving": Residents' Perspectives on Transitions Within a Continuing Care Retirement Community'. *The Gerontologist* 49 (3): 418–27. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnp030.

Simons, Helen. 2009. *Case Study Research in Practice*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: SAGE Publications, Limited. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/durham/detail.action?docID=743724.

Smith, Christian. 2009. *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Christian, and Melinda Lundquist Denton. 2005. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Christian, Kyle Longest, Jonathan Hill, and Kari Christoffersen. 2014. *Young Catholic America: Emerging Adults In, Out of, and Gone from the Church*. 1 edition. Oxford University Press.

Smith, Christian, and Patricia Snell. 2009. *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Gregory A. 2019. 'Just One-Third of U.S. Catholics Agree with Their Church That Eucharist Is Body, Blood of Christ'. *Pew Research Center* (blog). 5 August 2019. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/05/transubstantiation-eucharist-u-s-catholics/.

Spickard, James V., J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire. 2002. *Personal Knowledge and beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*. New York ; London: New York University Press.

Stake, Robert E. 2000. 'Case Studies'. In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 2nd ed., 435–54. Thousand Oaks, Calif. ; London: Sage.

Storm, Ingrid, and David Voas. 2012. 'The Intergenerational Transmission of Religious Service Attendance'. *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 25 (2): 131–50.

Strack, Robert W., Cathleen Magill, and Kara McDonagh. 2004. 'Engaging Youth through Photovoice'. *Health Promotion Practice* 5 (1): 49–58. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839903258015.

Strhan, Anna. 2013. 'Practising the Space Between: Embodying Belief as an Evangelical Anglican Student.' *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 28 (2): 225–39. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1080/13537903.2013.783336.

Swidler, Ann. 2001. 'Cultural Expression and Action'. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, edited by Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes, 3063–69. Amsterdam ; Elsevier.

Thatcher, Jenny, Nicola Ingram, Ciaran Burke, and Jessie Abrahams. 2015. *Bourdieu: The Next Generation: The Development of Bourdieu's Intellectual Heritage in Contemporary UK Sociology*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/durham/detail.action?docID=4218354.

Thomas, Gary. 2011. 'A Typology for the Case Study in Social Science Following a Review of Definition, Discourse, and Structure'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 17 (6): 511–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800411409884.

Tomasi, Luigi. 2000. 'Young Adult Experience in Italy: Towards a Religious and Moral Supermarket?' In *Young Catholics at the New Millennium: The Religion and Morality of Young Adults in Western Countries*, edited by John Fulton, 90–111. Dublin: University College Dublin Press.

Trzebiatowska, Marta. 2010. 'The Advent of the "EasyJet Priest": Dilemmas of Polish Catholic Integration in the UK'. *Sociology* 44 (6): 1055–72. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038510381618.

Tweed, Thomas A. 2002. 'Between the Living and the Dead: Fieldwork, History and the Interpreter's Position'. In *Personal Knowledge and beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*, by James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire, 63–74. New York ; London: New York University Press.

Umoquit, Muriah J., Mark J. Dobrow, Louise Lemieux-Charles, Paul G. Ritvo, David R. Urbach, and Walter P. Wodchis. 2008. 'The Efficiency and Effectiveness of Utilizing Diagrams in Interviews: An Assessment of Participatory Diagramming and Graphic Elicitation'. *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 8 (August):53. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-8-53.

Vakalopoulos, Konstantinos. 2022. 'Shedding Some (More) Light in Bourdieu's Habitus and Doxa: A Socio-Phenomenological Approach'. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* n/a (n/a): 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12364.

Vásquez, Manuel A. 2011. *More than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion*. Ebook Central. Oxford, England ; New York, New York: Oxford University Press. https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=6260938.

———. Vásquez, Manuel A. 'Grappling with the Legacy of Modernity: Implications for the Sociology of Religion'. In *Religion on the Edge: De-Centering and Re-Centering the Sociology of Religion*, edited by Courtney Bender, Wendy Cadge, Peggy Levitt, and David Smilde, 23–42. Oxford University Press, 2012. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199938629.003.0002.

Verter, Bradford. 2003. 'Spiritual Capital: Theorizing Religion with Bourdieu Against Bourdieu'. *Sociological Theory* 21 (2): 150–74. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9558.00182.

Village, Andrew, and Leslie Francis. 2016. 'Measuring the Contribution of Roman Catholic Secondary Schools to Students' Religious, Personal and Social Values'. *Journal of Catholic Education* 19 (3): 66–115. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.1903062016.

Vincett, Giselle, and Elizabeth Olson. 2012. 'Case Study 3: The Religiosity of Young People'. In *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*, by Linda Woodhead and Rebecca Catto, 196–202. London: Routledge.

Voas, David, and Steve Bruce. 2007. 'The Spiritual Revolution: Another False Dawn for the Sacred'. In *A Sociology of Spirituality*, by Kieran Flanagan and Peter C Jupp, 43–61. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=438421.

Voas, David, and Alasdair Crockett. 2005. *Religion in Britain : Neither Believing nor Belonging*. Oxford etc: Clarendon Press.

Voas, David, and Laura Watt. 2014. 'The Church Growth Research Programme Report on Strands 1 and 2'. Church of England. https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/report_strands_1_2_rev2-from-cgr-website.pdf.

Ward, Pete. 2012. *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*. Studies in Ecclesiology and Ethnography. Grand Rapids, Mich; Cambridge: William BEerdmans Publishing Company.

Ward, Pete, and Sarah Dunlop. 2011. 'Practical Theology and the Ordinary'. *Practical Theology* 4 (3): 295–313. https://doi.org/10.1558/prth.v4i3.295.

Watkins, Clare. 2015. 'Practising Ecclesiology: From Product to Process'. *Ecclesial Practices* 2 (1): 23–39. https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-00201009.

Watkins, Clare, and Bridget Shepherd. 2014. 'The Challenge of "Fresh Expressions" to Ecclesiology'. *Ecclesial Practices* 1 (1): 92–110. https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-00101005.

Weddell, Sherry A. 2012. *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus*. Our Sunday Visitor Inc.,U.S.

Wilcox, Melissa M. 2002. 'Dancing on the Fence: Researching Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Christians'. In *Personal Knowledge and beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*, by James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire, 47–60. New York ; London: New York University Press.

Wodon, Quentin. 2021. 'Declining Enrollment in Catholic Schools in the West and Insights from the United States'. *Journal of Catholic Education* 24 (1). https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.2401182021.

Woodhead, Linda. 2011. 'Spirituality and Christianity'. In *Religion, Spirituality and Everyday Practice / Edited by Giuseppe Giordan, William H. Swatos, Jr.*, edited by Giuseppe Giordan and William H. Swatos, 3–21. Dordrecht ; London: Springer.

———. 2013. 'What Catholics Really Think about Sex | Linda Woodhead Reveals Catholic Attitudes to Sex and the Family'. *Westminster Faith Debates* (blog). 2013. http://faithdebates.org.uk/blog/catholics-really-think-sex/.

———. 2014. 'Endangered Species'. *The Tablet*, 14 November 2014. https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/826/endangered-species.

Woodhead, Linda, and Rebecca Catto. 2012. *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*. London: Routledge.

XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. 2023. 'Synthesis Report: A Synodal Church in Mission'. Office for Synod. https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/assembly/synthesis/english/2023.10.28-ENG-Synthesis-Report.pdf.

Yin, Robert K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods / Robert K. Yin.* 4th ed.. Applied Social Research Methods ; 5. London: SAGE.

———. 2013. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Fifth edition. Los Angeles, California: SAGE.

Young, Lorraine, and Hazel Barrett. 2001. 'Adapting Visual Methods: Action Research with Kampala Street Children'. *Area* 33 (2): 141–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-4762.000