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College Ethnic Catholic Communities: Ethnoreligious Pathways for an Intercultural Church

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**COLLEGE ETHNIC CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES:
ETHNORELIGIOUS PATHWAYS FOR AN INTERCULTURAL CHURCH**

A thesis by

Kyle Ko Francisco Shinseki, SJ

presented to

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Abstract

When children of Catholic immigrants leave their families and ethnic Catholic communities for multiethnic colleges, they often encounter a sense of alienation. As this experience challenges their sense of identity, the resources typically available on their respective campuses either offer a de-ethnicized version of their religious identity or a secularized version of their ethnic identity. College ethnic Catholic communities offer them a space where they can explore the intersection of their faith and ethnicity, selectively integrate and adapt aspects of their ethnoreligious heritage received from their families and faith communities, and construct a second generation ethnoreligious identity.

Through interviews, surveys, and participant observation, this thesis will describe how six predominantly Asian American and Latino college ethnic Catholic communities from both Catholic and public universities in the Western and Midwestern U.S. provide their members with a spiritual home in college. In this family-like environment, members are reconnected with ethnoreligious traditions, find the support they need to face the challenges of college life, and internalize their faith in their own second-generation way.

Furthermore, these communities foster the expression of their ethnoreligious identity not only amongst their members but also in their broader campus environments. These expressions often take the form of popular devotions, which students are able to plan and lead in a way that is true to their newfound identity. In contrast to the

monocultural and often monolingual ethnic churches where students were first introduced to these devotions, these reinvented traditions serve as intercultural bridges that enable the sharing of their ethnoreligious identity, which speaks to the promise that these communities may hold for a more intercultural U.S. Catholic Church.

Eduardo C. Fernández, SJ, STD, Director Date

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Preface

When I left the familiar Japanese-Hawaiian, subtly Buddhist-Christian environment I grew up in on the rural island of Kaua‘i for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I felt as out of place as many of the college students I interviewed for this thesis. In the midst of my transition, I happened upon a candle with a familiar, yet mysterious image, that of *la Virgen de Guadalupe*. Although I was not Catholic at the time, I recalled seeing that image before in a Mexican American friend’s home. So, I bought the candle and kept one of them lit in my room throughout my entire first year even though I had no idea who this mysterious *Virgen* was.

The light of that candle led me to a group of Mexican American Catholic friends who did know *la Virgen* very well and who introduced me not only to her but to the Catholic faith. So, of course after being received into the Church at the Easter Vigil my junior year, my friends organized a *fiesta* complete with Mexican food catered from the restaurant owned by the *jalisciense* we affectionately called Don Pepe and a live mariachi band that featured one of my friends from El Paso as a violinist. Years later, I was introduced to my religious order, the Jesuits, by a Cuban American Marian sodality whose weekly meetings began with a Spanish Mass followed by Cuban coffee—*con espumita*—and a lively discussion, often ending with plans being made by the *jóvenes* for some salsa dancing the following weekend.

Ethnoreligious traditions like these have nourished my faith and continue to inspire the ministry I do now as a Catholic priest. As I came to the faith through an informal ethnoreligious community in college, I sought to help create a similar community when I began my studies as a Jesuit. This community, which *gracias a Dios*

y a la Virgen, continues to thrive to this day was what prompted me to make college ethnic Catholic communities the focus of this STL thesis.

I would not have been able to complete this thesis without the prayers and encouragement of family, friends, and my brother Jesuits. I am grateful to all of my professors at both the Jesuit School of Theology (JST) and the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology who have supported me through this process. JST sociology professor Jerome Baggett deserves special gratitude for his guidance in designing and analyzing my research. In addition, I was blessed to receive the counsel of many scholars, diocesan youth ministers, student affairs professionals and campus ministers, including Armando Cervantes; Olivia Cornejo; Allan Figueroa Deck, SJ; Brett Hoover; Ricky Manalo, CSP; G. Cristina Mora; Czarina Ramsay; Robert Schreiter, CPPS; Roger Schroeder, SVD; and many who must remain unnamed to protect their confidentiality.

A special word of thanks goes to my thesis committee: my director and brother Jesuit, Eduardo Fernández, SJ, whose Sacraments in a Latino Context course my first year at JST sparked my interest in studying intercultural ministry and who encouraged me every step along the way; Fr. Simon Kim, who shared with me his passion for and knowledge of intercultural theology; and Carolyn Chen who inspired me as a trailblazer in researching the ethnoreligious identity of the new second generation and who generously agreed to be on my committee during her sabbatical from the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of California Berkeley.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the students who I interviewed, who patiently completed my surveys, and who invited me into the sacred spaces of their college ethnic Catholic communities. — *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*.

Introduction

While the U.S. Catholic Church has always been an immigrant church, previously held assumptions that the children of Catholic immigrants would naturally assimilate and then move seamlessly from ethnic parishes into a “mainstream” parish no longer hold.¹ Today’s children of Catholic immigrants, the 1.5 generation and the second generation, referred to as the “second generation” for the remainder of this thesis, reflect a vast diversity of ethnic backgrounds. In contrast to blurring of ethnic boundaries among previous waves of European Catholic immigrants,² many of these young people seek ways to integrate their ethnic heritage and Catholic faith in an American context.³

College is often the first exposure that many children of Catholic immigrants have to a more multiethnic Catholic community and could provide the ideal opportunity for such intercultural integration. However, campus ministry programs at Catholic universities and Catholic/Newman Centers at public universities often provide worship and faith formation opportunities that more closely reflect the backgrounds of “mainstream” Catholic students who do not come from immigrant families. Even at a university where the majority of students were Latinos, a study of mostly Catholic White and Latino students reflected minimal “spiritual transculturation,” between the two groups, which was defined as “the process of sharing...spiritual beliefs whether by cultural exchange or other influence.”⁴

¹ Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Mission* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009), 92.

² Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1960), 157, 221.

³ Robert J. Schreiter, “Just What Do We Want?: Ministry in a Multicultural World,” *New Theology Review* 13, no. 1 (February 2000): 10.

⁴ Roger Geertz González, “College Student Spirituality at a Hispanic Serving Institution,” *Journal of College & Character* IX, No. 4 (April 2008): 16.

While there certainly are campus ministry centers and Catholic centers that provide programming specifically targeted to particular ethnic Catholic populations, ranging from multilingual Masses to retreats, these college ethnic Catholic communities are distinct in that they are largely student-initiated and are all student-led. In addition, the communities meet on a weekly basis and so require a greater level of commitment and participation on the part of their members than most other campus ministry or Catholic center programs for second generation Catholic students.

College ethnic Catholic communities offer an alternative by which children of Catholic immigrants can engage their ethnic identity and Catholic faith in an integrated fashion. As one student commented on an open-ended question on a survey conducted for this thesis explains, his college ethnic Catholic community “helps cultivate my faith with who I am. I want to praise God with all the gifts he has given me and my family and my heritage is one of those gifts.”⁵ These communities foster the sharing of these ethnoreligious gifts not only amongst their members, but with broader campus communities. As such, they might provide a model for how ethnically diverse Catholic communities might be integrated into the U.S. Catholic Church.

College ethnic Catholic communities have existed in the United States since at least 1985, when Kyrie Eleison, then known as Korean Catholic Bible Study, was formed at the University of California Los Angeles.⁶ Since then, dozens of similar communities comprised primarily of students of the same ethnic Catholic background have formed at both public and Catholic universities across the country. About half of these communities

⁵ Anonymous survey response by student from a Filipino American college ethnic Catholic community. See next page for further details on the survey.

⁶ “History,” UCLA Kyrie Eleison, accessed February 12, 2019, <https://lakyrie.wordpress.com/about/history/>.

are Latino-focused,⁷ while most of the remaining communities serve Filipino American,⁸ Korean American,⁹ and Vietnamese American Catholics.¹⁰

The following thesis presents the findings of a study conducted of six college ethnic Catholic communities affiliated with two Catholic universities in the Midwest and two public universities in the West. In addition, a seventh non-ethnically-themed Catholic community at a public university in the West was included in the study for the purposes of comparison. The study explored how college ethnic Catholic communities contribute to the lived religious experience of the children of Catholic immigrants in the U.S. In particular, the research sought to understand how these communities facilitate the integration and appropriation of ethnic and religious identity and so contribute to these students' overall religious experience in ethnically diverse college settings.

Two communities were Latino-focused, two Filipino American, one Korean American, and one multiethnic. A total of 18 college ethnic Catholic community members were interviewed as well as two members of the non-ethnically-themed community. Three additional interviews were conducted of campus ministers from three

⁷ Latino communities include: Hispanic/Latino Outreach Committee, University of Rochester; Latinos 4 Christ, Franciscan University of Steubenville; Los Cristeros of Northern Arizona University; Ministerio CaFe of University of California Davis; Nueva Alianza of the University of Florida; Pescadores of Texas A&M University; Spanglish CLCs of Loyola University Chicago and Santa Clara University; and Tepeyac of DePaul University. Since "Latino" was the most common term used by female and male students interviewed of Latin American heritage, it will be used versus "Hispanic," "Latin@," or "Latinx."

⁸ Filipino American communities include: Filipino CLC of Loyola University Chicago; Liwanag of University of California Irvine; and Pagasa of University of California San Diego. Korean American communities include: Chun Jin Ahm of University of California Berkeley; Since "Filipino" was the most common term used by female and male students interviewed of Philippine heritage, it will be used versus "Filipin@," or "Filipinx."

⁹ Korean Catholic Student Ministry of University of Virginia; Kyrie Eleison at the University of California campuses at Los Angeles, Irvine, Riverside, and San Diego as well as at the University Southern California.

¹⁰ Vietnamese American communities include: Breaking Banh Mi at University of California Davis; Hạt Cải at University of California Irvine; Muối at the University of California Los Angeles, and Vietnamese Catholic Student Association (not affiliated with a specific college).

different universities (See Appendix A). All references to interviewees are pseudonyms. A total of 97 surveys were taken of 78 college ethnic Catholic community members and 19 members of the non-ethnically-affiliated Catholic community (See Appendix B).

Approximately 50% of college ethnic Catholic community members surveyed were Asian Americans, 44% Latinos, 3% Whites, 1% Black, 1% mixed race, and 1% other. While the overall sample was 64% female and 36% male, the majority of those surveyed in two of the six communities were male. More than half surveyed were second generation (53%), while 21% were of the 1.5 generation (born abroad but raised in the U.S.). Not surprisingly then, 76% of the families of those surveyed immigrated to the U.S. since the 1980s. Although 69% of the students in the overall sample have at least one college-educated parent, only 50% of the Latinos in the sample do. Students indicated a range of majors from science and engineering (25%) to humanities and social sciences (20%), as well as business (12%) and education (7%). The interviews and surveys were supplemented by participant observation of each of the groups.

Chapter 1 describes the context of ethnic diaspora churches in the U.S., which were formative in the faith lives of most students in the study. Chapter 2 addresses how ethnic culture and Catholic faith contribute to the construction of identity among children of Catholic immigrants. Chapter 3 explores how college ethnic Catholic communities facilitate the exploration and appropriation of ethnoreligious identity. Chapter 4 explains how the practices of these communities reflect the agency of their members to adapt and reinvent ethnic Catholic rituals and traditions for an intercultural context. Finally, Chapter 5 contextualizes the research findings by proposing how they could inform an intercultural ecclesiology and a more expansive vision for the U.S. Catholic Church.

Chapter 1

Church as Union and Disunion

Beginning in the nineteenth century, “wave after wave of immigrants,” introduced new languages and cultures to the U.S. Catholic Church with each group seeking “to have their vision and experience of Catholic life respected.”¹¹ Although some church leaders strongly advocated that “Catholic immigrants and their descendants should be encouraged to adapt American ways,”¹² more often than not, “from 1830 to 1920, national parishes were the pastoral answer.”¹³ Such parishes sought to “maintain close communication between the immigrants and the church, providing immigrants with a strong institutional setting within which they could adjust to American society.”¹⁴

National parishes “preserved their members’ cultural heritage through festivals, devotions, Catholic schools, and other programs of religious instruction.”¹⁵ So, “the national parish appeared everywhere that non-English speaking immigrants were present in any numbers in the nineteenth century.”¹⁶ Since “Catholicism was viewed by many as both foreign and mysterious...in mid-19th-century America,”¹⁷ these national parishes

¹¹ Jeffrey M. Burns, Ellen Skerrett, and Joseph M. White, eds., *Keeping Faith: European and Asian Catholics Immigrants* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000), xxi.

¹² Philip Gleason and David Salvatore, “Ethnicity, Immigration and American Catholic History,” in *A Church of Many Cultures: Selected Historical Essays on Ethnic American Catholicism*, ed. Dolores Liptak (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 37.

¹³ Schreiter, “Just What Do We Want?” 4.

¹⁴ James S. Olson, “The Hispanic Catholics,” in Liptak, 396.

¹⁵ Mark Stelzer, “A New Ecclesial Reality and a New Way of Doing Theology: Heralding a New Pentecost,” in *Many Faces, One Church: Cultural Diversity and the American Catholic Experience*, ed. Peter C. Phan and Diana Hayes (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 17.

¹⁶ Gleason and Salvatore, 43.

¹⁷ James T. Fisher, *Communion of Immigrants: A History of Catholics in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 46.

provided “a sense of identity and stability in a society that was often experienced as hostile to both [the immigrants’] culture and their religion.”¹⁸

However, national parishes were not always established proactively to address the needs of immigrant populations. In some instances, when “an existing church [was] dominated by another group... differences in language and in devotional practices [meant that] [i]mmigrants could not feel at home, religiously.” If “they were numerous enough to draw much attention to themselves...they were apt to be treated as intruders by the original Catholic congregation.”¹⁹ For example, in New York, “[b]ecause of the institutional dominance of the Irish and Irish-descent members...[p]arish life and behavior were expected to conform to an Irish Catholic core.”²⁰ The Irish felt that since they spoke English, “they constituted the American Catholic norm and that it was up to the others to assimilate themselves to the language, mentality, and outlook of the Irish.”²¹

In response to this assimilationist perspective, “[t]he leaders of the German Catholics [as well as other Catholic ethnic groups]...insisted that systematic efforts to preserve language and culture were absolutely essential.” For many Catholic immigrants, “language, religion, and culture interpenetrated each other so thoroughly,” that it was inconceivable that one could lose one’s language and culture without losing one’s faith. Given how many immigrants “were convinced that maintenance of the traditional forms of Catholic life and thought was the surest way to preserve the faith of the immigrants

¹⁸ Mark R. Francis, *Local Worship, Global Church: Popular Religion and the Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 2.

¹⁹ Gleason and Salvaterra, 39.

²⁰ Ana María Díaz-Stevens, *Oxcart Catholicism on Fifth Avenue: The Impact of Puerto Rican Migration Upon the Archdiocese of New York* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 72.

²¹ Gleason and Salvaterra, 42.

and their children,”²² these “non-English speaking Catholics [transformed] the national parish into a positive institution of cultural preservation.”²³

In this way, national parishes served as what might be termed today as “diaspora missions.”²⁴ A diaspora is understood a community of people “who share a collective identity and who spread around the world but maintain networks that sustain and nurture their common beliefs and practices.”²⁵ Diaspora missions involve both ministry *to* diasporic populations, seeking the conversion, or in some cases re-conversion of migrants through evangelism, and provision of spiritual and material support to foster integration in the host society, while ensuring they do not “lose their faith.”²⁶ At the same time, diasporic missions incorporate ministry *through* diasporic populations, “to the church itself (*ad intra*) and to the world (*ad extra*),”²⁷ which involves transmission of the faith both to the descendants of the migrants born and/or raised in the host country and evangelism to the broader society in which the diaspora finds itself.²⁸

In the case of national parishes, beyond serving as missions *to* immigrant Catholic diasporas by providing “some type of refuge within a new hostile environment,” through which “the Church became the defender of those who had come to America seeking a better life,”²⁹ these parishes also sought to serve as missions *through* immigrant Catholic diasporas to transmit the faith to their children born and/or raised in the United States.

²² Gleason and Salvaterra, 36, 42.

²³ Díaz-Stevens, 73.

²⁴ Enoch Wan and Sadiri Joy Tira, “Diaspora Missiology and Missions in the Context of the Twenty-First Century,” *Total Trinity Journal* 13, no. 1 (2010): 54.

²⁵ Hiebert, 121.

²⁶ Wan and Tira, 48.

²⁷ Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 394.

²⁸ Wan and Tira, 45.

²⁹ Eduardo C. Fernández, *Mexican-American Catholics* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2007), 31.

National parishes reflected the belief that “if the children of the immigrants gave up their mother tongue they would also very likely give up their religion.” So, another important focus of the national parish was “to socialize young children into the religiolinguistic culture of the ethnic group.” Foreign-language instruction in the parochial schools of national parishes “functioned to preserve a transplanted language and culture beyond the span of time in which it would otherwise tend to disappear.”³⁰

Yet, “controversy often swirled around the national parish,” raising questions as to whether “an immigrant always belongs to a national parish even if he understood English and found it more convenient to attend the regular territorial church,” and whether U.S.-born children “who were ordinarily more adept in English than in the ancestral tongue,” were obligated to “attend and support the national church they grew up in.”³¹ So, while immigrants found “comfort and security”³² in these parishes, for those Catholic leaders who favored assimilation, they were seen as delaying the integration of the native-born children of immigrants into U.S. society and so as standing “in the way of appropriate Americanization of the Catholic religion.”³³ In addition, the continued existence of such national parishes meant that “far from being one community, immigrant Catholics tended to live as discrete communities, often pejoratively referred to as ‘Catholic ghettos.’”³⁴ Such parishes then brought up the concern that the U.S. Catholic Church would always exist as a series of diasporic churches as opposed to one body.

³⁰ Gleason and Salvaterra, 37, 45.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

³² Stelzer, 16.

³³ Gleason and Salvaterra, 34-35.

³⁴ Kevin F. Burke, “Thinking About the Church: The Gift of Cultural Diversity to Theology,” in Phan and Hayes, 29.

Nonetheless, over time, children and grandchildren from European Catholic immigrant communities “moved out of their closely knit urban neighborhoods and out of their ethnic parishes.” While some second- and third-generation American Catholics chose to continue to “travel beyond their local territorial parishes to participate in the life of the so-called French, Italian, Polish, or German parishes,” many sought to join the “American” mainstream by joining suburban parishes with European Americans of mixed ethnic origins.³⁵ As a result, “non-English speaking national parishes tended to lose parishioners as the second generation learned English.”³⁶ So, from the 1920s to the 1970s, “second- and third-generation [European American] Catholics...[became] very much de-ethnicized in comparison with the immigrant generation.”³⁷

Instead of continuing to assert their ethnic identity, “it was a major preoccupation of American Catholics in the first half of the twentieth century to be accepted in a dominantly Protestant culture as ‘real Americans.’”³⁸ They followed what past models of migration referred to as a “unilinear and irrevocable movement from a place of origin to a new place of residence [in which] [q]uestions of integration and assimilation were central.”³⁹ So, after the major waves of European Catholic immigration ended in the 1920s, “for about fifty years...the Church [consolidated] its position in American society.”⁴⁰ The election of Irish American Catholic John F. Kennedy as president in 1960 was perhaps most emblematic of this “consolidation.”

³⁵ Stelzer, 17.

³⁶ Díaz-Stevens, 74.

³⁷ Gleason and Salvaterra, 46.

³⁸ Lakeland, Paul, *Church: Living Communion* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2009), 151.

³⁹ Waltraud Kokot, Khachig Tölölyan and Carolin Alfonso, eds., *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New directions in theory and research* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3.

⁴⁰ Schreiter, “Just What Do We Want?” 4.

While Kennedy might epitomize “[t]he Americanization of [European Catholic] émigrés’ descendants in the course of the twentieth century,” this movement “occurred simultaneously with another crucial historical trend: the significant new immigration of Catholics to the United States,” most notably of Latin American Catholics. Not unlike their European American coreligionists, “many Hispanics advocated for national or ethnic parishes as a means to retain their language, cultural practices, sense of group identity, and Catholic faith.” As early as 1875, a national parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe, was established in San Francisco for Spanish-speaking Catholics. While the parishioners were predominantly of Mexican origin, the parish was established with support from several Central and South American consulates as well as that of Spain.⁴¹

Nonetheless, the Latin American Catholic population in the United States remained relatively small until the middle of the twentieth century. Since by that time, most “American” Catholics were culturally assimilated, there was often little room for cultural diversity. So, when Puerto Ricans arrived in large numbers in New York City in the 1940s and 1950s, clergy tended to promote the rapid Americanization of Puerto Ricans and of their form of Catholicism.⁴² Not unlike what the U.S. Catholic Church had done with its Mexican constituents after the U.S. conquest of northern Mexico in the war of 1846-1848, these Puerto Ricans were introduced to “a form of Catholicism that was profoundly alien to [them].”⁴³

⁴¹ Timothy Matovina, *Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America’s Largest Church* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 27, 38.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴³ R. Stephen Warner, Elise Martel, and Rhonda E. Dugan, “Islam Is to Catholicism as Teflon Is to Velcro: Religion and Culture among Muslims and Latinas,” in *Sustaining Faith Traditions: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion among the Latino and Asian American Second Generation*, eds. Carolyn Chen and Russell Jeung (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 62.

Since “[t]he decline of the nationality parish coincided with the [post-World War II] Hispanic influx,” and as “Hispanic immigrants...had few native priests and settled in areas where active Catholic parishes were already functioning,” English- and Spanish-speaking Catholics often worshipped separately in the same parishes.⁴⁴ Spanish-language worship was often relegated to church basements as with the Italians before them,⁴⁵ which “reinforced Hispanics’ alienation from the church.”⁴⁶ Despite some notable efforts to “foster Hispanics’ dignity and rights,”⁴⁷ the “church hardly played the critical role in the lives of Hispanic immigrants that it had played in the lives of so many eastern and southern Europeans.”⁴⁸

Similarly, only in recent decades has the presence of Black Catholics in the U.S. Catholic Church in the United States been recognized, even though African Americans, both slave and free, have been active in the U.S. Church since its inception.⁴⁹ Through its history, “this [U.S. Catholic] church has been less than a nourishing and supportive mother for many, if not most, black Catholic believers at one time or another.”⁵⁰ In fact, this “painful history” includes support of slavery as well as other forms of injustice.⁵¹

In the late nineteenth century “separate parishes and other Catholic institutions,” were established in the South to ostensibly “prevent black Catholics from being neglected or discriminated against in integrated parishes.” Yet, this paternalistic, “diaspora”

⁴⁴ Olson, 396.

⁴⁵ Matovina, 47, 49.

⁴⁶ Olson, 396.

⁴⁷ Matovina, 72.

⁴⁸ Olson, 396.

⁴⁹ Diana Hayes, “Black Catholics in the United States: A Subversive Memory” in Phan and Hayes, 58.

⁵⁰ Bryan N. Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 79.

⁵¹ Hayes, 52.

approach often meant that “black Catholics had no option but to attend the black parishes.” In 1917, the same year that the Archdiocese of Chicago “ended” national parishes as part of an “Americanization campaign to bring more uniformity to...ethnic parishioners,” Saint Monica’s was set up as an exclusively African American parish, thus setting “black Catholics apart from the city’s other Catholics as a unique population.”⁵²

In the first decades of the 1900s, “Japanese and Chinese mission parishes operated much as other Catholic ethnic parishes had—the missions sought not only to preserve the immigrants’ faith...but also to preserve their language and culture.” As a result, the Church “played an important role in preserving the culture and language of many second- and third-generation Japanese and Chinese.” Yet, one distinction was that “[s]ince few Chinese and Japanese immigrants were Catholics, the missions’ main purpose was conversions to Catholicism.”⁵³

While there were “few priests, religious, or lay catechists to minister to [Asian Americans] in their own languages,” non-Asian priests and religious often served these “mission churches.” Although “Asian immigrants faced intense racial hostility from Americans,” these non-Asian “missionaries” remained faithful to those they had been assigned to serve and some went as far as moving to the remote camps where Japanese Americans were incarcerated during World War II. In contrast to the Chinese and Japanese, “[f]or the most part, Filipinos have been encouraged to become part of their local parishes.” In fact, the only Filipino national parish ever erected in the United States was St. Columban’s parish in Los Angeles in 1947.⁵⁴

⁵² Karen J. Johnson, “Beyond Parish Boundaries: Black Catholics and the Quest for Racial Justice,” *Religion and American Culture* 25, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 269-270.

⁵³ Burns, Skerrett, and White, 230.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 229, 231, 251.

Prior to Vatican II, U.S. Catholics of Asian, Black, European, and Hispanic origins were often served through such diaspora missions, in which “the experience of worship was... ‘culturally framed’ and often experienced in very different ways.” For example, in Irish or German parishes, there was often a “very ordered liturgy in which the faithful were largely confined to their pews except for Communion,” while in Italian or Hispanic parishes, “there was often quite a bit of activity going,” including “elaborate processions before, after, or even during Mass; people going to confession or leaving their pew to light candles in front of particular statues; and others moving up the aisles on their knees to fulfill a vow.”⁵⁵ After Vatican II, instead of greater assimilation, the U.S. Catholic Church would only continue to reflect a mosaic of diasporas.

Ethnic/Immigrant Catholics in U.S. today as Diaspora “Missions”

As can be clearly seen from the preceding historical narrative, “[a] multicultural setting is not something new in the Catholic Church.”⁵⁶ Yet, the extent of multicultural diversity that is experienced in the United States today is significantly greater than what had largely been in the past a “racial checkerboard [of] white with a smattering of black.” Perhaps equally if not more significant today is that “whites are on a long, steep slide toward losing their majority status.”⁵⁷ These demographic changes are mirrored in U.S. Catholicism, where growth “over the past half century is heavily rooted in immigration from Asia, the Pacific Islands, Africa, and particularly Latin America.”⁵⁸ Immigrants from Latin America (67%), the Pacific Islands (27%), and Africa (26%) tend to be more

⁵⁵ Francis, 2.

⁵⁶ Robert J. Schreiter, “Just What Do We Want?” 4.

⁵⁷ Paul Taylor, *The Next America: Boomers, Millennials, and the Looming Generational Showdown* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2014), 7.

⁵⁸ Matovina, 38.

Catholic than their White, non-Hispanic peers (22%) in the U.S.,⁵⁹ which means that the growing presence of these groups is making the country more Catholic.

The U.S. Catholic Church today “is the most ethnically and racially diverse national ecclesial body in the world.”⁶⁰ As of 2013, 54% of U.S. Catholics were non-Hispanic White, 38% were Hispanic/Latino, 4% were Black, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian/Alaska Native.⁶¹ Throughout the country, the Church is “struggling to welcome persons of diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds who are arriving in great numbers.”⁶² These “many diasporic communities...make up what [today] is the demographic mainstream of American Catholicism.”⁶³ In particular, Latinos will have a disproportionate impact on this new mainstream of the church given that half of all U.S. Catholics under 18 today are Hispanic and given that in next 40 years, an estimated two-thirds of all U.S. Catholics will be Hispanic.⁶⁴

While there are clear similarities between today’s diasporic U.S. Catholic populations and those of the past, such as their desire to retain their culture, inextricable ties between their faith and culture, and the hope to pass on the faith to future generations, there are clear differences as well. For instance, “most of the European immigrants came to the United States with the mentality that they would stay permanently,” which led to their openness to fully assimilate to U.S. culture.⁶⁵ However,

⁵⁹ Mark Gray, “Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church in the United States,” (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), October 2016), 4.

⁶⁰ Matovina, 38.

⁶¹ Gray, 6.

⁶² Stelzer, 16.

⁶³ Dorian Llywelyn, “Diasporic Devotions,” in *Scattered and Gathered: Catholics in Diaspora*, ed. Michael L. Budde (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017), 165.

⁶⁴ Ken Johnson-Mondragón, “Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the United States,” Publication 6, Instituto Fe y Vida, 2010, 2.

⁶⁵ Fernández, 32.

present-day diaspora communities “do not wish to cut themselves off completely from their homelands, and they prefer to live, as it were, ‘in two worlds.’”⁶⁶

In contrast to the period when previous waves of European immigration arrived in the U.S., “multiple identities are now more acceptable than they were before,” which means that one can both maintain an affiliation with one’s diasporic identity while still considering oneself fully “American.” As opposed to how past generations may have seen “American” culture as somehow superior, “members of minority communities are less apologetic about retaining their homeland culture.” Retention of homeland culture is “easier now than it has ever been before,” given that “[n]ational boundaries have become more permeable,” with advances in global travel and communication enabling diasporas to easily “receive infusions of culture from abroad.”⁶⁷

In response to the growing numbers of Catholics in the United States today who retain a strong sense of diaspora identity, 36% of all parishes across the U.S. “serve a particular racial, ethnic, cultural, and/or linguistic community.”⁶⁸ At least once a month, Mass is celebrated in a non-English language in 29% of U.S. parishes, while 4% of parishes celebrate Mass in two or more non-English languages each month.⁶⁹ In the Los Angeles Archdiocese alone, “the Eucharist is regularly celebrated in forty-two languages.”⁷⁰ Parishioners in parishes with non-English Masses are ethnically diverse: 56% non-Hispanic White, 34% Hispanic/Latino, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 4%

⁶⁶ William Safran, “Deconstructing and comparing diasporas,” in Kokot, Tölölyan and Alfonso, 11.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁸ Gray, 6.

⁶⁹ Mark M. Gray, Mary L. Gauthier, and Melissa A. Cidade. “The Changing Face of U.S. Catholic Parishes” (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), 2011), 31.

⁷⁰ Matovina, 38.

Black. These parishes are “larger in size, have more registered members, and celebrate more Masses than parishes that only celebrate Mass in English.”⁷¹

In contrast, the remaining 71% of U.S. parishes that only celebrate Mass in English each month tend to be “significantly less racially and ethnically diverse than other parishes,” where on average, “88 percent of parishioners in these parishes are non-Hispanic White and no other average for any other race or ethnicity group attains 5 percent.”⁷² As such, ethnic ministries and thus diaspora communities, while representing half of the U.S. Catholic population, tend to be concentrated in larger, multiethnic parishes that form less than a third of all Catholic parishes.

Even these “multiethnic” parishes most often “function as separate, parallel communities of the various [cultural and linguistic] groups,”⁷³ which only share common worship and gathering spaces. Each of these diaspora groups “worships, catechizes, and functions as Church in a way that affirms individual group identity but rarely promotes true dialogue across cultural boundaries.”⁷⁴ As such, the de facto paradigm for serving ethnic communities in the U.S. Catholic Church today is that of diaspora missions. This can be seen in how while the college ethnic Catholic community members surveyed for this thesis grew up in ethnically diverse neighborhoods (75%) and ethnically diverse schools (74%),⁷⁵ the majority (56%) grew up participating in worship communities where

⁷¹ Gray, Gauthier, and Cidade, 33.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷³ Schreiter, “Just What Do We Want?” 10.

⁷⁴ Stephen Dudek, “Building a Home for a Multicultural Parish: Lessons Learned,” *New Theology Review* 13, no. 1 (April 2013), 41.

⁷⁵ Ethnically-diverse is defined here as “mostly *not* of my ethnicity” or “*some* of my ethnicity,” as opposed to “mostly of my *same* ethnicity.” Among the college ethnic Catholic community members surveyed, 74% attended public schools, 22% Catholic schools, and 15% attended private schools prior to college.

those of their own ethnicity were the majority. This was particularly true for those students from Korean American (80%) and Latino (64%) Catholic communities.

Since Latinos represent more than one third of the U.S. Catholic Church today, many Catholic parishes across the country are “in effect national parishes, because they serve overwhelmingly Hispanic congregations.”⁷⁶ Although as of 2013, 54% of Hispanic/Latino Catholics in the United States were born in the U.S., while only 46% were born in Latin America,⁷⁷ “the [continued] prevalence of an immigrant-focused, Spanish language approach to Hispanic ministry,” reflects a diaspora mission approach towards Latino Catholics in the U.S. One key influence that sustains this approach is “[t]he preponderance of foreign-born Latino clergy,” as more than 80% of the 3,000 Latino priests in the U.S. are foreign born. As a result, “Hispanic ministry initiatives in the U.S. Catholic Church tend to be strongest among immigrants [as opposed to the U.S. born] who respond enthusiastically to the national parish dynamic,” with traditional devotions, preference for Spanish, and immigrant pastors.⁷⁸ This preference for Spanish is reflected in how the majority (62%) of college students surveyed for this thesis from Latino Catholic communities frequently attended Mass in Spanish growing up.

Across the U.S., even in locations without large Asian American communities, Asian American Catholics have advocated for and formed their own ethnic parishes. As far back as the 1970s, prior to the establishment of their own parishes, Korean American Catholics “would...gather separately to further their prayers, catechesis, and other religious-cultural celebrations in the Korean language.” Today, “the majority of Korean

⁷⁶ Matovina, 51.

⁷⁷ Gray, 6.

⁷⁸ Matovina, 51.

American Catholic communities are staffed by visiting Korean clergy.” In a truly diaspora mission approach, “[s]ome faith communities, especially those with large populations of Korean Americans, had Korean clergy assigned to them as an extension of their home diocese.”⁷⁹ In fact, back in 1981, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Korea appointed a Korean bishop to monitor the care Korean Catholics received in the U.S.⁸⁰ Min Choi, a Korean American student from Southern California who attends a Western public university describes how she, “never really went to just other, non-Korean Catholic churches, we were always at Korean Catholic churches and I think that’s really big for Koreans [since] Korean church groups are very tight knit, so even for my parents I think that was their main source of their friends.”

Similarly, Vietnamese American Catholics, who have “adhered to many [traditional] devotional practices,” after settling in the U.S.,⁸¹ have expressed their ardent belief that “their religious identity plays a central role in who they are as Vietnamese and as American.”⁸² As a result, many Vietnamese Catholic communities in the diaspora have shown a “determination...to remain together and reconstruct as much as possible of the religious life of their homeland.”⁸³ This determination has been reflected in how Vietnamese Catholics across the U.S. have “built and maintained religious institutions as places of political, spiritual, and cultural refuge.”⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Simon C. Kim, “A New Creation: The Catholic Faith in Diaspora,” in Budde, 47-48.

⁸⁰ Burns, Skerrett, and White, 304.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁸² Linh Hoang, “Vietnamese Catholics and Diaspora: Re-imaging Mary as Vietnamese,” in Budde, 179.

⁸³ Gleason and Salvaterra, 41.

⁸⁴ Linda Ho Peché, ““I Would Pay Homage, Not Go All “Bling””: Vietnamese American Youth Reflect on Family and Religious Life,” in Chen and Jeung, 235.

While Filipino Americans represent 80% of Asian American Catholics in the U.S.,⁸⁵ “[i]n many instances, Filipino pastoral needs have been sidelined because of the stereotypical impression that they do not need much pastoral care because they are fluent in English and can integrate easily into parish life.”⁸⁶ Nonetheless, Filipino American Catholics have turned to “Catholic churches, Catholic schools, Catholic events, and Filipino clubs,” to organize themselves as a diaspora community in the U.S. In particular, “the neighborhood Catholic church is...one of Filipino Americans’ most important centers of gravity,” where the observance of faith and ethnic traditions motivate transnational practices like sending remittances and balikbayan (care boxes) to the Philippines.⁸⁷ Analyn Santos, a Filipino American from Northern California who attends a Western public university, recalls how, “ever since I was born...baptism, first communion, all the sacraments up until confirmation [were] at that parish, my Filipino Catholic parish, so I feel like it’s such a big part of me that it’s a Filipino Catholic community because everyone I see is of my ethnicity.”

A range of other ethnic diasporas from the Igbo from Nigeria to the Karenni from Myanmar are served in various ways by the U.S. Catholic Church in its attempt to “communicate the gospel in terms of a particular culture, in a particular language.”⁸⁸ While in some cases local clergy who may or may not be familiar with these cultures and languages struggle to serve these communities, in others “[i]t is possible to bring in

⁸⁵ Gray, 6.

⁸⁶ Cecile L. Motus, “Harmony in Faith: Asian and Pacific Catholics in the United States,” in *Scattered and Gathered: Catholics in Diaspora*, ed. Michael L. Budde (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017), 58.

⁸⁷ Joaquin Jay Gonzalez, III, “Second-Generation Filipino American Faithful: Are They ‘Praying and Sending’?” in Chen and Jeung, 157, 162, 164, 166.

⁸⁸ Bevans and Schroeder, 396.

personnel from different parts of the world to serve local congregations,”⁸⁹ For example, 5% of the approximately 1,900 African born clergy and religious in the U.S. serve African-born Catholic communities. While “African-born Catholics retain a strong fidelity to the Church,” in keeping with most diaspora Catholic groups, “many do not identify as an integral part of the ecclesial community in the United States.”⁹⁰

Diasporic Approach: Union and Disunion

The diasporic mission approach has the advantage of uniting the diaspora by delivering the “Christian message...in terms of the culture of diaspora,” in a way that responds to “questions of the problems of diaspora existence.”⁹¹ In this way, diaspora missions can serve as “a stabilizing factor amid the challenges to identity that inevitably arise out of the migration experience.”⁹² Such “[c]ulturally sensitive ethnic ministries...have been valuable to immigrant Catholics and have enabled them to maintain and deepen their cultural and Catholic identity.”⁹³ This approach recognizes the inextricable connection between ethnic identity and faith, provides culturally-relevant support, and builds solidarity amongst the diaspora.

In particular, immigrants turn to diaspora missions as “a place where one’s own language may be spoken and understood, where one can enjoy the social status that is denied during the rest of the week, and where children may be socialized into homeland

⁸⁹ Robert Schreiter, “Religion Displaced and Replaced: What We Have to Learn from Diaspora Communities,” in Budde, 22.

⁹⁰ Aniedi Okure, “The African-born & The Church Family in the United States” (paper presented at One With the Family: Colloquium on African and Caribbean Presence in the Catholic Church in the United States, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC, March 11, 2011).

⁹¹ Luther Jeom O. Kim, *Doing Diaspora Missiology Toward “Diaspora Mission Church”: The Rediscovery of Diaspora for the Renewal of Church and Mission in a Secular Era* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 76.

⁹² Schreiter, “Religion Displaced and Replaced,” 17.

⁹³ Motus, 58.

patterns and find endogamous marriage partners.”⁹⁴ In many cases, immigrant parents will send their children to church “for both religious teachings and linguistic and cultural formation.”⁹⁵ In this case of the Filipino American diaspora, “the Catholic church is a venue where first-generation Filipino migrants have a strong tendency to exhibit and try to pass on religion-reinforced Filipino traits, values, and actions to the next generations.”⁹⁶ Alex Flores, a Filipino American from a Midwestern Catholic university explains how “there were few Filipinos in the place I lived [in Indiana]...so that...Filipino [Catholic] community, that small community I had was the main source of how I learned my faith.” Similarly, Vietnamese Catholics in San Jose, California, expressed the desire for their own parish in order “to preserve their faith and culture and to ensure their children would learn the sacred traditions in the new land.”⁹⁷

While the diasporic approach has some clear advantages, there are also “some potential and real downfalls that [come] from formation of parallel Christian communities.” These diaspora missions can often perpetuate disunity through isolation from “other ethnic communities and the local church in general.” Diaspora missions can leave their members in a constant “limbo,” such missions can portray members of these diasporas as eternal “foreigners” who do not truly belong to the local Church, and diasporic approaches often do not resonate with those born and/or raised in the U.S.⁹⁸ Thomas Mathew, a South Indian student from the Midwest who attends a Midwestern Catholic university describes how he “came from a very just Indian church, Indian

⁹⁴ Schreiter, “Religion Displaced and Replaced,” 17-18.

⁹⁵ Peché, 234.

⁹⁶ Gonzalez, 168.

⁹⁷ Burns, Skerrett, and White, 285.

⁹⁸ Gioacchino Campese, “‘One Does Not Live By Bread Alone...’ (Matt 4:4): The Relational Turn of Theologies of Migration in the Twenty-First Century,” in Budde, 87, 94.

people, and I think when you're part of the group so much you think that you're like the only group...which I think is super unhealthy.”⁹⁹

The inability of diaspora missions to effectively engage with those born and/or raised in the U.S. is a critical outage for the U.S. Catholic Church. While diaspora missions “cater to the needs of the first generation,” they struggle to “understand and meet the needs of their children.”¹⁰⁰ Approaches that “engage one generation...can easily be less resonant—even counterproductive—with that generation’s children.”¹⁰¹ For example, while most students surveyed from college ethnic Catholic communities spoke English (59%) or a mix of English and their parents’ language (29%) with their friends, diaspora missions often insist programs be solely in parents’ languages. Diaspora missions often fail to recognize how “the context for some [religious] practices has been lost,” which “renders those practices more abstract to the experience of younger members of the diaspora community.”¹⁰² As a result, “[t]he recreated [homeland] institutions and cultural patterns do not effectively embrace [the U.S. born and/or raised].”¹⁰³

While ethnic identity continues to be significant for most U.S. born and/or raised members of diaspora populations,¹⁰⁴ they bring to the church “their experience of growing up between cultures,”¹⁰⁵ which means that “their approach to spirituality is so different from their parents and elders.”¹⁰⁶ These youngest members of diaspora

⁹⁹ Thomas Mathew, interview with author, November 1, 2018.

¹⁰⁰ Campese, 87.

¹⁰¹ Matovina, 220.

¹⁰² Schreiter, “Religion Displaced and Replaced,” 19.

¹⁰³ Safran, 14.

¹⁰⁴ Ken Johnson-Mondragón, “Multicultural Ministry in Parishes Today and Important Themes for its Future,” *Multicultural Ministry in Parishes Today* (Chicago, IL: National Association for Lay Ministry, 2008), 1.

¹⁰⁵ Johnson-Mondragón, “Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the United States,” 3.

¹⁰⁶ Linh Hoang, “The Faith and Practice of Asian American Catholics: Generational Shifts,” *New Theology Review* 23, no. 1 (February 2010): 51.

communities, “participate in many different groups and cultural frames and do not fully identify with any one of them.”¹⁰⁷ Rather, the second-generation faces the challenge “of inhabiting a space between two cultures.”¹⁰⁸ Natalia Cárdenas, a Mexican American student from Colorado who attends a Midwestern Catholic university, uses the term “middle ground” to describe this space, since she has received the traditions, passion, and music from her Mexican family, while she also understands “the social justice issues that are present in the U.S. because I grew up here and I experienced a lot of race issues.”¹⁰⁹

In many cases, “the second generation does not attend the churches built by the first generation because their participation is limited or not even welcomed.”¹¹⁰ Min Choi expresses her belief that in “Korean [Catholic] communities in general, the older people always have a bigger voice than the young will ever have.”¹¹¹ There often are limited opportunities for youth to exercise leadership in such diaspora missions and in fact, “some youth [even] feel exclusion and discrimination,” from immigrant members.¹¹²

Not surprisingly, “even the Latino Catholic parents who are very committed to their faith and involved in their parish are struggling to pass their faith to their adolescent children.”¹¹³ One stark statistic is how in New York City, 75% of first generation Korean American Catholics regularly attend Mass, while only 5% of the post-college second generation do so.¹¹⁴ Along those lines, “[t]he second generation [of Vietnamese Americans] does not seem to have such a commitment to the religious institutions of the

¹⁰⁷ Hiebert, 92.

¹⁰⁸ Schreiter, “Just What Do We Want?” 10.

¹⁰⁹ Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, November 2, 2018.

¹¹⁰ Hoang, “The Faith and Practice of Asian American Catholics,” 51.

¹¹¹ Min Choi, interview with author, April 23, 2018.

¹¹² Peché, 234.

¹¹³ Johnson-Mondragón, “Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the United States,” 4.

¹¹⁴ Hoang, “The Faith and Practice of Asian American Catholics,” 54.

first generation.”¹¹⁵ At the same time, one must ask if Catholic religious institutions of the first generation are committed to serving the spiritual needs of the second generation.

What has been neglected in the U.S. Catholic Church’s approach to serving its ethnically and culturally diverse communities is a focus on how these diasporas might serve as missions *through* which the broader Church could be served and strengthened. In mission *through* the diaspora, a more explicit focus would be placed on how immigrant members of diasporic communities transmit the faith in a way that is relevant to those born and/or raised in the U.S. and how these diasporic communities might contribute to the broader Church, beyond the boundaries of their diasporas. In order to do so, the U.S. Catholic Church must first develop a deeper understanding of the ethnic Catholic identity that emerges through the acculturation process experienced by the children of Catholic immigrants today, a process that is quite distinct from a century ago when Catholic immigrants were primarily of European origins.

The de facto diaspora to mainstream ecclesiology of the U.S. Catholic Church may have served the Church well during a period in U.S. history when ethnic groups would have been expected to assimilate into “mainstream America.” However, in today’s postmodern, multicultural society, the union that such an approach achieves amongst the immigrant generation through reinforcing cultural patterns from the homeland leads to a disunion amongst the children of these immigrants as they enter into a multiethnic society. The following chapter will explore how the ethnoreligious culture of diaspora churches contributes to the construction of the ethnoreligious identity of the second generation of ethnic Catholics.

¹¹⁵ Peché, 234.

Chapter 2

Second Generation Ethnic Catholic Identity

The growing ethnic diversity of the U.S. Catholic Church calls for a deeper understanding of how ethnic culture and Catholic faith contribute to the construction of the ethnoreligious identity of the nascent majority of U.S. Catholics. In particular, the complex and multifaceted experience of the children of Catholic immigrants does not easily lend itself to any one area of study. Rather, the robust scholarship on race/ethnicity and religion, ethnicity and the second generation, and the emerging scholarship on the so-called “new” second generation and religion, collectively provide rich insights into the lived religious experience of the children of Catholic immigrants in the United States and what would lead them to participate in college ethnic Catholic communities.¹

Race/Ethnicity and Religion

Prior to the watershed Hart-Celler immigration act of 1965, which fundamentally changed the racial and ethnic composition of immigrants to the U.S.,² Will Herberg sought to explain in *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (1960) how religious identity continued to play an instrumental role in Americans’ lives while ethnicity had become largely symbolic for most European Americans.³ Herberg noted how houses of worship in European immigrants’ countries of origin were “the meaningful center of life, the repository of the sacred symbols of community existence,” which led to the efforts across European immigrant groups to reestablish them in the U.S. When immigrants first

¹ Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston III, *The Rise of the New Second Generation* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2016), 2.

² *Ibid.*, 2-4.

³ Herberg, 2-3, 221.

arrived, these houses of worship were not only linked to distinct faith traditions, but as noted in the previous chapter, they were also strongly tied to specific ethnic groups, such that one was not merely “Catholic,” but a “German Catholic” or an “Italian Catholic.”⁴

Yet as these European immigrants became American, they were expected to change their language and culture. The children of these immigrants faced even greater pressures than their parents and so often learned to view their ethnic status as a “deprivation,” leading to an ambivalence about their ethnic identity. Herberg rightly argues that instead of a “melting pot,” in which all ethnic groups contribute to new cultural synthesis, the U.S. was a “transmuting pot,” which privileged Anglo-Saxon culture as that to which other European immigrants and their children ought to conform. While Herberg believed Americans were expected to decouple their ethnic and religious identities, leaving behind ethnic communities in the process, he equally held that diverse religious communities could serve as context for self-identity and social location.⁵

Herberg lauded the “skill with which the [Catholic] church directed [the] process of acculturation” of European immigrant groups, which led to the “rapid disappearance” of the boundaries that had once divided ethnic Catholic groups. Yet at the same time he acknowledged that the emerging “American” Catholic community did not necessarily transcend ethnicity, but that it followed what he termed the “Irish-American model” in “temper, tradition, and leadership.” He noted how since Irish American Catholics did not rely on a “distinct and separating language” for their identity, this model made the most sense for creating an “American” Catholic culture.⁶

⁴ Herberg, 11, 14-15.

⁵ Ibid., 16, 18-21, 23, 36, 38, 56.

⁶ Herberg, 146, 157-158, 221

Herberg provides an optimistic account of religious pluralism in the U.S. that depends on the eclipsing of ethnic identities. He could not have anticipated the vast demographic changes that post-1965 immigration would bring to the Catholic Church and how shortsighted he was in declaring, “America is no longer a land of immigrants.” Furthermore, Herberg’s observation that African Americans and Latinos were “almost entirely unassimilated in the Catholic community,” did not seem to concern him.⁷ As such, I would argue that *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* is not a helpful lens to understand the interplay of race/ethnicity and religion for the racially diverse “new” second generation.

Milton Gordon’s *Assimilation in American Life* (1964) offers a more critical portrait of race, ethnicity, and religion in the U.S. during roughly the same time period as Herberg’s work. Gordon differed from Herberg in that he did not view Protestants, Catholics, and Jews as equally American. Rather, he maintained that White Protestants continued to represent what it meant to be quintessentially American and that others were seen by White Protestants as living in groups outside of the mainstream of American community life. In this, he echoes Herberg in how protestant “Anglo-conformity” continued to be the “desirable goal of assimilation in America” and how the melting pot analogy that would lead to a “neutral American social structure was a myth—a mirage.”⁸

Gordon asserted that American society was composed of a variety of ethnic groups with multiple layers of identity based on national origin, religion, race, and nationality, which gave Americans a sense of “peoplehood.” Then, these ethnic groups were “criss-crossed” by social classes defined by social status, economic power, and

⁷ Ibid., 158.

⁸ Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 5, 89, 103, 113, 124, 129.

political differences. Americans who were part of the same ethnic group and same social class formed what Gordon considered to be one of the country's multiplicity of "pots" or subsocieties, which he termed the "ethclass." He claimed that most Americans tended to stay in their ethclass for "most of their intimate, primary relationships," while only interacting with other Americans via "impersonal, secondary group relationships."⁹

These subcultural groups reflect on the one hand the desire for "ethnic communality" among what Gordon described to be the "vast majority of Americans," despite the inherent tensions with an equally valued desire for civic equality. On the other hand, the persistence of these groups is a historical consequence of how non-Anglo-Saxon Protestant groups' reacted to the "semi-hysterical attempt at pressure-cooking assimilation" in the early 20th century, which often led to ethnic self-hatred among the second generation when adequate counter measures to foster ethnic pride were lacking. Nonetheless, Gordon argues that many immigrants did actively resist Anglo-conformity such that "cultural pluralism was a fact in American society before it became a theory."¹⁰

Gordon again echoes Herberg in asserting how through "firm ecclesiastical action" the Irish encouraged rapid assimilation to an "English-language pan-Catholicism" among their European immigrant coreligionists. While perhaps not a "pressure cooker" approach, the "territorial parish" was established as the normative place of worship, such that the descendants of those who had founded "national parishes" were expected to ultimately abandon such parishes for the territorial, Irish-dominant parish. However, in

⁹ Gordon, 26-27, 34, 48, 53, 130, 160, 234.

¹⁰ Ibid., 106, 133, 135, 138, 157-158, 254, 263.

contrast to Herberg, Gordon recognizes that “pan-Catholicism...has been largely unrealized,” given the social exclusion of African American and Latino Catholics.¹¹

Ana María Díaz-Stevens explores the case of a particular group of Latino Catholics in her work *Oxcart Catholicism on Fifth Avenue* (1993) and addresses how the Catholic Church responded to the massive migration of Puerto Ricans to New York City from 1946 to 1964. In contrast to the Irish-driven assimilationist approach described by Herberg and Gordon, the approach described by Díaz-Stevens is one that engaged with and largely affirmed the “ethclass” of the rural Puerto Rican migrants to New York City and their distinct expressions of Catholicism including deinstitutionalized folk devotions, patriotic and nostalgic music, and *Cursillos* that “reinforced cultural traits.” This approach deemphasized “Americanization” and instead valued cultural pluralism, to the extent that not only were all territorial parishes expected to serve both English- and Spanish-speaking Catholics, but those to be ordained priests were expected to be immersed in Puerto Rican culture and trained in intercultural communication.¹²

Díaz-Stevens asserts that the approach taken by the Catholic Church with Puerto Ricans gave them “the time and place to develop their own mode of worship in this country.” While they were often relegated to the basement of churches, this social distance from the members of the “main church” allowed them to maintain their Catholic folk customs without the assimilation pressures from English-speaking Catholics and assert their agency to develop “their own brand of Catholicism” in New York City.¹³

¹¹ Gordon, 135-136, 198-199, 201, 217.

¹² Díaz-Stevens, 22, 52, 108-109, 111, 127, 138, 140, 192, 198.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 114-115.

In *A Church of Our Own* (2005), R. Stephen Warner argues that the reason why religion in the U.S. has been able to accommodate such cultural pluralism like in the case of Puerto Ricans in New York is because, in contrast to Europe, religion has always been “constitutively disestablished” in the U.S., which made religion “the most available channel for the public expression of societal differentiation.” This has led to what he calls a “new voluntarism,” where religious groups today must persuade potential members to assert their agency to make religious choices, effectively making religion an “identity marker” in the U.S. So, while during Herberg and Gordon’s time, “religious identities were taken to be ascribed,” today “religious identities appear to be achieved.”¹⁴

In contrast to when religious identity may have been taken for granted, now one “may be expected to defend and claim it.” This leads to a hardening of social boundaries through cultural expression that affirms how a particular religious group is different in order to “build morale internally.” In this way, religious groups foster “subcultural reproduction” that solidifies collective religious identities, particularly when such groups are alienated from “mainstream” culture. At the same time, they serve as a “vehicle of mobilization” by which these groups are able to engage with the broader society.¹⁵

Warner notes how such religious groups predominantly reflect a “de facto congregationalism,” which he explains as a local religious community comprised of those who assemble voluntarily rather than a geographic unit established by a central hierarchy. Although a Catholic parish might seem to be a clear example of the latter, today even a parish can serve as “vehicle for expression,” since Catholics are increasingly willing to “parish shop” to find what most feeds them spiritually or to establish their own supra-

¹⁴ Warner, *A Church of Our Own*, 43, 65, 265, 278, 282.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 6, 9, 264, 268-269, 271, 284.

parish lay associations. Likewise, the emerging majority of Latinos in the U.S. Catholic Church are “more devotional, more home-centered, and less parish-centered,” than their European American counterparts and so contribute to the growth of such voluntaristic “de facto” congregations across the American religious landscape.¹⁶

In *American Grace*, Robert Putnam and David Campbell provide an assessment of how what Warner describes as the “new voluntarism” in American religion came to be and what its impact has been on the role of religion in society. Putnam and Campbell historicize their argument by explaining how religion went through the shock of the social upheaval of the 1960’s, followed by two aftershocks of religious conservatism in the 1970’s and 1980’s and the disaffection of youth from religion in the 1990’s and 2000’s. As a result, they argue, “a substantial number of Americans now choose their beliefs, rather than inheriting them,” in a “highly fluid” religious landscape where “religions compete, adapt, and evolve as individual Americans freely move from one congregation to another, and even from one religion to another.”¹⁷

Putnam and Campbell assert, however, that this free movement leads people to “gradually, but continually, sort themselves into like-minded clusters.” The authors find that ethnicity serves as one of the most important factors that influence the formation of such religious “clusters.” They describe how “religion pulls people together with a common ethnic background...into particular congregations,” in a way that “ethnicity and religion are often mutually reinforcing,” which had previously enhanced retention of European American Catholics relative to their non-Catholic counterparts in other

¹⁶ Warner, *A Church of Our Own*, 36, 150-151, 164, 166, 243-244, 261.

¹⁷ Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 4, 91-133, 159.

religious congregations. While Putnam and Campbell note how the “dissolving of Catholicism’s ethnic roots” among European Americans after World War II led to a decline in Catholic loyalty, ethnicity remains highly influential in forming religious “clusters” among many U.S. Catholics, most of whom are not of European origins.¹⁸

Russell Jeung and Jonathan Calvillo in their 2017 article “Race, Immigration, Ethnicity, and Religion in America,” explain how such ethnoreligious clusters form in “the open religious marketplace in the United States.” In this environment, the authors hold, religious congregations must compete for “spiritual consumers,” who are “rational decision-makers who make choices about the costs and benefits about retaining ethnic or religious affiliation.” Congregations attract these “spiritual consumers” by fostering ethnoreligious practices that “solidify an extensive network of co-religionist co-ethnics,” in order to both “preserve ethnicity” by recreating “spaces reminiscent of [immigrants’] sending contexts” and “facilitate Americanization” through the exchange of social and cultural capital in the host context.¹⁹ While these nostalgic spaces might be attractive to immigrants themselves, they might not appeal in the same way to their children.

Ethnicity and the Second Generation

Herbert Gans reframes the apparent dichotomy between the pluralistic position of “preserving ethnicity” and the assimilationist position of “facilitating Americanization” by distinguishing between acculturation, by which immigrants and their children adopt the “host” culture, and assimilation, by which immigrants and their children move

¹⁸ Putnam and Campbell, 5, 140, 167, 259, 288, 297.

¹⁹ Russell Jeung and Jonathan Calvillo, “Race, Immigration, Ethnicity, and Religion in America,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, online publication date February 2017, <http://religion.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-487>, 10-13, 16.

beyond ethnic social ties, in his 1997 article “Toward the Reconciliation of ‘Assimilation’ and ‘Pluralism.’” Gans asserts that acculturation always happens faster than assimilation, particularly among the second generation, since they may choose to acculturate to the “host” culture, even if society does not necessarily allow them to assimilate. He argues that the second generation may either voluntarily maintain ethnic ties for practical reasons, such as facilitation of family relationships, or involuntarily retain such ties when faced with discrimination and exclusion from the “host” society.²⁰

Gans recognizes that expressions of ethnic identity often reflect a mix of these two kinds of ethnic retention, voluntary and involuntary. He illustrates this through what he asserts might be the case with second generation college students, whose ethnic identity development would be fostered through exposure to non-ethnics. While these students have the freedom to distance themselves from their immigrant parents’ “boring ethnic practices,” they often resist the pressure to assimilate on predominantly White campuses by taking part in such practices as members of ethnic identity groups.²¹

The decision made in college by second generation students to take part in ethnic practices inherited from their immigrant parents reflects the selective acculturation that Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut describe in *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* (2001). According to the authors, selective acculturation results from when the second generation is embedded in a co-ethnic community that facilitates partial retention of ethnic culture. Portes and Rumbaut contend that the “paced fashion,” in which selective acculturation takes place minimizes alienation and so prevents loss of

²⁰ Herbert J. Gans, “Toward a Reconciliation of ‘Assimilation’ and ‘Pluralism’: The Interplay of Acculturation and Ethnic Retention,” *The International Migration Review* 31, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 875-878, 880.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 882-883.

cultural resources and social capital from co-ethnic networks. Rather, the authors argue that selective acculturation fosters self-worth, provides guidance in the face of external challenges, and helps the second generation “find a meaningful place in society.”²²

The pluralistic concept of selective acculturation more accurately describes the process by which the “new” second generation finds its place in U.S. society today as opposed to the assimilationist “transmuting pot” experienced by the “old” second generation as described by Herberg. In *The Rise of the New Second Generation* (2016), Min Zhou and Carl Bankston argue that selective acculturation occurs in the context of failed assimilation, increased racial/ethnic inequality, and multiculturalism. As a result, for the second generation, “ethnic identity itself is not only highly fluid and changeable, but varies greatly by class, race, geography, and other aspects of the social context.”²³

Zhou and Bankston propose a theory of ethnic social relations in which cultural traits combine with social connections to form social capital. The authors suggest strong cultural traits emerge for second generation youth whose families emphasize affiliation with their ancestral background and who live in tight-knit ethnic communities that provide ample access to co-ethnic second generation peers. These communities need not be residential, but rather could be religious. In this way, selective acculturation depends on settings, like neighborhoods, schools, and places of worship; relationships among co-ethnics; and access to resources. The second generation then uses social capital gained through selective acculturation to both “fit into the land of their birth” and “reshape it.”²⁴

²² Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2001), 53-54, 63-64, 190, 275-276.

²³ Zhou and Bankston III, 3-5, 143.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 110, 133-134, 165, 197, 207.

Second Generation and Religion

A strong ethnic identity not only provides the second generation with valuable social capital to successfully navigate life in the U.S., but according to Putnam and Campbell in *American Grace*, it also “enhances religious retention.”²⁵ In this way, ethnic identity and religious identity are mutually reinforcing for Rubén Rumbaut argues in his essay, “Severed or Sustained Attachments?” that “religious involvement...may foster the transmission of ethnicity and ethnic socialization from the parent generation to that of their children.”²⁶ Religious congregations recognize the importance of transmitting not only the faith but also an ethnic identity to the next generation, so they make concerted efforts to ensure that ties to the homeland endure.²⁷ However, Rumbaut is quick to point out that for the second generation such tenuous ties are to “a homeland that was never lost to them in the first place.”²⁸

Rumbaut’s observation points to a central tension that exists in ethnoreligious congregations. In *A Church of Our Own*, Warner elaborates on this tension, where the immigrant first generation seeks to reproduce the homeland in ways that serve as a “refuge from America,” while to engage the second generation requires that “some home country ways, in particular language, must be sacrificed.” While religious congregations continue to struggle with this tension, Warner argues that immigrants do recognize that

²⁵ Putnam and Campbell, 272-273, 300-301.

²⁶ Rubén G. Rumbaut, “Severed or Sustained Attachments? Language, Identity, and Imagined Communities in the Post-Immigrant Generation,” in *The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational Lives of the Second Generation*, Peggy Levitt and Mary C. Waters, eds. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002), 90-91.

²⁷ Levitt and Waters, *The Changing Face of Home*, 9.

²⁸ Rumbaut, 90-91.

“religion cannot be taken for granted but must be actively produced, renegotiated, and reproduced into the next generation.”²⁹

For, according to Wendy Cadge and Elaine Howard Ecklund in their 2007 article “Immigration and Religion,” while the first generation views religion “according to ascribed religious and ethnic criteria,” the second generation tends to view religion “according to more achieved and individualistic criteria.” So, when ethnoreligious congregations demonstrate an openness to “produce, renegotiate, and reproduce” religion with the agency of the second generation in mind, they provide the second generation with intangible resources “to help them maintain an ethnic identity as well as construct new racial and ethnic identities.” For example, they explain how Korean churches facilitate the process by which second generation Korean Americans are able to successfully negotiate their ethnic and religious identity in relationship to the first generation, their second generation peers, and the larger society, leading to “a religious and ethnic identity that is distinctive from the first generation.”³⁰

In his 2010 article “The Faith and Practice of Asian American Catholics,” Linh Hoang echoes Cadge and Ecklund in noting how first generation Asian American Catholics see Catholicism as “an ascribed characteristic that comes with family church membership,” while the second generation views “Christianity as an achieved characteristic that comes through a spiritual journey.” Hoang attributes the lower participation of second generation Asian American Catholics to both the communication gap with the first generation and the lack of opportunities for leadership and engagement

²⁹ Warner, *A Church of Our Own*, 1, 33, 269.

³⁰ Wendy Cadge and Elaine Howard Ecklund, “Immigration and Religion,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007): 365, 369.

for the second generation. He laments how “first-generation leaders incorporate the English-speaking second generation at any cost, but also, consistently exclude the second generation from leadership roles,” which limits their opportunities to “achieve” their Catholic identity.³¹

Ken Johnson-Mondragón describes similar challenges in fostering religiosity among second generation Latinos. In his 2010 article “Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the United States,” Johnson-Mondragón proposes three pastoral categories and corresponding pastoral needs that should be addressed to engage effectively with second generation Latino Catholics. In particular, his pastoral category of “identity seekers” (25% to 45% of Latino young adults) maps onto Portes and Rumbaut’s concept of selective acculturation. These “identity seekers,” are those who seem to be attracted to college ethnic Catholic communities, and face the pastoral need of “mentoring to integrate faith and life amid [the] cultural transition” involved in selective acculturation.³²

The consequences of the lack of such integration are highlighted by Timothy Matovina in *Latino Catholicism* (2012). He explains how for some second generation Latinos there is a disconnect between the Catholic faith with which they were raised and their young adult lives, since they perceive the faith as “too entwined with suffering, too connected to a bygone immigrant homeland, too focused on strict obedience to authority, too simplistic to address the realities of contemporary life, or simply irrelevant to the concerns of a new generation.” However, for other second generation Latinos, “[o]ngoing

³¹ Hoang, “The Faith and Practice of Asian American Catholics,” 51, 53-55.

³² Johnson-Mondragón, “Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the United States,” 4-5.

immigration reinforces retention of the Spanish language, elements of Latinos' respective cultures, and the desire for faith communities that foster group solidarity."³³

In order for the Catholic Church to better enable second generation Latinos to integrate their faith with their young adult lives, Matovina contends that a "most urgent need is for apostolic movements, religious education experiences, pastoral leaders, and mentors that both build on familial and ethnic traditions and form Latinos in [the Catholic] faith." In particular, such ethnic-based "active apostolic movements and small faith communities," provide the second generation with what Warner would view as a form of "de facto congregationalism." Such groups give the second generation the opportunity to exercise agency over both their ethnic and religious identity and belonging in ways that reflect the differences between them and their immigrant parents, so as to "credibly address with Catholic faith the situations and issues in contemporary life."³⁴

The groups that Matovina proposes for the second generation reflect the dynamics found in college ethnic Catholic communities. Such communities foster among the second generation what Carolyn Chen and Russell Jeung describe in their book *Sustaining Faith Traditions* (2012) as "ethnoreligious hybridization," which is "the innovative process of combining elements of religion and ethnicity to create two types of new subcultural identity, either ethnic religion or religious ethnicity." Chen and Jeung assert that Herberg did not anticipate three factors that influence how "ethnoreligious hybridization" enables the second generation to negotiate race, religion, and ethnicity,

³³ Matovina, 62, 220.

³⁴ Ibid., 120, 184, 250.

which are segmented assimilation, racialized multiculturalism, and the more ambivalent relationship many Americans today have with institutionalized religion.³⁵

Segmented assimilation contributes to how “the experience of race and ethnicity not only foregrounds but shapes the religious experiences and identities of the new second generation.” Given the new second generation of Asian Americans and Latinos’ “racialized status as outsiders, foreigners, and ‘probationary Americans,’” Chen and Jeung argue that “their opportunities to assimilate into mainstream American denominations are mixed, at best.” Rather, the second generation finds in ethnic religious congregations the opportunity to “resist this marginalization and to claim identity in America,” for such groups recognize that “identity and belonging of the second generation revolves around religion, race, and ethnicity simultaneously.” When successful then, these ethnic religious congregations foster what Gordon termed as “primary group relationships,” in which the second generation find the resources to “embrace and integrate their ethnic backgrounds with their religious identities.”³⁶

Chen and Jeung emphasize how for the new second generation the effective integration of ethnic and religious identity affects their persistence in their respective faith traditions. Following Zhou and Bankston, they argue that shared ethnic ties provide “ethnic-bonding social capital,” that bolsters religious group commitment since there is an inextricable connection between religion and ethnicity for many Asian Americans and especially for Latinos. As an example, the authors cite how “[n]ative-born and English-speaking Latinos are not joining White Catholic parishes but rather are continuing to worship in ethnic congregations,” where they can practice an “explicitly and

³⁵ Chen and Jeung, *Sustaining Faith Traditions*, 3, 7-9, 11.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4, 7, 20.

unapologetically” Latino form of Catholicism. Similarly, Catholic universities, parachurch organizations, and student groups are providing Filipino Americans the resources to develop a Filipinized Catholicism.³⁷

Through the development of subcultural, ethnoreligious identities such as “Filipinized Catholicism” or “Latino Catholicism,” among others, second generation Catholics define the boundaries of what Gordon would refer to as their primary group relationships and negotiate their identity in a way that responds to their contemporary context. While Korean American Protestant student organizations at universities have been shown to be “more likely than any other ethnic [affinity] group to maintain ethnic solidarity and group identity,” the impact of similar college ethnic Catholic communities of Asian American and Latino students has not been as well documented.³⁸ These, “de facto congregations,” as Warner would describe them, facilitate the selective acculturation of their members through integration of ethnic and religious identity.

Such ethnoreligious communities tap into what Ann Swidler’s refers to as a cultural “tool kit.”³⁹ The student members of these communities collectively tap into these “tool kits” of symbols, stories, rituals, and worldviews in which ethnic culture and Catholic faith are intrinsically linked. In ethnically and religiously diverse college environments, these communities facilitate access to ethnic Catholic “tool kits” for what Jerome Baggett describes as a “locus of self-expression and meaning making.”⁴⁰ Through the resultant hybridization of ethnicity and religion, ethnic cultural “tools” are sacralized,

³⁷ Chen and Jeung, *Sustaining Faith Traditions*, 10, 13, 15-16.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁹ Ann Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies,” *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 273.

⁴⁰ Jerome Baggett, *Sense of the Faithful: How American Catholics Live Their Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 38-39, 65-66.

for as Clifford Geertz notes, religion shapes the social order by “placing proximate acts in ultimate contexts”⁴¹

Christian Smith’s subcultural identity theory, as described in *American Evangelicalism* (1998), posits eight factors or propositions that lead to strong symbolic boundaries and helps illuminate the potential role of college ethnic Catholic communities. These communities reflect morally-oriented collective identities (Proposition 1) and form symbolic boundaries (Proposition 2). In pluralistic college environments (Proposition 6), the would-be members of these communities are able to exercise individual choice (Proposition 4) with respect to the reference groups with which they associate (Proposition 5). As these communities seek to address their members’ felt needs and desires in today’s context (Proposition 8), they must engage in strategic renegotiation (Proposition 3) and navigate intergroup conflict (Proposition 7). Smith’s theory would hold then that college ethnic Catholic communities would promote robust ethnoreligious identity and practice.⁴² The following chapter will explore whether these communities do indeed promote the development of collective ethnoreligious identity and how this emerging identity affects the lived experience of their college student members.

⁴¹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (Waukegan, IL: Fontana Press, 1993), 119, 122.

⁴² Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 90-117.

Chapter 3

Second Generation Ethnic Catholics in College

Children of Catholic immigrants often leave behind monocultural diaspora churches to attend ethnically diverse colleges and universities. As of Fall 2016, Whites comprised 54% of undergraduate enrollment at U.S. institutions, Latinos 19%, Blacks 14%, Asians 6%, Mixed Race 4%, and American Indian/Alaska Native 1%, and Pacific Islanders <1%.¹ While not all campuses reflect this diversity given that “racial diversity can certainly be regional and there are pockets of communities that are less diverse,” these figures are representative of Generation Z, those born between 1995 and 2010, which is 55% White and which is the most racially diverse generation in the U.S. to date.²

Uprooted: Alienation and Search for Belonging

The vast majority of the college ethnic Catholic community members surveyed for this thesis came from homes where either only their parents’ language (35%) or a mix of their parents’ language and English (49%) was spoken. Similarly, most grew up praying and worshipping in either their parents’ native tongue (34%) or a mixture of this and English (27%). The majority (55%) participated in Catholic youth groups affiliated with their own ethnic background and even more (74%) grew up attending Catholic rituals and events that were identified with their ethnicity. As a result, the transition to college uproots them from what had been a family-oriented ethnoreligious environment.

¹ Cristobal de Brey et al., *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2018* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, February 20, 2019), 126-127.

² Corey Seemiller and Meghan Grace, *Generation Z Goes to College* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 6, 10, 37.

Generation Z overall claims to be much closer to their parents than previous generations did at their age. In fact, 88% say they are “extremely close” to their parents and 69% indicate that their parents are their number one role models.³ Latino children in particular are known for having strong bonds with their parents and siblings.⁴ Given how “the context for faith experiences is embedded within the family and local community,” leaving home then means leaving an ethnoreligious support system that cannot be easily replaced by another parish or faith community.⁵ The majority (76%) of college ethnic Catholic community members surveyed indicated that family, especially parents and grandparents, most influenced their faith growing up and 94% indicated that the person who most influenced their faith was of their own ethnicity.

Students often express a greater appreciation of the ethnoreligious communities where they were raised once they leave for college. Alex Flores, a Filipino American junior from Indiana who attends a Midwestern Catholic university explains how as a child “it was kind of annoying...[that] my parents would always want us to do things together as a family...but I learned to...appreciate my family, how close we were.”⁶ Min Choi, a Korean American senior from Rancho Cucamonga, California who attends a Western public university describes how growing up, “church was the only place where I could meet people that looked like me and that were raised like me.”⁷

³ Seemiller and Grace, 157-158, 161-162.

⁴ Roland Nuñez and John Foubert. “Understanding the Meaning Making Process of Hispanic College Students in Their Spiritual and Religious Development.” *Religion & Education* 43, no. 1 (2016): 18-19.

⁵ Maureen Campesino, Michael Belyea, and Gary Schwartz, “Spirituality and Cultural Identification Among Latino and Non-Latino College Students,” *Hispanic Health Care International* 7, No. 2 (2009): 73.

⁶ Alex Flores, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

⁷ Min Choi, interview by author, April 23, 2018.

These second generation students not only experience being uprooted from prior ethnoreligious environments, but also a distancing from their ethnic identity. Jonathan Gómez, an Ecuadorian American senior, explains how living in the neighborhood near his Midwestern Catholic university campus, “has separated me from that ethnic identity, not seeing my family for a couple of months.”⁸ Camila Negrón Vega, a first-year student from Puerto Rico, who attends a Midwestern Catholic university describes how at the start of her college career, “I did not have any Hispanic friends and I felt like the odd one out in my social group...I felt like, ‘Wow, well, then where do I fit in this?’”⁹

While the undergraduate enrollment of Latinos in the U.S. more than doubled from 1.4 million to 3.2 million students between 2000 and 2016, Latinos like Jonathan and Camila often experience what it means to be a minority for the first time in college.¹⁰ This can make their ethnoreligious identity, “newly salient to them as they move from their communities of origin...into spaces that include both fewer Catholics and fewer Hispanic individuals.”¹¹ Similarly, Asian Americans, “face challenges in college,” particularly at “predominantly White institutions [where] they encounter relatively less welcoming climates,” leading them to confront their ethnoreligious identities.¹²

Surveys of Filipino American youth indicate how they struggle with cultural conflicts and pressures to assimilate to the extent that “[m]any...internalized the belief

⁸ Jonathan Gómez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁹ Camila Negrón Vega, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

¹⁰ de Brey, 126-127.

¹¹ Cristen Dalessandro, “Hispanic and Catholic, or Hispanic-Catholic? Racialized Religious Identity for Self-Identified ‘Hispanic’ Students at a Predominantly White Institution,” *NEXT Graduate Journal of Religious Studies* 5, no. 2 (2017), 12-13. For how “identity is more apt to develop among ethnics living amidst nonethnics, as on college campuses,” see also Gans, 883.

¹² Dina C. Maramba and Samuel D. Museus, “Examining the Effects of Campus Climate, Ethnic Group Cohesion, and Cross-Cultural Interaction of Filipino American Students’ Sense of Belonging in College,” *Journal of College Student Retention* 14, no. 4 (2012-2013): 496, 499.

that anything related to their ethnic identity was negative.”¹³ Marisol Reyes, a fourth-year Filipino American from National City, California who attends a Western public university felt she had to “grow out of” her hesitance to speak up in her campus job, without “disrespecting...my own cultural identity,” which taught her to not to voice her opinion out of respect for elders.¹⁴ Such examples illustrate how “culture and race do play a substantial role in the experiences of Filipino American college students.”¹⁵

Distance from family and faith communities can lead to intercultural conflicts and a sense of alienation. Sebastián Martínez, a Mexican American sophomore from Chicago who attends a Midwestern Catholic university describes his experience as a freshman:

I’m first-generation going to college...I didn’t come with any friends from high school. I didn’t know anybody. I don’t have any family members over here like a lot of people do and it was very difficult for me, especially [because I come from] a different ethnic and socioeconomic background and...I had a couple of instances of racial prejudice and discrimination to the point where I had campus security called on me because someone didn’t recognize me in my own dorm, and [so] I felt very alienated from the school as a whole.¹⁶

When students like Sebastián encounter such alienation, they often turn to ethnic organizations on campus for support. Jorge Rodríguez, a senior born in Mexico and raised in Chicago, who attends a Midwestern Catholic university explains how, “my second year here, I...felt very isolated being the only brown kid [in the mathematics department]. So, I sought out different groups and I went to [two different Latino organizations].”¹⁷ Yet, in the end, neither of the organizations appealed to Jorge.

¹³ Third Andresen, “Knowledge, Construction, Transformative Academic Knowledge, and Filipino American Identity and Experience,” in *The “Other” Students: Filipino Americans, Education, and Power*, Dina C. Maramba and Rick Bonus, ed. (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2013), 77-78.

¹⁴ Marisol Reyes, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

¹⁵ Maramba and Museus, 513.

¹⁶ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

¹⁷ Jorge Rodríguez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

Likewise, Natalia Cárdenas, a Mexican American senior from Colorado who attends a Midwestern Catholic university noted how the Latino organization on campus “didn’t resonate [with me] very much...since I see my culture and my religion together.”¹⁸ While 84% of students surveyed regularly participate in their college ethnic Catholic community, only 25% regularly participate in non-Catholic ethnic clubs on campus.

Other students turn to faith-based resources in the transition to college. Alex Flores indicates how he “wanted to be more involved in my faith...coming into college,” so he first volunteered to be an altar server before finding his Filipino college ethnic Catholic community.¹⁹ However, 55% of the college ethnic Catholic community members surveyed indicated that worship on campus is not similar to what they grew up with and 85% state that their worship and prayer life have changed in college. So, students’ initial encounters with Catholic worship in college can also be alienating.

For example, Michelle Sánchez, a Mexican American second-year student at a Midwestern Catholic university describes how, “this past Ash Wednesday, I went to church here, but it was my first English Mass and I was really shocked because I know all the prayers in Spanish, and so...I was trying to read along, but I was like, ‘I can’t,’ so I would just say them in Spanish because that’s...what I grew up with.”²⁰ Along these lines, Sebastián Martínez, who did not learn English until he was five, describes how “prayers seem a lot weirder in English,” whereas in Spanish “it clicks.”²¹

Asian American students share similar experiences of ethnoreligious cultural dissonance. In reference to her university’s Catholic center, Min Choi explains that “since

¹⁸ Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, November 2, 2018.

¹⁹ Alex Flores, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

²⁰ Michelle Sánchez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

²¹ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

it's not a Korean church... people don't feel as connected as they did in their hometown."²² Ben Fernandez, a third year student from National City, California, who attends a Western public university, grew up in what he describes as a "Filipino church," so his "expectation [for] Mass is like... a little more animated, the jokes in the homilies are funnier and there's a lot going on," as compared to Mass at his university's Catholic center, "where it's predominantly Caucasian, it was a little drier."²³

The ethnoreligious cultural dissonance that these students experience may be connected to the lack of ethnic diversity amongst Catholic campus ministers, 86% of whom were White non-Hispanics as of 2017.²⁴ The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has stated that campus ministry must be accountable for the whole campus community, including its ethnic diversity, which would mean "cultivating intercultural competence and greater pastoral engagement of diverse populations on campus." Such intercultural competence would call upon campus ministers to recognize how "the [spiritual] practices which nourish their own faith life may not resonate with the student who sits before them or the one who curiously passes by the campus ministry office."²⁵

Robert Thompson, a White campus minister at a Midwestern Catholic university explains that students tell him that they do not get involved in campus ministry because "no one understands [their] experience" or "speaks their language." He acknowledges that his campus ministry team has what he calls a "ministerial impediment," since currently no campus minister both identifies as Latino and speaks Spanish.²⁶ Jorge

²² Min Choi, interview by author, April 23, 2018.

²³ Ben Fernandez, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

²⁴ Brian Starks and Maureen K. Day, *A National Study on Catholic Campus Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018), 3.

²⁵ Starks and Day, ii, 15-16.

²⁶ Robert Thompson, interview by author, November 14, 2018.

Rodríguez expresses his initial reticence to interact with campus ministry at his university by noting, “for me as a Mexican person...if I see only European Americans, it would be a lot harder for me to actually go in...versus if I were to see people who resembled me...then I would more than likely go because I would honestly feel more welcome.”²⁷

College Ethnic Catholic Communities: Ethnoreligious Spiritual Homes

On a Tuesday evening, two dozen students from a Western public university drove up to a Catholic center. Reminiscent of the tradition in Filipino homes, they all removed their shoes before entering into the darkened meeting space. The students sat on the carpeted floor before a statue of the Virgin Mary illuminated by votive candles to pray the rosary. All stood to sing a hymn to “Mama Mary,” then a dozen more students and a Catholic priest chaplain joined them to celebrate Mass. After the liturgy, students greeted each other exuberantly with embraces and divided into five “family” groups for a faith-based round of Pictionary. Then, one student gave a witness talk about prayer, study, and college life as the others listened attentively, none of them on their smart phones. All raised their voices to sing praise and worship songs to round out the evening. Nearly three hours later, many lingered in conversation, then slowly dispersed to their cars.

While it might be surprising that so many students would commit to a three-hour weekly religious gathering at a competitive public university, given that overall trends indicate that college students are less engaged in religious activities, as the ethnoreligious identity of second generation Catholic college students becomes more salient to them, they seek out places like the Filipino American college ethnic Catholic community

²⁷ Jorge Rodríguez, interview by author, October 31, 2018

described above where they are able to reconnect with their identity.²⁸ Although less than half (47%) of Generation Z college students participate in organized religion, the vast majority (87%) of those that do participate attend weekly religious services.²⁹

In college, second generation Catholic students come to view their ethnoreligious identity as different from that of many peers. As Min Choi explains, “being Korean Catholic is distinct from being just Catholic and I think that’s why [my Korean American Catholic community] means so much to me.”³⁰ Such communities provide their members with an instant sense of connection with both their faith and culture. In today’s pluralistic society, campus life has been described as “a spiritual marketplace where many different religious and spiritual options are made available to students.”³¹ In this marketplace, “an organization that is both ethnic and religious can have an easier time...competing for members,” for it can “offer religious consumers ethnic as well as religious goods.”³²

Most college ethnic Catholic community members surveyed received a personal invitation to join either by friends (57%), faculty or staff (9%), or family (7%), while only 16% first learned about their community through in-person or online promotion. In contrast, 59% of the members surveyed from the non-ethnically-affiliated college Catholic community found out about their community through such promotions and only 37% through personal invitations from friends. Personal invitations can be crucial for students who feel alienated on their respective campuses. In the case of Jorge Rodríguez, a Latino campus minister invited him to join, which allowed him to “feel almost at

²⁸ Nuñez and Foubert, 2.

²⁹ Seemiller and Grace, 43.

³⁰ Min Choi, interview by author, April 23, 2018.

³¹ Brian Starks, “A Secularizing Institution?: Understanding the Undergraduate Experience,” in *Young Adult American Catholics: Explaining Vocation in Their Own Words*, Maureen Day, ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 2018), 5-6.

³² Rebecca Y. Kim, “Religion and Ethnicity: Theoretical Connections,” *Religions* 2 (2011): 322.

home,” and “more connected to the university.”³³ Campus minister Robert Thompson notes how college ethnic Catholic community members feel “such a sense of belonging and connection [that] they are really doing the groundwork to get the word out.”³⁴

Scholars recognize that “ethnic cohesion [plays] a major role in the ability of college students of color to develop a sense of belonging or membership on campus,” and that ethnic organizations “provide safe havens and means of support.”³⁵ However, “[t]he role of religion in maintaining racial and ethnic identities in the United States has tended to be underemphasized by those interested in racial and ethnic issues,” despite the fact that “religion is a central source of group identity and motivation for individuals.”³⁶ As Jasmine Bautista, a Filipino American senior from South Bend, Indiana who attends a Midwestern Catholic university explains, “we can connect through our culture because it’s so deeply in our faith as well...faith and culture go hand-in-hand I feel in my life.”³⁷

While at first glance college ethnic Catholic communities may not appear to be different from non-ethnically-affiliated college Catholic groups, since many do not have explicit ethnic worship practices and meetings are often held in English, students explain how there is a familiarity that comes from sharing both ethnic and religious identities. Camila Negrón Vega believes that “faith is something that brings people closer together, whereas just having a common ethnicity is not really enough to fully bond deeply.”³⁸ Similarly, Adriana Hernández, an Ecuadorian second-year student at a Midwestern

³³ Jorge Rodríguez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

³⁴ Robert Thompson, interview by author, November 14, 2018.

³⁵ Maramba and Museus, 501, 513, 516.

³⁶ Carl L. Bankston, III and Min Zhou, “The Ethnic Church, Ethnic Identification, and the Social Adjustment of Vietnamese Adolescents,” *Review of Religious Research* 38, no. 1 (September 1996): 19.

³⁷ Jasmine Bautista, interview by author, November 16, 2018.

³⁸ Camila Negrón Vega, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

Catholic university explains that “I felt really connected...to my religion and my culture and I found a great place where I feel secure, I feel accepted.”³⁹

When students face alienation, college ethnic Catholic communities reconnect them with their roots. Jonathan Gómez’s community “definitely brought back into me that sense of family, that sense of community, and...identity...it’s reminded me, ‘Oh, you come from this background, and this is what you are, this is what you do.’”⁴⁰ Analyn Santos, a Filipino American second-year student from Milpitas, California who attends a Western public university, describes how her community serves as “a reminder that I am Filipino because [while] at home I definitely feel super Filipino because my parents watch the Filipino channel and we eat Filipino food...over here, I don’t eat Filipino food...or I don’t watch Filipino shows, so seeing them reminds me who I really am.”⁴¹ In the case of Natalia Cárdenas, her community enabled her to reconnect with her family and talk about her college experience in a way that they would be able to relate to:

...when you are a first generation [college student] and you call your mom and tell her, “Oh, I’m so stressed because this exam had this or that on it,” and you’re just complaining or letting out some frustration, my mom would always say, since she does not know what college is like, “Don’t worry, mi’ja [my dear daughter]. Everything will be ok,” as opposed to how some of my friends, when they talk to their mothers that did go to college...they say, “Oh, go to your professor’s office and they will help you with some tips.” And I’m not saying that it is bad that my mom cannot tell me these things, but I wanted a way to connect my experience here with my family and something that we have always shared is our faith and our dedication to the community and [sharing with her mother about her Latino college ethnic Catholic community] is what helped me to continue.⁴²

Through such experiences, a natural bond emerges amongst members of college ethnic Catholic communities. Soo-Jin Park, a Korean senior from a Western public

³⁹ Adriana Hernández, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁴⁰ Jonathan Gómez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁴¹ Analyn Santos, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

⁴² Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, my translation, November 2, 2018.

university explains how those who join her community “just automatically kind of vibe because...their Koreanness comes from the same source...that they went to Korean churches.”⁴³ Similarly, Alex Flores notes how “it’s easier to relate, not just to the faith, but how their families were involved in their faith...I always felt like talking to someone that was Filipino understood it a little bit better [since] they just did a lot of the stuff I did when I was growing up.”⁴⁴ Sergio Pérez, a Mexican American third-year student from Chicago who attends a Midwestern Catholic university, notes how having even a simple reminder of home at meetings like coffee with Mexican pastries “works so well and it resonates with so many people because they see a huge part of themselves in that.”⁴⁵

Students often express how they immediately feel a sense of connection with other members. Sergio expresses how, “I automatically clicked with all these people and it just felt more accepting to me.”⁴⁶ Likewise, Ben Fernandez describes how:

The minute I found [Filipino American college ethnic Catholic community], I realized, my initial thought just coming in was, “Oh, I just found a new home,” God literally put me in a new home, and it fit all the categories: there was the Filipino part, there was the strong Marian devotion part, and it felt so comfortable, it felt so similar to what I grew up with, that I felt just right...thank God!⁴⁷

The sense of connection attracts those who seek a place of refuge in the midst of the challenges to their faith as college students. Marisol Reyes recalls how “I didn’t find any fulfillment in...the things that I started to do when I first entered college...and then I met some people [from the Filipino American college ethnic Catholic community] and they were like, ‘Oh, come join us...here, this is a family, this is where we’re at.’”⁴⁸

⁴³ Soo-Jin Park, interview by author, April 24, 2018.

⁴⁴ Alex Flores, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

⁴⁵ Sergio Pérez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ben Fernandez, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

⁴⁸ Marisol Reyes, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

Through a shared ethnoreligious background that reconnects them with their roots, students find that college ethnic Catholic communities become spiritual homes where they are able to form community with their peers. Campus minister Robert Thompson describes such communities on his campus as “the place [students] go to be heard, to be accepted, to be understood, and for those students I think it is a very significant part of their [college] experience.”⁴⁹ In fact, when asked why they would recommend their college ethnic Catholic community to others, the most frequent words that students used were “home” (21%) and “family” (14%). In contrast, none of the non-ethnically affiliated college Catholic community members surveyed used these terms.

Camila Negrón Vega explains how not only did “finding this group of people in an ocean full of diversity that have a common ethnic and religious background...made me feel special and at home... like a family,” but it made her overall university campus “feel more welcoming.”⁵⁰ The family aspect of these communities is expressed through the support that is offered to members, especially first-year students. In the midst of her transition to college, Min Choi describes how the people she met through her community, “were definitely the main support group I had...my first year.” She explains how her community will “spoil” new members with food, “talk with them about their struggles...so it’s a much more intimate relationship...where we really think of them like a younger sibling.”⁵¹ Similarly, Analyn Santos expresses her gratitude for how “the people I’ve met through [her Filipino college ethnic Catholic community] have become my best friends here...and so it’s like they’re my home-away-from-home.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Robert Thompson, interview by author, November 14, 2018.

⁵⁰ Camila Negrón Vega, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

⁵¹ Min Choi, interview by author, April 23, 2018.

⁵² Analyn Santos, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

The family aspect of these college ethnic Catholic communities enables them to serve as a safety net. Lilibeth Cruz, a Filipino junior raised in Canada who attends a Midwestern Catholic university, explains how “we...establish a family where I can go back to if I ever need someone...[since] being with other Filipinos makes me feel comfortable on campus.”⁵³ Sebastián Martínez believes his community helps its members “feel needed and wanted and safe.”⁵⁴ According to campus minister Robert Thompson, participation in these communities is a “key retention indicator,” where a student’s involvement indicates a “much higher likelihood to persist at the university.”⁵⁵

The safe, family-like community environment lends itself to deeper relationships than what members indicate they experience in other groups. Min Choi explains how “we connect in a deeper level than other groups offered me.”⁵⁶ Natalia Cárdenas echoes this sentiment by describing how, “here I have made deeper friendships and we have the space to be ourselves.”⁵⁷ The common ground found in these communities encourages members to open up to each other. Analyn Santos holds that “it could seem very scary to join [a group] when everyone else you see is another ethnic group,” yet “when you see people who look like you, it makes you feel...like you could get closer to them.”⁵⁸

Jonathan Gómez believes that “if you have two Hispanics with the same Catholic faith, then you have more in common...and that kind of like brings up a more powerful, I think energy.”⁵⁹ Adriana Hernández likewise expresses how in her community, “I feel

⁵³ Lilibeth Cruz, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

⁵⁴ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁵⁵ Robert Thompson, interview by author, November 14, 2018.

⁵⁶ Min Choi, interview by author, April 23, 2018.

⁵⁷ Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, my translation, November 2, 2018.

⁵⁸ Analyn Santos, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

⁵⁹ Jonathan Gómez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

that people will understand me more...[and] we get into some deep conversations.”⁶⁰ As a result of such deep conversations, Michelle Sánchez holds that these communities “help make stronger friendships,” as opposed to non-faith-based ethnic clubs where people “might feel uncomfortable” talking about faith since they “don’t want to be judged.”⁶¹

Beyond a shared ethnicity, Jonathan Gómez believes that the religious affiliation of his community is what “makes it more open,” since it is a space where, “you get to express yourself and have your input, what you’re thinking...to express your feelings, to come closer to God.”⁶² Min Choi describes the inclusiveness of her Korean American college ethnic Catholic community, which has non-Korean-American and non-Catholic members, by noting that “we’re much more open for everyone...to come and see.”⁶³ According to Ben Fernandez, these communities provide those “who aren’t strong in faith coming to college [the opportunity] to be in an ethnic group and try out religion.”⁶⁴

Campus minister Matthew Weber-López describes how the Latino college ethnic Catholic community at his Midwestern Catholic university has “students that identify as Catholic, that practice their faith [and] students that don’t really know where they lie in terms of their spirituality...that are searching.” He believes the community facilitates conversations about “all the different layers that make up who they are.”⁶⁵ Lilibeth Cruz expresses how sharing “the same background...makes you feel comfortable, where you can talk about religion because I know sometimes religion for college students is kind of

⁶⁰ Adriana Hernández, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁶¹ Michelle Sánchez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁶² Jonathan Gómez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁶³ Min Choi, interview by author, April 23, 2018.

⁶⁴ Ben Fernandez, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

⁶⁵ Matthew Weber-López, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

hard to talk about.”⁶⁶ Michelle Sánchez likewise holds that in her community, “it’s much easier to [be] open and not [end up] shying away from your faith.”⁶⁷

“My Faith”: Collective Ethnoreligious Identity Formation

The sense of home, belonging, and safety that college ethnic Catholic communities offer students enables them to be what Warner would describe as “de facto congregations,” where these second generation students are able to engage in the process of ethnoreligious identity formation.⁶⁸ They do this by building upon a shared ethnoreligious foundation through which community members are able to reflect upon, explore, and internalize their beliefs together. As a result, these second generation ethnic Catholic students are able to construct their own collective ethnoreligious identity.

College ethnic Catholic communities emphasize the ethnoreligious values that their members share. Sebastián Martínez contrasts how the Latino parish he grew up in “was pushing me to be more American,” whereas in his Latino college ethnic Catholic community, he is encouraged to “show pride” in being a Latino Catholic.⁶⁹ In this way, Sebastián’s community allows its members “to relish in their ethnic/racial comfort zones and [so] construct their own specialized unique identity and culture through religion.”⁷⁰

Lilibeth Cruz explains how in her Filipino college ethnic Catholic community:

We try to make sense of home from the Filipino culture so that they’ll be able to share...their thoughts about what they believe, in terms of faith, and I guess that’s how we kind of integrate it, Catholicism and the Filipino culture, because...as long as we integrate some values from what they learned at home, then maybe it’ll be easier for them to talk about God and religion.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Lilibeth Cruz, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

⁶⁷ Michelle Sánchez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁶⁸ Warner, *A Church of Our Own*, 277-278.

⁶⁹ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁷⁰ R. Kim, 323.

⁷¹ Lilibeth Cruz, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

Similarly, Rachel George, a South Indian senior from Indiana who attends a Midwestern Catholic university, describes how her community “definitely helped me to see how my culture and my religion...go hand in hand.”⁷²

The affirmation of students’ ethnoreligious backgrounds encourages them to learn more about these backgrounds. Ben Fernandez explains how while his family “was more devotional, but here it’s definitely been devotional and knowledge [about the Catholic faith],” which helped him to recognize how, “praise and worship [music] helps us channel something we [Filipino Americans] stereotypically like [karaoke] into something we use to worship God.”⁷³ Sebastián Martínez describes how “now I look at...Mexican Catholic events and practices that I always did before...from a different angle,” which has made him want to know ““Why do you do it, what is the significance of every single part, and what it means to both me, my family, and those that passed before me.”⁷⁴

By upholding the ethnoreligious values of its members, college ethnic Catholic communities foster an interest to grow in their faith. Lilibeth Cruz admits that while she initially joined her Filipino college ethnic Catholic community to make friends, after joining, “the sense of family...and the shared values that we all have,” led her to realize “that I wanted to start up my faith back again and grow as a Catholic.”⁷⁵ Marisol Reyes also notes how in her college ethnic Catholic community, “I finally internalized what being Catholic really means...where I started to question, ‘Why do we do this?’ and

⁷² Rachel George, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁷³ Ben Fernandez, interview by author, October 23, 2018; On the significance of karaoke as a form of sociocultural bonding in Filipino American culture, see Korina Jocson, “*Kuwento* and Karaoke,” in Maramba and Bonus, 191-192.

⁷⁴ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁷⁵ Lilibeth Cruz, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

‘What does that really mean in my life?’”⁷⁶ Such questions facilitate a move “from a more external religious point of view to an internal spiritual point of view.”⁷⁷

While this move from an external religious to an internal spiritual point of view is often conceptualized as an individualized process that involves personal identity, personal meaning, and personal preferences, this may not necessarily reflect the experience of Asian American and Latino students who grew up in collectivist cultures.⁷⁸ The vibrancy of college ethnic Catholic communities manifests the importance of providing a space where students can reflect, explore, and internalize their religious beliefs together in a collective, shared cultural context. These communities hold weekly discussions that bring together the ethnic and religious identities of their members.

Michelle Sánchez explains how in her community, reflection questions often include, “‘What do you think about this [scripture] verse?’ or ‘How does it relate to your Hispanic identity?’”⁷⁹ Similarly, Sebastián Martínez explains how in his community, “on a weekly basis, we go very in-depth into our personal identities and our personal feelings towards scripture as well as the overlying messages of the Catholic Church...[which] lets me kind of see what does this mean to me.”⁸⁰ In contrast to her parish youth group, Anayn Santos describes discussions in her college ethnic Catholic community as “more relatable...because everything we’re saying is catered to college students.”⁸¹ Lilibeth

⁷⁶ Marisol Reyes, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

⁷⁷ Nuñez and Foubert, 24.

⁷⁸ Reynaldo I. Monzon, “Collective Self-Esteem and Perceptions of Family and Campus Environments Among Filipino American College Students,” in Maramba and Bonus, 238; Nuñez and Foubert, 14.

⁷⁹ Michelle Sánchez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁸⁰ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁸¹ Anayn Santos, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

Cruz affirms how “I got closer to God because we have little discussions where we talk about our faith and whatever topic we’re talking about and we...relate it to God.”⁸²

A study of Latino students at a Midwestern university underlines the importance of bringing together students’ ethnic and religious identities. The study found that in order to “make sense of themselves as different...on a majority-white campus...students craft a shared identity that is Hispanic-Catholic, rather than just Hispanic *and* Catholic. Their identities as Catholic intersect with their identities as Hispanic and each identity status helps define the other.”⁸³ Given this dynamic, it is not surprising that Latino students at a Southwestern university “tended to be more religiously involved...attending weekly church services three times more frequently and engaging in personal prayer outside of church twice as frequently as...non-Latino students.”⁸⁴

Likewise, Asian American Catholic students seek “spaces to address shared issues of identity,” in order to facilitate the “activating and maintaining [of their] faith lives.”⁸⁵ For instance, Marisol Reyes describes how she was able to “to become more vulnerable, to be okay with myself, because of that Filipino commonality,” in her college ethnic Catholic community and not have to worry about, “‘Will someone understand me?’ or ‘Will someone get where I’m coming from?’” She believes that the shared ethnic background of her community “makes it easier for us to talk about [faith] and being able to talk about it, we’re able to really just grow together.”⁸⁶

⁸² Lilibeth Cruz, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

⁸³ Dalessandro, 12.

⁸⁴ Campesino, Belyea, and Schwartz, 74, 77.

⁸⁵ Stephen M. Cherry and Tricia C. Bruce, “Asian and Pacific Islander American Catholic Young Adults,” in Day, 255.

⁸⁶ Marisol Reyes, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

Marisol explains how community discussions lead to introspection by each member since they help “to explore your ultimate identity...where you figure yourself out, what your interests are, what your beliefs are, what your values are.” This is why she believes “a place where you can practice your faith as well as express your culture is something really important to have.”⁸⁷ Natalia Cárdenas also values how her community provides her with a place that “helps you to understand yourself and no one will judge you.”⁸⁸ In this way, by “creating a space where students can ask questions and feel comfortable asking those questions,” their faith commitments are often strengthened, as witnessed by a Latino community member who decided to be confirmed as a Catholic.⁸⁹

Of course, the reflection, exploration, and internalization that occurs in these college ethnic Catholic communities is not an easy process. Students often use the words “struggle” and “challenge” to describe how they have grappled with their faith in their respective communities. Min Choi describes how “we kind of think of our religious journey as something we’ve kind of struggled through together...we’re kind of encouraging each other to struggle through it together.”⁹⁰ This encouragement is at the same time respectful of each member’s own religious journey, for as Lilibeth Cruz explains, “we try to just talk about our faith but not impose it on others.”⁹¹ As Min Choi adds, “it’s kind of like a struggle that they’re choosing to take on themselves. So, I think it’s very important that we [each] have our own voice.”⁹²

⁸⁷ Marisol Reyes, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

⁸⁸ Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, my translation, November 2, 2018.

⁸⁹ Matthew Weber-López, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁹⁰ Min Choi, interview by author, April 23, 2018.

⁹¹ Lilibeth Cruz, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

⁹² Min Choi, interview by author, April 23, 2018.

Marisol Reyes believes her community has both challenged and strengthened “my foundation in my faith,” as it has “helped me become more comfortable in speaking out about my faith and...explore my faith without feeling alone or... unaccepted.”⁹³ In this communal spiritual searching, students have the “freedom to adopt many or only some of the religious practices of their [ethnoreligious] traditions,” which can lead to a more “robust and vital understanding and practice of their faiths.”⁹⁴ Min Choi holds that “being independent from that bigger voice [of Korean elders] and having our voice...that’s a huge thing.”⁹⁵ Soo-Jin Park indicates that her community “gives people assurance that there are other people going through the same struggle...[and] it deepens their faith.”⁹⁶

Through valuing a shared ethnoreligious heritage and fostering an honest dialogue about faith, college ethnic Catholic communities “offer a consistent social space where the later-generation can construct their own ethnic religious identities.”⁹⁷ Religious congregations in the U.S. have historically “provided the social space necessary for new groups to work out definitions of who they are and how they fit into the American mosaic.”⁹⁸ When such congregations are “both ethnic and religious,” they “have a stronger basis for meaning-construction and cohesion.”⁹⁹

As college ethnic Catholic community members go through this process of ethnoreligious identity construction, they make the faith their own. Natalia Cárdenas expresses how, “I believe here...is where I learned to understand what my faith means,

⁹³ Marisol Reyes, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

⁹⁴ James L. Heft, ed., *Passing on the Faith: Transforming Traditions for the Next Generation of Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 6-7, 11.

⁹⁵ Min Choi, interview by author, April 23, 2018.

⁹⁶ Soo-Jin Park, interview by author, April 24, 2018.

⁹⁷ R. Kim, 323.

⁹⁸ Wade Clark Roof and Christel Manning, “Cultural Conflicts and Identity: Second-Generation Hispanic Catholics in the United States,” *Social Compass* 41, no. 1 (1994): 183.

⁹⁹ R. Kim, 320-321.

not my mother's faith, where I just go along with her, but my faith." She explains this process by contrasting how in high school, "sometimes I went because my mother would guilt trip me, but here neither my mother nor my grandmother is here and I felt that something was missing and I started to go to Mass here and it felt different."¹⁰⁰

In college, where students are often away from the direct influence of family, they are able to exercise their agency to decide whether to embrace the ethnoreligious heritage they have received. Analyn Santos explains how "back home I was so reliant on other people [but]...everything is basically my decision now...if I don't go [to church] they're not going to force me."¹⁰¹ Likewise, Lilibeth Cruz explains how growing up, "going to Mass with my family, I just always felt like I was always tagging along because they told me so. But now...[the Filipino college ethnic Catholic community] made me want to go to Mass because I want to go to Mass."¹⁰² Min Choi reflects on how "now it's kind of more like I do these things because I want to, I go to church because I want to."¹⁰³

The agency expressed by these students extends beyond external practices like Mass attendance to a desire to better understand their ethnoreligious identity. As opposed to passively receiving family traditions, Lilibeth Cruz expresses how, "I wanted to discover my own spirituality."¹⁰⁴ Rachel George notes how she came to her community "to find something that would help me connect with my culture and my religion."¹⁰⁵ Given how his peers assume he is Hindu "all the time," Thomas Mathew, who grew up in

¹⁰⁰ Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, my translation, November 2, 2018.

¹⁰¹ Analyn Santos, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

¹⁰² Lilibeth Cruz, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

¹⁰³ Min Choi, interview by author, April 23, 2018.

¹⁰⁴ Lilibeth Cruz, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

¹⁰⁵ Rachel George, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

a Syro Malankara parish, seeks to understand “where we fit in in the paradigm of Christianity.”¹⁰⁶

In this way, Lilibeth, Rachel, and Thomas reflect how, “[t]he second generation is prone to the shift from a collective-expression to an individual-expressive mode of identity.” In contrast to their immigrant parents, whose identities are “bound up with a distinctive language and culture,” these second generation students tend to value “personal autonomy and greater choice of identity.”¹⁰⁷ Sebastián Martínez expresses this sentiment by describing how his participation in his community has “made my faith my own instead of just the faith I follow.”¹⁰⁸ Michelle Sánchez echoes this by explaining that, “I’m still religious, but in my own way, in like the newer generation way.”¹⁰⁹

However, this “newer generation” is not assimilated into a European American culture, rather their participation in college ethnic Catholic communities reflects how they to some degree continue to be part of a collectivistic culture, albeit one distinct from that of their immigrant parents. For example, Asian American students are often raised in family cultures that “emphasize the interconnected nature of the self, the importance of feelings and evaluations of others, and the importance of one’s public image.” So, in such cases, “family affects the student throughout his or her collegiate experience.”¹¹⁰

Instead of rejecting this collectivist orientation, college ethnic Catholic communities help students to integrate and affirm their ethnic and religious identities. As Ben Fernandez explains, his community fosters the importance of “being able to be

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Mathew, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

¹⁰⁷ Roof and Manning, 178.

¹⁰⁸ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

¹⁰⁹ Michelle Sánchez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

¹¹⁰ Monzon, 237, 240.

happy with yourself as a Filipino and a Catholic and letting it be one.”¹¹¹ Similarly, Natalia Cárdenas explains how her Latino college ethnic Catholic community:

...helped me see that my culture is so important in my Catholicism because it helps me relate the way I grew up and the way I started to meet God [which] for me, it was praying the rosary at my grandmother’s house with all these Diositos [Infant Jesus statues] and la Virgencita [Our Lady of Guadalupe] and it helped me just kind of integrate that, that my culture and my religion are very much together, and not even just my religion, my faith.¹¹²

Alex Flores emphasizes the importance of being “in tune with your ethnicity...and how you can love and worship God through that,” since “you worship God with your entire identity.”¹¹³ Sebastián Martínez expresses this collectivist, ethnoreligious approach by stating, “We want to find our faith through who we are as Latino Americans.”¹¹⁴

Through this approach, members of college ethnic Catholic communities grow together in their faith. The vast majority of students surveyed strongly agree (49%) or agree (44%) that their college ethnic Catholic community helped them develop a deeper prayer life and relationship with God. Similarly, nearly all strongly agree (47%) or agree (51%) that their community helped them develop a better sense of what it means to be Catholic, while most either strongly agree (45%) or agree (37%) that it helped them develop a better sense of what it means to be a Catholic of their particular ethnicity.

Studies indicate that “[s]tronger ethnic identities...correlate with stronger religious affiliation,” such that those of the second generation who have a “stronger ethnic identity are less likely to leave the religion of their parents.”¹¹⁵ Alex Flores explains how “I’ve definitely grown much more in my identity as a Filipino...[which]

¹¹¹ Ben Fernandez, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

¹¹² Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, November 2, 2018.

¹¹³ Alex Flores, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

¹¹⁴ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

¹¹⁵ R. Kim, 322.

helps me to relate more [to others in his Filipino American college ethnic Catholic community], so I can open up more, and so...my faith has grown because of that.”¹¹⁶

Alex’s comment reflects how a greater understanding of one’s ethnic identity can have a positive impact on students’ sense of belonging and adjustment to college, particularly when religion serves as the foundation of this ethnic identity.¹¹⁷

Given their strong sense of ethnic identity, Latinos are “twice as more likely than whites to remain in their parents’ religion.”¹¹⁸ One study found that Latino college students who did not identify as strongly with “Hispanic culture [were] more in line with religious tendencies of White students, which was an overall decrease in religious involvement over the college years,” while those “who identified themselves as ‘Hispanic’ in culture...described their religiosity as decreasing as they entered college, but increasing later on in their college experience.”¹¹⁹ Sebastián Martínez reflects this in noting how, “now I feel much closer to my ancestry and my family back in Mexico because this is how they see the world and how they see their faith and I can finally relate to them about that, there’s no longer that separation and it’s a really beautiful thing.”¹²⁰

Thus, college ethnic Catholic communities provide students with a spiritual home that affirms their ethnoreligious background, creating a space where they can internalize their faith together. Through open and vulnerable conversations, students learn from each other’s challenges and struggles, which leads them to greater reflection and introspection. This process leads them to form a collective ethnoreligious identity

¹¹⁶ Alex Flores, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

¹¹⁷ Maramba and Museus, 501; Bankston and Zhou, 32.

¹¹⁸ R. Kim, 322.

¹¹⁹ Nuñez and Foubert, 22, 26.

¹²⁰ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

distinct from that of their immigrant parents, an identity that is reflective of their realities as second generation ethnic Catholic college students. The next chapter will explore how students give expression to this newfound collective ethnoreligious identity.

Chapter 4

Expressions of College Ethnic Catholic Identity

As the weekly meeting of a college ethnic Catholic community comes to a close, one of the three student facilitators leads a group of about 20 of her peers in a prayer of her own inspiration to la Virgen (the Virgin Mary). Then, the students gather in a circle and bless each other on the forehead with a sign of the cross, as is custom for mothers or grandmothers to do in many Latino families before children depart from the home. The blessing is followed by a heartfelt embrace prior to leaving the gathering.

The closing ritual described above reflects how college ethnic Catholic communities provide students the opportunity to explore the traditions they receive from their families and faith communities, adapt these traditions to the context of a multiethnic college campus, and give expression to their collective ethnoreligious identity. In reference to this particular ritual, Sebastián Martínez relates how on his college campus where such expressions of affection are not as common as in the community where he was raised, “having the physical connection of a hug...and then you mix that in with the final blessing before you go out...it feels Latino and it feels very welcoming and accepting and I just love it so much.”¹ These simple yet profound gestures, “emphasize the social relationships that the faith is expected to nurture.”² While born out of traditions received from their immigrant parents, students adapt rituals like these in order to continue to draw meaning from them in a way that responds to the new realities of college life.

¹ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

² Francis, 150-151.

Internal expression: selective acculturation

College ethnic Catholic communities often explore the background and context of the ethnoreligious traditions of their members' families at weekly meetings. Through this internal process, they decide upon which traditions they would like to observe within their communities. For example, Lilibeth Cruz describes how her community introduced for the first time what she describes as an "older generation" devotion of "bringing [a statue of] Mother Mary...to different households...so that's what we're trying to do [with different student community members]."³ These adapted or reinvented expressions manifest what Portes and Rumbaut refer to as selective acculturation, but carried out not by individuals alone, but in a collective manner by college ethnic Catholic communities.⁴

The practice of these internal, communal faith expressions of these communities integrates and affirms their collective ethnoreligious identity.⁵ In this way, they enable those who participate in them to experience "both a sense of selfhood and a sense of belonging."⁶ These expressions are connected with both ethnic and religious identity and so manifest how "[r]eligion is...completely enmeshed in the structures of culture."⁷ As *Evangelii Nuntiandi* recognizes, "the kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by [people] who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building up of the kingdom cannot avoid borrowing the elements of human culture or cultures."⁸

³ Lilibeth Cruz, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

⁴ Portes and Rumbaut, 52-54.

⁵ Raúl R. Gómez, "Veneration of the Saints and Beati," in *The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 121.

⁶ Virgilio P. Elizondo and Timothy M. Matovina, *Mestizo Worship: A Pastoral Approach to Liturgical Ministry* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 24.

⁷ Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2010), xxxix.

⁸ Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (On Evangelization in the Modern World), Vatican City: Catholic Church, December 8, 1975, no. 20,

An example of such borrowing from cultures is how Marisol Reyes believes that for her Filipino American college ethnic Catholic community, “praise and worship is essential and it’s there every week and I think it’s something great because it shows that it is super part of our culture because everyone’s pretty much singing.” As indicated in the previous chapter, karaoke serves as a social bond amongst Filipino Americans; accordingly Marisol notes how praise and worship “plays a big part in putting together both our faith as well as our culture because we like to put our talent into that.”⁹

The home-like, family environment of college ethnic Catholic communities provides the opportunity to contextualize these ethnoreligious faith expressions in order to reflect students’ lived experience in college. Camila Negrón Vega describes how after first feeling disconnected from her Puerto Rican roots, her Latino college ethnic Catholic community has provided her with “a way to express [my faith] while here.”¹⁰ While multiethnic, often predominantly White college settings can create ethnoreligious cultural dissonance for students, “[s]earches for the holy are not forsaken; rather new paths are explored.” Such new paths may manifest “a new appreciation of received traditions in ways that may not be deemed traditionally religious,” at least in the ways these traditions were practiced in their immigrant parents’ homelands.¹¹ It might be said that the “religious past whispers in the ear of the spiritual present,” such that “elements of cultural

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html.

⁹ Marisol Reyes, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

¹⁰ Camila Negrón Vega, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

¹¹ Edwin David Aponte, *Santo!: Varieties of Latina/o Spirituality* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2012), 4, 46.

identity, spiritual practices, moral values, or reconfigured personal relationships,” serve to reshape ethnoreligious traditions to respond to new realities.¹²

Ethnoreligious-themed retreats provide college ethnic Catholic communities opportunities for greater reflection on and contextualization of such received traditions and faith expressions. Min Choi explains how her Korean college ethnic Catholic community holds an annual retreat for its members “where we have different little stations where different groups...talk about much deeper conversations within their faith.”¹³ Campus minister Matthew Weber-López describes the retreat sponsored by his university’s Latino college ethnic Catholic community as an opportunity for students to explore “how do we live our identity through our faith, through our culture, in the way we serve one another.”¹⁴ Alex Flores notes how a student retreat that his community hosted, “let me talk to people that weren’t necessarily super religious, but also trying to find their faith and how they want to live in life [and] they were also Filipino, so that was an event that...made me feel more in tune with the Filipino community.”¹⁵

Service events also provide an outlet for some communities to express their shared ethnoreligious identity through raising funds for disasters in their parents’ homelands, tutoring students at ethnic parishes, and accompanying those experiencing homelessness or facing deportation as an expression of a faith that does justice. Camila Negrón Vega believes the annual visit of her Latino college ethnic Catholic community to pray at an U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center, “reflects what

¹² Elizabeth Drescher, *Choosing Our Religion: The Spiritual Lives of America’s Nones* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 88.

¹³ Min Choi, interview by author, April 23, 2018.

¹⁴ Matthew Weber-López, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

¹⁵ Alex Flores, interview with author, October 30, 2018.

the [community] is because we have the opportunity to...[be] there for those who don't have the same opportunity and privilege that we do...and especially because most of those immigrants who are detained do share the common faith that we do.”¹⁶

Through selective acculturation, college ethnic Catholic communities find ways to express their ethnoreligious identity not only to strengthen the bonds among themselves, but also to share this identity with their peers on campus. To do this, they turn to traditions they received from their families and faith communities and reinvent them in ways that make sense for the new environments of multiethnic college campuses. In other words, they turn to a combination of what Zhou and Bankston call cultural traits and social connections in order to “find resources to adapt to changes in their environment.”¹⁷

Popular Devotions: Formation and Expression of Identity

On a Tuesday evening, 15 mostly Latino students gathered for a Día de los Muertos (All Souls' Day) event in the campus ministry office, which was strewn with festive papel picado (decorative crepe paper). Conversations were sprinkled generously with Spanish phrases, while Día de los Muertos-themed music from the online streaming service Spotify played in the background. As they enjoyed pizza, some students painted calaveras (plastic skulls) with designs from their smartphones. Others made cempasúchil (marigolds) with crepe paper and pipe cleaners. Over time, a more ethnically diverse group of White, Asian American, and African American students joined the event, which

¹⁶ Camila Negrón Vega, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

¹⁷ Zhou and Bankston, 133-134; Robert J. Schreier, “Foreword,” in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies In Inculturation*, ed. Tomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1999), vii.

culminated in the blessing of a large ofrenda (altar) with items of Mesoamerican and European origin located outside the campus ministry office in the student center.

Popular devotions like *Día de los Muertos* (All Souls' Day) are formative experiences for many second generation ethnic Catholics. Immigrant parents make use of these "sacralized occasion[s] to welcome their children into their morality and culture."¹⁸ These devotions communicate spiritual and religious wisdom to new generations about "the way people relate, the way people adore, the way they forgive, or send, or initiate."¹⁹ Through "communal rituals and symbols the new born babies and growing children are initiated into the God-language of [a particular] people."²⁰ For example, "[c]hildren born into Mexican Catholic families become familiar with Catholic customs and imagery even before they are able to fully comprehend their significance." Most often, it is the mother or grandmother, "who socializes the children of the family into Catholicism."²¹

Not surprisingly then, the vast majority (91%) of college ethnic Catholic community members surveyed indicated that such ethnic devotions are important to them, in comparison to how two-thirds (65%) expressed that Mass in the language of their ethnic heritage was important to them. Students express how popular devotions often provided their first sense of connection with the divine and an understanding of their faith. Sebastián Martínez explains how growing up during the novena for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe was "the first time I would ever truly pray the rosary and had

¹⁸ Orsi, 170.

¹⁹ Peter E. Fink, "Liturgy and Popular Piety in the Church's Magisterium," in Phan, *The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, 52.

²⁰ Virgilio Elizondo, "Popular Religiosity as the Core of Cultural Identity," in *Enduring Flame: Studies on Latino Popular Religiosity*, ed. Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo and Ana María Díaz-Stevens (New York: Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies, 1994), 117.

²¹ María Del Socorro Castañeda-Liles, *Our Lady of Everyday Life: la Virgen de Guadalupe and the Catholic imagination of Mexican American women in America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 56.

this strong, warm feeling towards the image of *la Virgen de Guadalupe*.”²² Devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe is undoubtedly the most widespread and enduring “symbol of Mexican and Mexican American identity.”²³ Guadalupe devotion is so deeply intertwined with Mexican culture that it has been likened to *café con leche*, where the mixture of coffee and milk can no longer be separated once blended together.²⁴

Annual observances of the *Vía Crucis Viviente* or live Stations of the Cross are commonplace in many Mexican American communities across the U.S. These events provide participants the opportunity “to engage the Passion narrative intimately.”²⁵ At the same time they offer inspiration “to endure present hardships with faith and encourage [participants] to struggle for the transformation of their personal and collective lives.”²⁶ The *Vía Crucis* is seen by Mexican mothers as “an occasion to teach their children about Jesus’ life and death and about *nuestra cultura* [our culture],” for they view it as “a spiritual event that takes its form and meaning from Mexican culture and history.”²⁷ Natalia Cárdenas describes how growing up, “[a]ll of the *Vía Crucis* (Stations of the Cross) I’ve been to have been acted out and...the visual [aspect], that really helped me as a kid really understand the story and what this whole ‘Jesus died for us’ thing means...it really helps paint a picture and [helps you to] relate.”²⁸

While popular devotions express faith in a transcendent God, they are at the same time very much grounded firmly in the day-to-day reality of everyday believers, which is

²² Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

²³ Elizondo, 122.

²⁴ Castañeda-Liles, 23, 55, 76-77.

²⁵ Karen Mary Davalos, “The Real Way of Praying,” in *Horizons of the Sacred: Mexican traditions in U.S. Catholicism*, eds. Timothy Matovina and Gary Riebe-Estrella (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 46, 48, 50, 56.

²⁶ Matovina, 166-171.

²⁷ Davalos, 51.

²⁸ Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, November 2, 2018.

why they are able to honestly represent “all of the conflicting emotions of being both human and Christian.”²⁹ As a result, they “may have a greater impact on the participants than any formal teaching associated with them,” as witnessed by the experiences of Sebastián and Natalia.³⁰ In these devotions, the faithful are able “to discover themselves and recognize their own lives in the dying and rising of Christ,”³¹ which is to say that they are “the way the people relate to the God of Jesus,” and so manifest “the church’s tradition as it has been interiorized in the hearts of the faithful by the Spirit.”³²

Popular devotions make manifest the ways in which people “construct their lives and live in their religious worlds.”³³ These practices reveal people’s “deepest values and perceptions, their cosmology—the way they [understand] the world to work,” and how people make use of the “facts and trials of their [everyday] lives as their way of faith.”³⁴ Indeed, over the centuries, the “majority of Christians have experienced and celebrated their faith,” through such devotions. These devotions also manifest how people’s religious worlds are constructed not individually, but together, “often sharing vivid experiences of [an] intersubjective reality.”³⁵ Furthermore, these practices are resources for “identity formation, insights about others, creation of community, wisdom for living in the world, and answers to big questions in life.”³⁶

²⁹ Patrick L. Malloy, “The Re-emergence of Popular Religion among Non-Hispanic American Catholics,” *Worship* 72, no.1 (1998): 25.

³⁰ Aponte, 80.

³¹ Keith F. Pecklers, “The Liturgical Year and Popular Piety,” in Phan, *The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, 97.

³² Elizondo and Matovina, 37, 75.

³³ Schreiter, “Foreword,” vii.

³⁴ Orsi, lxvi.

³⁵ Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12.

³⁶ Aponte, 53-54.

In contrast to her experience growing up, Natalia Cárdenas explains how the *Vía Crucis* (Stations of the Cross) organized by her Latino college ethnic Catholic community is “more of a reflective, silent time and we do have the little [Spanish-language] song that goes with the *Vía Crucis* [“*Perdona tu pueblo, Señor*”], but it is more of a time to understand each reading at each station...so it kind of has more of a chill vibe.”³⁷ In part, this “chill vibe” that Natalia describes is in response to how while in Latino Catholicism, “personal, expressive styles of faith predominate,” the European American Catholicism still dominant on her college campus might view such “folk practices” with suspicion.³⁸ Sebastián Martínez notes how “sometimes...we might have to tone things down a little bit to make it seem more welcoming and less strange for people that haven’t had a chance to see [Latino popular devotions]...but we also have to find this odd balance between what’s tradition and what is more attainable by people that have never seen this before.”³⁹

As a result, college ethnic Catholic communities are challenged to reinvent traditions received from their parents and faith communities for their college campuses. Marisol Reyes believes that her Filipino American college ethnic Catholic community is “not super cultural...we express our culture in subtle ways.”⁴⁰ Yet, while devotions organized by these communities may not have the same pageantry as in immigrant parishes, they still carry a deep significance for their members. Sebastián Martínez explains how the celebration for Our Lady of Guadalupe organized by his Latino college

³⁷ Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, my translation, November 2, 2018.

³⁸ Roof and Manning, 177.

³⁹ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁴⁰ Marisol Reyes, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

ethnic Catholic community is “shorter, a lot simpler, but you still get that feeling of community in the congregation and we’re here because we want to honor our Mother.”⁴¹

Popular devotions have historically been able to adapt to new contexts and environments, as manifest by how such devotions have made their way from Spain to Mexico to the Philippines over the centuries.⁴² The adaptability of these devotions reflects how they are a “genuine inculturation of faith” that results in the “harmonious blend of faith and liturgy, feelings and art, and the recognition of...identity in local traditions.”⁴³ As such, these practices neither “imply a slavish attachment to tradition nor hostility to modernity.” Rather, “[l]iving between the old and the new, people make distinctions, sort out what appears to be valuable, select what is useful and within their reach, and seek to forge their own (still spirited) versions of modernity.”⁴⁴

Along these lines, Jasmine Bautista explains how the Simbáng Gabi celebration held in the main chapel of her college campus enabled Filipino American students to be “in that sacred space, but also having a sort of cultural connection... to really connect with their culture through their faith as well.” Simbáng Gabi, a novena of Masses starting on December 16, represents the “most important Filipino tradition at Christmastime.”⁴⁵ The tradition reenacts the “accompanying of the expectant mother of Jesus,” and was brought to the Philippines by Spanish and Mexican missionaries in the 17th Century “as

⁴¹ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁴² Timoteo J.M. Ofrasio, “Inculturation of the Liturgical Year in the Philippines,” *Landas* 31, no. 1 (2017): 89, 96, 98.

⁴³ Pontifical Council for Culture, *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*, Vatican City: Catholic Church, May 23, 1999, no. 28, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_pc-cultr_doc_03061999_pastoral_en.html.

⁴⁴ Bamat and Wiest, 11-13.

⁴⁵ Ofrasio, 88.

an instrument of evangelization.”⁴⁶ Simbáng Gabi has been “passed down to the children of Filipino immigrants,” in a way that bridges the gap between generations, enabling Filipino Americans to connect to their roots and religion.⁴⁷ For this reason, Jasmine notes how decorating the main chapel on her campus with *parols* (Filipino Christmas lanterns) for Simbáng Gabi meant for her “that this sacred space can be decorated in different cultures and that everybody is welcome.”⁴⁸

Through the process of adapting and reinventing these popular devotions, they take on new meaning for students. Sebastián Martínez describes how, “When I was participating in the *Vía Crucis* (Stations of the Cross), I remember I did one of the stations, I got to read in Spanish, which felt very welcoming...[since] we did it out in the open, where other people could see us, and we actively invited other people to come join us on our march around and to come pray with us.” After “feeling hated” for being Latino his first year, he expresses how his participation in the *Vía Crucis* made him feel that “everyone can see me, no one can deny that I’m here and [no one can say] I don’t deserve to be here, they have to see me now...this feeling of [being] undeniably present.”⁴⁹ In this way, these devotions not only express ethnoreligious identity, but also a sense of belonging on campus. Campus minister Matthew Weber-López explains how the Latino

⁴⁶ Ricky Manalo, “Deepening Advent, widening the circle: celebrating Las Posadas and Simbang Gabi,” *Pastoral Liturgy* 43, no. 5 (Sep-Oct 2012), <http://pastoralliturgy.org/resources/1209DeepeningAdventWideningTheCircle.php>.

⁴⁷ Angelo Jesus Canta, “Can’t wait till the 25th? For Filipinos celebrating Simbang Gabi, Christmas comes early,” *America Magazine*, December 19, 2017, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/12/19/cant-wait-till-25th-filipinos-celebrating-simbang-gabi-christmas-comes-early>.

⁴⁸ Jasmine Bautista, interview by author, November 16, 2018.

⁴⁹ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

college ethnic Catholic community on his campus serves “almost like a wedge in the door...not to say like taking over a space, more so just making that presence known.”⁵⁰

Adriana Hernández described the meeting place for her college ethnic Catholic communities as “a sacred space...where [members] can feel comfortable and connected...and just be themselves.”⁵¹ Popular devotions serve to extend these sacred spaces out onto their campuses. These traditions are “visible expressions of [a people’s] collective soul through which [they] affirm ourselves in...relationship to each other and to God.”⁵² As these “devotions are celebrated by the community,” they foster unity and nurture a “communal spirituality.”⁵³ Natalia Cárdenas expresses how, “what I love about [the *Via Crucis*] is that it’s very public...so when we are walking around and we have these different stations, people are like, ‘What is going on?’ and it exposes people and gets them curious about our faith or our culture.”⁵⁴ Similarly, the *ofrenda* described in the previously mentioned *Día de los Muertos* event was actually one of 15 such altars around that particular university campus, including in the university president’s office. Jorge Rodríguez expresses how these *ofrendas* around his campus reflect how “it could go both ways...preserving your culture, then also being part of the larger community.”⁵⁵

In this way, popular devotions reflect the portability of sacred spaces, where *ofrendas* from Mexican homes can find their place on university campuses, not unlike how the establishment of shrines to Our Lady of Guadalupe in the suburbs of Chicago and to Our Lady of Charity in Miami reflect the “transnational dimension” of sacred

⁵⁰ Matthew Weber-López, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁵¹ Adriana Hernández, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁵² Elizondo, 116.

⁵³ Ana María Pineda, “Shrines and Pilgrimages,” in Phan, *The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, 161.

⁵⁴ Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, November 2, 2018.

⁵⁵ Jorge Rodríguez, interview with author, October 31, 2018.

space, such that “migration does not cut off devotions that have their roots in Latin America [or Asia].” Rather their continued observance gives “shape and new meaning to...devotions in new locales.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, the practice of such devotions in new locales like college is indicative of “a desire to make their present surroundings home.”⁵⁷

Popular devotions blur the line between the sacred and profane, which enables them to be vehicles for students to claim sacred spaces beyond public venues on campus to students’ residence halls as in the case of Sebastián Martínez who has an *ofrenda* in his residence hall room. He explains how growing up, “it was always so hard to look at my *abuela*’s (grandmother’s) picture on the *ofrenda* and not cry.” However, with the deeper understanding of *Día de los Muertos* that Sebastián gained in his Latino college ethnic Catholic community, he notes how “this was the first year where I look at her picture at my little *altar* in my room, in my dorm and think, she would have been happy.”⁵⁸

By creating a sacred space in his room, Sebastián recreates in a college setting the way in which Mexican American ethnoreligious identity is “reinforced...in the form of altars to Our Lady of Guadalupe in front of people’s homes, and other public displays of Catholics rituals and practices such as Mass, processions on particular religious holidays, theatrical reenactments of Catholic stories, and pilgrimages to sites deemed holy.”⁵⁹ These expressions of popular devotion create “patterns of religious sensibility among later generations,” thus infusing “the activities of daily life with a sense of the sacred.”⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Aponte, 118-119.

⁵⁷ Joaquin Jay Gonzalez, III, *Filipino American Faith in Action: Immigration, Religion, and Civic Engagement* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 7, 96-97.

⁵⁸ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁵⁹ Castañeda-Liles, 56.

⁶⁰ Wendy M. Wright, *The Lady of Angels and Her City: A Marian Pilgrimage* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2013), 84.

In the midst of college environments that contrast sharply with the ethnoreligious communities in which students were raised, familiar manifestations of popular devotions provide “a sense of security and of being ‘at home.’”⁶¹ So, for a student like Sebastián, an *ofrenda* in his room is a way to make it feel more like home. As such, these practices reinforce ethnic identity and reassure “participants that they do have an identity as a people and that their group symbols, customs, and approach to life, even if not acceptable to the world of the dominant culture, are of value in the world of holy pilgrims.”⁶²

External Expression: Sharing Ethnoreligious Identities

As these popular devotions take on new and deeper significance for college ethnic Catholic community members, their desire to share them with their fellow students grows. Campus minister Robert Thompson describes the events sponsored by college ethnic Catholic communities as an “opportunity...for sharing or an exchange of culture, an exchange of gifts.”⁶³ Through sharing these devotions with others, students develop an even greater appreciation of their meaning.

These students actively choose to take part in these devotions, as opposed to being “forced” to take part in them growing up with their families. Although some students may “not know the origin of the rituals or lack an understanding of the meaning these rituals carry in the tradition,”⁶⁴ the process itself enables them to “connect more and more through...[these] significant experiences.”⁶⁵ So, by accompanying the sacred images

⁶¹ Robert J. Schreier, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), *The New Catholicity*, 48.

⁶² Elizondo and Matovina, 89.

⁶³ Robert Thompson, interview by author, November 14, 2018.

⁶⁴ James Empeur and Eduardo Fernández, *La Vida Sacra: Contemporary Hispanic Sacramental Theology* (Latham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 38.

⁶⁵ Drescher, 213.

associated with these devotions, they “accompany Christ himself,” which then “constitutes and empowers them as persons and as a community of faith.”⁶⁶ Through this “return to cultural heritage and faith,” by means of these popular devotions, students express solidarity with those whom they share an ethnoreligious heritage.⁶⁷

Instead of isolating students in ethnic siloes, college ethnic Catholic communities help ensure that each member “develops his or her own identity in an awareness of its richness and cultural tradition,” while providing them the “necessary tools for understanding [different cultures] and relating them to their own culture.”⁶⁸ The sense of pride in one’s ethnoreligious identity does not preclude interacting with others, but rather, “individuals who feel secure with their ethnic or racial identity are more likely to have greater acceptance and interaction with other groups.”⁶⁹ In this way, “awareness of one’s own tradition and culture [becomes] the starting-point from which one can dialogue and recognize the equal dignity of the other person.”⁷⁰ As such, popular devotions help in “negotiating new identities” and “forging new social relationships.”⁷¹

Natalia Cárdenas explains how her Latino college ethnic Catholic community helped her appreciate the sacrifices her family made to allow her to attend college and how “even though they can’t tell me what professor to take or what to take, they gave me something even more valuable which is this hard work ethic...[and]...this idea of, ‘Be

⁶⁶ Gómez, 127, 131.

⁶⁷ Aponte, 127-128.

⁶⁸ Congregation for Catholic Education, “Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love,” Vatican City: Catholic Church, October 28, 2013, Chapter IV, no. 50, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20131028_dialogo-interculturale_en.html#The_Intercultural_Approach.

⁶⁹ Maramba and Museus, 513-514.

⁷⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education, Chapter V, no. 63.

⁷¹ McGuire, 183.

true to yourself and if you care about your faith and you care about your spirituality, then don't let the popular culture of college...push you away.”⁷² In this way, she recognized how she had something of value to offer her peers. Jasmine Bautista expresses how sharing Simbáng Gabi “with my friends or [with] different people that don't even know the culture, that was very exciting for me.” She notes how the Simbáng Gabi Mass in her university's chapel “just encapsulates everything...that I love the school, I love my heritage, and I love being able to worship God in this space, so it... incorporates into one event...everything that I believe in and love.”⁷³ By celebrating Simbáng Gabi, Filipino American students are able to “honor their heritage and to share the richness of Filipino traditions with their new communities.”⁷⁴

College ethnic Catholic communities thus empower their members to become protagonists of their own ethnoreligious identities. Jorge Rodríguez explains how helping organize Spanish Masses on his campus, “allows me to minister in the way [that I would in] Catholic churches that have predominantly Latinx parishioners.”⁷⁵ Jorge's comment illustrates how the Spanish language is an important component of Latino popular devotions, even when adapted to bilingual formats by college ethnic Catholic communities, since Spanish has been found to be “a significant component of the religious plausibility structure” for second-generation Latino Catholics, who often “do not feel that they fit into their parents' churches, nor do they feel fully accepted in [European American] churches.”⁷⁶

⁷² Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, November 2, 2018.

⁷³ Jasmine Bautista, interview by author, November 16, 2018.

⁷⁴ Canta.

⁷⁵ Jorge Rodríguez, interview with author, October 31, 2018.

⁷⁶ Roof and Manning, 180.

College ethnic Catholic communities provide a kind of “third-space” that is neither an immigrant nor European American parish where students are able to express their agency as protagonists of their collective identity. Jasmine Bautista, who coordinated her Filipino American college ethnic Catholic community’s Simbáng Gabi celebration describes how, “I feel like putting it all together was definitely pretty exciting just because I was never really put in that position,” since growing up, “it was mostly the *titas* and *titos* (elders) who would put it all together and the kids would be more like the [performers] afterward in the reception.”⁷⁷ While Lilibeth Cruz seems to lament that her Filipino American college ethnic Catholic community’s celebration of Simbáng Gabi, “doesn’t compare to the traditional Simbáng Gabi,” she nonetheless finds meaning in how “being in a new generation and being college students where you’re exposed to so many things, [you] can make it accustomed to what [you] believe Simbáng Gabi should be and...in a way that kind of impacts how [you] see God.”⁷⁸

In the midst of the “cultural crisis and flux” that students face on college campuses, engaging with and leading these familiar yet adapted devotions “provides individuals and groups with a sense of control and potency.”⁷⁹ These contextualized devotions provide the spiritual resources they need to engage with their new reality as college students.⁸⁰ At the same time, these devotions are some of “the foremost opportunities for people to meet the living Christ,” which in turn enables them to develop a deeper sense of ownership not only of their ethnic identity but of their faith.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Jasmine Bautista, interview by author, November 16, 2018.

⁷⁸ Lilibeth Cruz, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

⁷⁹ Malloy, 22.

⁸⁰ Aponte, 7.

⁸¹ Pontifical Council for Culture, no. 28.

Campus minister Robert Thompson notes how events organized by college ethnic Catholic communities “very much [take] place on the level of individual student organizing, individual student relationships formed with campus ministry staff.”⁸² These students do not simply inherit the traditions of their forbearers, but rather use the agency they find when away from home on college campuses to “selectively engage their heritage and the U.S. context to transform their identities, faith expressions, and strategies for social activism.”⁸³ They do this not by following a preset script of devotional practices but rather reinvent them by “generating conversation, sharing stories, and encouraging common action.”⁸⁴ Thus, these students “re-craft...traditional celebration[s] in a way that [makes] sense in their context.”⁸⁵ As a result, these adapted devotions enable students to “carry elements of religious experience into other aspects of their lives,”⁸⁶ and by so doing, “create and recreate [their] identity.”⁸⁷ Through this process, students like Sebastián Martínez encounter a newfound sense of ownership of their faith, which for Sebastián, “makes me want to talk about it with a lot more with people.”⁸⁸

At the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe at one Midwestern Catholic university, “students have started to do a little presentation about the feast and its background and history and importance to their culture and their spiritual lives,” which adds “a little bit of a teaching and educational component [to] the celebration itself.”⁸⁹ By such efforts, college ethnic Catholic communities are shaping the ethnoreligious identity of their

⁸² Robert Thompson, interview by author, November 14, 2018.

⁸³ Matovina and Riebe-Estrella, 5.

⁸⁴ Drescher, 249.

⁸⁵ Aponte, 87.

⁸⁶ Drescher, 39.

⁸⁷ Nuñez and Foubert, 7.

⁸⁸ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁸⁹ Robert Thompson, interview by author, November 14, 2018.

college campuses to be more reflective of the ethnoreligious diversity of their students. Jonathan Gómez explains that by organizing *Día de los Muertos* events, “I feel like I contribute something more to [my university] than just attending, especially with...this whole week with setting up *ofrendas* for students all over campus.”⁹⁰ Through this process, popular devotions enable their practitioners to be “self-initiated agents of transformation and empowerment,” as they articulate “in words and actions...[the] individual and communal experience of navigating and making sense of the world.”⁹¹ This provides students with a sense of “narrative coherence,” such that they feel “reintegrated...into the totality of their culture,” as it is lived out in a college context.⁹²

As a result, the ethnoreligious practices of college ethnic Catholic communities reflect the agency of their members to adapt and reinvent ethnic Catholic rituals and traditions for an intercultural context. This occurs through a dialectical process by which children of Catholic immigrants are able to take an active part in contextualizing and reinventing ethnic Catholic culture and traditions from their childhood unencumbered by the cultural expectations placed upon them by the ethnic Catholic communities in which they were raised. This dialectical process enables college students to integrate and share their collective ethnoreligious identity in a multiethnic college environment.

An essay by Belzer, Flory, Roumani, and Loskota titled, “Congregations that Get It,” finds that young adults want their participation in congregations to be valued, seek a sense of ownership, hope to build community with peers, expect to be encountered where they are at with questions and doubts, and desire to be emotionally affected by their

⁹⁰ Jonathan Gómez, interview with author, October 31, 2018.

⁹¹ Aponte, 138, 147.

⁹² Drescher, 39; Orsi, 172-173.

religious engagement. The examples the authors provide for being “emotionally affected” include moving music, connection to their history, and a sense of cultural heritage. In terms of ownership, the authors highlight the importance of planning and leading activities and events for peers. So, one could surmise that planning and leading popular devotions that tap into cultural heritage and faith would be particularly valued.⁹³

In *Young Catholic America* (2014), Smith, Longest, Hill, and Christoffersen propose a series of factors that lead to higher religiosity in young adulthood. The first factor is close bonds to actively religious parents and other adults during formative years and enjoyment of participation in religious activities, which popular devotions often provide children of immigrants, as noted previously. The second factor is internalization of beliefs through their reinforcement and a drive for identity continuity through the transition to adulthood, which college ethnic Catholic communities help foster. The third factor is conservation of what the authors term “accumulated religious capital,” through ongoing religious practices, like the popular devotions described in this chapter.⁹⁴

The expression of ethnoreligious identity through popular devotions organized by college ethnic Catholic communities enables students to be protagonists of this identity, which bodes well for their future religiosity and engagement with the faith. At the same time, these devotions provide opportunities for students to share their ethnoreligious identity with others. In this way, they open avenues towards a more intercultural church.

⁹³ Tobin Belzer, Richard W. Flory, Nadia Roumani, and Brie Loskota, “Congregations that Get It: Understanding Religious Identities in the Next Generation,” in Heft, 119-122.

⁹⁴ Christian Smith, Kyle Longest, Jonathan Hill and Kari Christoffersen, *Young Catholic America: Emerging Adults In, Out of, and Gone from the Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 189-197, 268-269.

Chapter 5

Towards an Intercultural Church

College ethnic Catholic communities have their roots in ethnic diaspora churches where, as noted in the first chapter, a focus on “continuity with the past” is combined with resources to help with “problems of the present.”¹ In contrast to the “distinct division between religious and secular life in the West,” many Catholic immigrants come from contexts where religion is “an all-encompassing way of life.”² Diaspora churches attempt to recreate environments that reflect such an “instinctive and pervasive religion,” in which traditions are passed down in what might be termed a “chain of memory.”³

Immigrant parents turn to these diaspora churches to serve as “the primary site where their children can learn about, embrace, and develop pride in their ethnic culture.”⁴ Although these churches do provide formative experiences for the second generation, like popular devotions described in the fourth chapter, they offer few opportunities for the second generation to take an active role. The majority (55%) of college ethnic Catholic community members surveyed never served at a Mass in their parents’ language growing up, in comparison to only 26% of the non-ethnically-affiliated Catholic community members who never served at an English-language Mass. Furthermore, these monocultural churches leave youth ill-prepared for multiethnic college campuses.⁵

¹ Paul D. Lee, “The Korean American Catholic Experience as Part of an Ongoing Pentecost,” in *Embracing Our Inheritance: Jubilee Reflections on Korean American Catholics (1966-2016)*, ed. Simon C. Kim and Francis Daeshin Kim (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 31.

² Jaisy Joseph, *The Struggle for Identity among Syro-Malabar Catholics* (Fairfax, VA: Eastern Christian Publications, 2009), 90.

³ Patricia Wittberg, *Catholic Cultures* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2016), 45.

⁴ Sharon Kim, *A Faith of Our Own: Second-Generation Spirituality in Korean American Churches* (Piscataway, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 43.

⁵ Gray, 28.

College environments challenge the ethnoreligious identity of the second generation in several ways. First, most U.S. colleges and universities today “categorize students into racial groupings and treat them differentially.” Through this process, students’ racial identity is brought to the fore and “becomes a significant factor in social relations,” thereby serving to institutionally “legitimate certain groupings.”⁶ In this way, their ethnoreligious identity becomes more salient through their exposure to non-ethnics.⁷ As a result, the “discovery of being neither fully American nor fully [of one’s parents’ ethnicity]...often threatens one’s sense of self.” Students are left seeking “an identity that places them in solidarity with others and gives an orientation towards the future.”⁸

Second, college often presents students with the postmodern concept that “identity is...something to be constructed,” as opposed to being something ascribed and received as is assumed in diaspora churches.⁹ This process involves “contested negotiations of the complex and difficult relationships between their Christian faith and the demands of the gospel, culture, race/ethnicity, and peoplehood within contemporary U.S. society.”¹⁰ While religion often serves “as a vehicle to reproduce ethnic identity among the American born,” ethnic studies departments, ethnic student services, and ethnic student organizations in many universities often reflect an ambivalence to religion.¹¹ While students’ ethnic and religious identities were formed in an integrated

⁶ Russell Jeung, *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches* (Piscataway, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 45, 49.

⁷ Gans, 883.

⁸ Joseph, 84.

⁹ Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church: A People Called and Sent* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 237.

¹⁰ Jonathan Y. Tan, *Introducing Asian American Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 81.

¹¹ Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations* (Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press,

fashion, college may influence them to take on a more “secular ethnic identity.”¹² This “marginalization of [their] religious experience,” stems from a lack of awareness of “how precious the religious dimension is for fruitful, proficient, intercultural dialogue.”¹³

Cultural dissonance with fellow Catholics presents yet another challenge to students’ ethnoreligious identity. Given that “campus ministries are less culturally diverse than the overall Catholic population,” when students participate in campus ministry events, they often recognize how their experience of Catholicism differs significantly from that of their peers.¹⁴ Yet for second generation ethnic Catholic students, “to preserve, celebrate, and retain particular cultural iterations of Catholicism,” represents a fundamental “way to be Catholic [and] to stay Catholic.”¹⁵ As noted in the third chapter, the lack of such cultural awareness on the part of campus ministry and their Catholic peers can be alienating for students.

Admittedly, ethnic identity is not always relevant to the faith of second generation ethnic Catholic students. For example, Stephanie García, a member of the non-ethnically-affiliated college Catholic community included in this study is from Southern California and identifies as Hispanic. She describes how a negative experience in “a very Hispanic parish,” led her to an English-speaking parish where she “learned and grew so much.”¹⁶ Nonetheless, for many students, “[r]acial and ethnic identities mediate [their] experience

2000), 2, 8; For how such ambivalence emerges from post-colonial critiques of Christian missionaries’ Eurocentric “conquest paradigm,” see Gaillardetz, 43.

¹² R. Stephen Warner, “Immigration and Religious Communities in the United States,” in *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, eds. R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1998), 11, 16, 20.

¹³ Congregation for Catholic Education, Chapter I, no. 9.

¹⁴ Johnson-Mondragón, “Multicultural Ministry in Parishes Today and Important Themes for its Future,” 1.

¹⁵ Tricia Colleen Bruce, *Parish and Place: Making Room for Diversity in the American Catholic Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 204.

¹⁶ Stephanie García, interview by author, October 25, 2018.

of Catholicism.”¹⁷ So, the challenges posed to their ethnoreligious identity and the “experience of rupture or alienation from one’s previous experience as one is propelled into a new, different, and sometimes hostile environment,” can be quite disorienting.¹⁸

College Ethnic Catholic Communities as Intercultural Bridges

In the midst of this disorienting experience that challenges and even threatens students’ ethnoreligious identity, college ethnic Catholic communities serve as an intercultural bridge between the immigrant-led diaspora churches where these second generation ethnic Catholics grew up and the multiethnic college environments in which they find themselves. In these communities, students are not expected to “deny or shed their identity,” instead their “longing for fellowship and spiritual enrichment is...met in an environment in which their ethnic, racial, and generational selves are understood and affirmed.”¹⁹ The common and familiar bond of ethnoreligious culture in these small, family-like groups, facilitates the ease with which “members [are able] to know one another’s unique qualities and special interests, to learn her or his wants or needs,” which then leads to “solidarity as co-religionists [who] come to act and feel mutually responsible for one another.”²⁰ This shared understanding and sense of mutual responsibility lead them to feel at “home,” as noted in the third chapter. In turn, this enables community members to be comfortable and open in exploring their faith together.

As intercultural bridges, these college ethnic Catholic communities do not simply recreate the diaspora churches where students were raised, nor are they merely “safe

¹⁷ Bruce, 129.

¹⁸ Robert Schreiter, “Religion Displaced and Replaced,” in Budde, 14.

¹⁹ Sharon Kim, 50, 52-53.

²⁰ Judith G. Wittner, “A Reader Among Fieldworkers,” in Warner and Wittner, 369.

spaces” to provide sanctuary from hostile campuses. Rather, these communities represent a hybrid “third-space,” which is neither an immigrant diaspora church nor a campus ministry setting similar to a European American parish. These spaces encourage students to move beyond their experience of marginality to explore “more nuanced categories that incorporate the realities of plurality, hybridity, and heterogeneity,” which then fosters the construction of a second generation ethnoreligious identity.²¹

Unlike immigrant-led ethnic parish youth groups, these communities give students the “latitude to improvisationally and innovatively fashion [an ethnoreligious identity] that is uniquely their own.”²² Students encounter in these communities “a new spiritual space to process their lives, including some intragenerational and intergenerational frictions and conflicts as well as their own ethnic identity.”²³ In these spiritual spaces, “[identity problems] can be discussed and worked out with peers who share their ethnic and religious backgrounds as well as their experiences of growing up in America.”²⁴ Robert Thompson affirms how these communities “provide opportunities in faith sharing contexts...to look at the way that our cultural experiences impact our religious experiences and vice versa.”²⁵ Similarly, Daniel Soto, a third-year Venezuelan American from Arkansas who is one of two student leaders at the Catholic center for a Western public university argues that their Filipino American college ethnic Catholic community facilitates exploration of his fellow students’ “holistic experience.”²⁶

²¹ Tan, 116.

²² Sharon Kim, 108-109.

²³ Gonzalez, “Second-Generation Filipino American Faithful,” 169.

²⁴ Ebaugh and Chafetz, 125-126.

²⁵ Robert Thompson, interview by author, November 14, 2018.

²⁶ Daniel Soto, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

The growth of these communities reveals “a strong desire among the second generation to practice their faith in an institutional setting that understands and addresses their needs as a racial-ethnic group and as children of immigrants.” In these settings, students have the freedom to seek “creative resolution to the constraints and opportunities tied to [their] multiple identities.” This resolution often takes the form of “collective identity that is open and ‘in between.’”²⁷ Michelle Sánchez expresses how her community is “ethnic but it’s also related to faith, if you do choose faith, and if you don’t, then you could still come by, because it’s still ethnic. So it’s kind of like the best of both worlds for people...they don’t feel like they’re being forced to learn or know.”²⁸

These communities are a kind of “free association of the baptized,” where students express both their autonomy from their parents’ attempts to ascribe them with an ethnoreligious identity and their desire to draw freely from their ethnoreligious roots to create their own identity.²⁹ In other words, by “assertively defining and shaping their own ethnic and religious futures,” students express their agency and so “create a new and distinct expression of spirituality with discernable fingerprints of their ethnic, racial, and generational selves.”³⁰ As this collective, second generation ethnoreligious identity emerges, college ethnic Catholic communities serve as intercultural bridges for students to share this newfound identity with their peers.

As a result, these communities foster a sense of agency among their members not only to construct their own ethnoreligious identity, but also “to confidently engage and

²⁷ Sharon Kim, 3, 39, 52, 80, 163-165.

²⁸ Michelle Sánchez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

²⁹ Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 267.

³⁰ Sharon Kim, 3, 39, 164-165.

assert their voices in the larger mainstream society.”³¹ Natalia Cárdenas describes how “seeing that there’s [a community] tailored and that is specifically inclusive of all Latinos,” enabled her to “get more involved in campus ministry because before that...I just didn’t have a way in.”³² Similarly, Matthew Weber-López notes that previously, “we didn’t have a lot of students of color coming in and just hanging out on the couches [in campus ministry],” but now with the Latino college ethnic Catholic community’s active presence, “I’ll walk in some days and we have such a diverse group.”³³

Of course, these diverse students do not simply “hang out on the couches,” in campus ministry, but their presence reflects how they believe that their ethnoreligious traditions are valuable gifts that should be shared with their peers. As detailed in the fourth chapter, college ethnic Catholic communities often organize popular devotions in ways that reflect their own unique expressions of their second generation ethnoreligious identity, selectively adapting and reinterpreting aspects of their parents’ ethnoreligious traditions in a way that makes sense for their experience as college students on multiethnic campuses. As they organize these ritual devotions, they “not only do they *perform* the ritual, but as hermeneutical beings they also *interpret* the ritual they perform,” which serves to further solidify their ethnoreligious identity.³⁴

Furthermore, as these students organize and participate in these popular devotions they move from being marginalized “guests” on their campuses to being valued “hosts,” while at the same time being able to “make sacred spaces [on campus] their own.”³⁵ In

³¹ Sharon Kim, 14.

³² Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, November 2, 2018.

³³ Matthew Weber-López, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

³⁴ Dudek, 38.

³⁵ Ibid.

this way, the college campus transforms “de ser lugar a ser hogar (from a place to a home),” similar to how one moves from “receiving hospitality in someone else’s parish to a homecoming in one’s own church.”³⁶ As these devotions involve a diverse group of students from campus that extends beyond the membership of their college ethnic Catholic communities, they serve to “bind people together into one religious community that shares a single destiny and a collective memory.”³⁷ As such, the college ethnic Catholic community as intercultural bridge is thus able to make a “contribution from its own vitality and creativity to this more comprehensive, ecclesial level.”³⁸ As community members recognize their ability to make such a contribution, it serves to “enhance their...commitment to the broader institution.”³⁹

Fruits of College Ethnic Catholic Communities

*By their fruits you will know them.*⁴⁰

College ethnic Catholic communities are having a positive impact not only on their student members’ ethnoreligious identity and college experience but also on their overall university campuses. While these communities are admittedly not in and of themselves intercultural, given that most of their members are of the same ethnoreligious background, they do serve as intercultural bridges in ways that diaspora churches do not. As intercultural bridges, they provide opportunities to share the fruits of their members’ ethnoreligious identities and traditions with their respective institutions.

³⁶ Matovina, 55.

³⁷ Marianne Moyaert, “Ritualizing Interreligious Encounters: Mapping the Field of Interculturality,” *Interreligious Studies and Intercultural Theology* 1, no. 2 (2017), 173.

³⁸ Shorter, 267.

³⁹ Ebaugh and Chafetz, 62, 84.

⁴⁰ Mt 7:16 (NAB)

In contrast to monocultural and often monolingual diaspora churches, all the communities in this study have members from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This inclusivity is highlighted time and again as positive in member interviews. Natalia Cárdenas describes how this fosters cultural awareness in her community, where “there are people who grew up here, whose parents grew up here...in our meetings and they love to understand and learn more about Latin American culture...people [who] want to know about how my family raised me.”⁴¹ This cultural awareness goes in both directions as a Latina student named her “family” break-out group in her Filipino American college ethnic Catholic community after “Saint Juan Diego,” as a reflection of her own culture.⁴²

The inclusive environment of these communities also fosters reconciliation as Sebastián Martínez explains how for him as a Mexican American “it’s so hard for me to forgive [Spaniards] and look past the centuries of anguish.” Yet after Sebastián got to know the Spanish members in his Latino college ethnic Catholic community, he expresses how “we found this common place in our faith because...what matters is we’re here right now, we’re praying to the same God, the same prayers in the same language, there’s something beautiful about that.”⁴³ This reconciling spirit also can be seen in how Sebastián’s Latino community invited his campus’ Filipino college ethnic Catholic community to participate in its *Via Crucis* and even read at some of the stations.⁴⁴

The collaboration between these two communities also manifests an openness to adapting the ethnoreligious traditions received from members’ immigrant families and faith communities in order to respond to their multiethnic college campus environments

⁴¹ Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, my translation, November 2, 2018.

⁴² Analyn Santos, interview with author, October 23, 2018.

⁴³ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁴⁴ Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, November 2, 2018

and share them with their ethnically diverse peers. This represents a freedom to move beyond “ethnic-bound traditions, customs, and theological positions from the ‘Old World,’” in order to embrace the “largely unconscious and ongoing process of shaping, constructing and negotiating new traditions, practices, and theological positions.”⁴⁵ Sergio Pérez believes that this process has been able to “help with building a stronger bond between people, rather than just isolating ourselves by ethnic background.”⁴⁶

Although many popular devotions are associated with a particular culture and can serve as “boundary markers,” they may also “occasion a transgression of boundaries and constitute a new (sense of) communion.”⁴⁷ For example, “in 2010...more than two thousand parishes (some without Filipino parishioners) celebrated *Simbang Gabi*,” reflecting how “the [Advent] devotion is no longer only for Filipinos, by Filipinos.”⁴⁸ This example illustrates how popular devotions represent “often surprising non-verbal forms of understanding...as intercultural or bridging languages.”⁴⁹ Alex Flores expresses how his community has enabled him to “celebrate and also grow in those cultural aspects, but then also share [them] with others, so it becomes more connected.”⁵⁰

Through “creatively picking and choosing” expressions of their shared ethnoreligious identity, college ethnic Catholic communities both “establish new connections,” beyond the boundaries of their communities and harness the ways in which the “[i]mages or symbols of a culture are in themselves didactic.”⁵¹ Jasmine Bautista

⁴⁵ Tan, 171.

⁴⁶ Sergio Pérez, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁴⁷ Moyaert, 165.

⁴⁸ Motus, 61.

⁴⁹ Werner Ustorf, “The Cultural Origins of ‘Intercultural’ Theology,” in *Intercultural Theology: Approaches and Themes*, eds. Mark J. Cartledge and David Cheetham (London: SCM Press, 2011), 20.

⁵⁰ Alex Flores, interview by author, October 30, 2018.

⁵¹ Sharon Kim, 82; Moyaert, 183; Shorter, 5.

explains how the Simbáng Gabi celebration her community sponsored prompted White students to “ask about what this is all about or how your culture connects to faith,” and so was an “experience that [was] exciting for me to share.”⁵² Sebastián Martínez believes that the events sponsored by his community have “definitely made campus a lot more open to Hispanics and Hispanic culture,” and that it “makes us feel this new level of community, like no one has to be afraid anymore of showing who they are.”⁵³

Sebastián’s comment reflects how the increased openness to and interest in diverse ethnoreligious cultures fostered by these college ethnic Catholic communities are transformative of the overall campus culture. The official sponsorship of these communities by campus ministries and Catholic centers provides for the fuller incorporation not only of their members but also of their ethnoreligious culture into their respective university community. In the same way that “[p]arish status...matters in material and symbolic ways,” in a diocese, official recognition legitimates the presence of these ethnoreligious groups on campus and fosters interest in their ethnoreligious cultures. So even while these groups are “born of participants’ own agency,” the sanctioning of a “structural, organizational reality...by institutional authorities,” promotes the active inclusion of these students and their ethnoreligious identity.⁵⁴

College ethnic Catholic communities promote a campus culture that is “attentive to different expressions of Christianity as culturally mediated, and seeks to facilitate interactions between them.”⁵⁵ Natalia Cárdenas expresses her excitement at how non-Latino students that participate in the celebration for Our Lady of Guadalupe at her

⁵² Jasmine Bautista, interview by author, November 16, 2018.

⁵³ Sebastián Martínez, interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁵⁴ Bruce, 8, 25.

⁵⁵ Cartledge and Cheetham, 2.

campus are “craving more knowledge about it,” which for her reflects how “people want to know about your culture or the way you were raised.”⁵⁶ Similarly, Adriana Hernández explains how at some of her community’s meetings, non-Latinos will join and express how they “want to learn more about the community,” which she finds “really heartwarming because you get to know the impact that [the community is having].”⁵⁷

As students of diverse ethnoreligious backgrounds, “share with each other their ways of life,” there emerges an openness to transcend cultural boundaries that results in “the gradual erosion of a dominant-culture mentality.”⁵⁸ While this gradual erosion may not be immediately evident on some campuses, Robert Thompson does note “a growing awareness from White-identified students that the church is becoming more diverse in the U.S. and they have a desire to understand that experience [of ethnic Catholic college students] and to learn about it.”⁵⁹ Over time, these intercultural interactions have the potential to bring about “a new cultural creation,” or a new intercultural campus culture that is “shaped and formed from the constituent cultures of the various group members,” in a way that “does not blend or melt or erase aspects of each individual’s culture but becomes ‘superorganic’...greater than the sum of its parts.”⁶⁰

The Road to Emmaus: Pathways to an Intercultural Church

In the Gospel of Luke, two disciples are found on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13), away from home, sharing a traumatic and life-altering experience. This

⁵⁶ Natalia Cárdenas, interview by author, November 2, 2018.

⁵⁷ Adriana Hernández, interview by author, October 31, 2018.

⁵⁸ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, Vatican City: Catholic Church, September 14, 1998, § 71, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html; Anthony Gittins, *Living Mission Interculturally: Faith, Culture, and the Renewal of Praxis* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2015), 111.

⁵⁹ Robert Thompson, interview by author, November 14, 2018.

⁶⁰ Shorter, 263; Gittins, 132.

experience is not unlike the ethnoreligious cultural shock experienced by the children of Catholic immigrants when they make the journey away from their families and diaspora churches to multiethnic, often predominantly European American, college campuses. Since “faith flourishes or atrophies in a cultural context, and culture provides the way of expressing faith,” the new cultural context of college can be disorienting, even to the extent that it is experienced as “a head-on attack on their faith and spirituality itself.”⁶¹

In the midst of their journey, Jesus encounters these two disciples, who are described as “looking downcast” (Luke 24:17b), for they are disoriented and without hope. Jesus grounds himself in their reality, what had been familiar to them, and shows his understanding of their ethnoreligious context as “beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures” (Luke 24:27). While Jesus was from a “culturally heterogeneous corner of Palestine known as Galilee...particularly influenced by Graeco-Roman culture,” his fundamental ethnoreligious identity was undoubtedly Jewish.⁶² This shared identity expressed through Jesus’ interpretation of the scriptures inspires the disciples to then take the initiative to invite Jesus to stay with them and enter into their home (Luke 24:29).

It is precisely in this context of home, like the home that students find in college ethnic Catholic communities, that the disciples recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread (Luke 24:30-31). In the familiarity, security, and comfort of home, Jesus “can be recognized...in the ritual gestures of the community fellowship meal.” These gestures are not unlike the familiar ethnoreligious traditions students practice in their college ethnic Catholic communities, like how one Latino community ends its weekly meeting by

⁶¹ Gittins, 62, 116.

⁶² Shorter, 119.

offering a blessing of protection to each other, which as with the disciples, moves them from “the shock of absence” to “the shock of full presence.”⁶³ A place once strange and alienating suddenly becomes a home for students who encounter Christ’s presence there.

The experience of the disciples is not one of cognitive recognition but rather is an emotionally moving one, for “they said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?’”⁶⁴ Young Catholics today place a high value on “actions...and strong emotional experiences,” such as “extraordinary religious events,” as in the case of some popular devotions.⁶⁵ In this moving encounter with Jesus, the disciples are able to “resolve the cognitive dissonance between their experience and their convictions.” Just as for the disciples, “without ‘Moses and the prophets’ they would not have had the symbols for appropriating their experience,” the collective ethnoreligious identity students construct in their communities provides them the symbols to appropriate and make sense of their college experience.⁶⁶

Furthermore, the disciples’ powerful experience is not one that they keep to themselves, but rather this experience moves them to immediately share their encounter with Jesus with others (Luke 24:33-35). The internal conversion they experience together thus leads to a broader communal conversion since “the process of telling and interpreting these diverse experiences begins not only to build a community narrative, but actually begins to create the community itself.”⁶⁷ In a similar way, college ethnic

⁶³ Timothy Luke Johnson, *The Gospel of John* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 398.

⁶⁴ Lk 24:32 (NAB)

⁶⁵ Isabelle Jonveaux, “Postmodern Youth: Challenges and Connectivity,” in *Intercultural Mission: Volume 2*, eds. Lazar T. Stanislaus and Martin Ueffing (Delhi, India: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2017), 417.

⁶⁶ T. L. Johnson, 399.

⁶⁷ T. L. Johnson, 399.

Catholic communities foster a desire to share their second generation ethnoreligious identity with others. In so doing, they share the gifts of their ethnoreligious experiences beyond the boundaries of their communities and enrich the broader church.

Intercultural Ecclesiology for the U.S. Catholic Church

The current de facto model followed by the U.S. Catholic Church of diaspora and “mainstream” churches reflects an unresolved “tension between ethnic particularism and religious universalism.”⁶⁸ As of 2014, 27 percent of U.S. Catholics were immigrants and 15 percent had at least one parent that immigrated to the U.S., which means that this divide between diaspora and “mainstream” presents a significant challenge for the entire U.S. Church and not only for a few pockets of diversity.⁶⁹ While there is a clear need to “move beyond an entrenchment mentality in isolation,” the U.S. Church currently offers few opportunities to bridge the gap between diaspora and mainstream churches.⁷⁰ Indeed, one could argue that the operative paradigm continues to be “the unilateral Americanization of an immigrant church,” where diaspora churches are viewed as “mere way stations en route to assimilation.”⁷¹

However, the Catholic Church affirms that “[c]ultural context permeates the living of Christian faith,” which is to say that everyone “experiences God through [their] own cultural frames of reference.”⁷² Accordingly, the Church encourages the faithful to “express their Christian experience in ways that are consonant with their own cultural

⁶⁸ Sharon Kim, 134.

⁶⁹ Michael Lipka, “A Closer Look at Catholic America,” Pew Research Center, September 14, 2015, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/09/14/a-closer-look-at-catholic-america/>.

⁷⁰ Lee, 29.

⁷¹ Matovina and Riebe-Estrella, 7; Sharon Kim, 12.

⁷² Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, § 71; Sharon Kim, 94.

traditions.”⁷³ Thus, allowing people “to preserve their own cultural identity...in no way creates division, because the community of the baptized is marked by a universality which can embrace every culture and help to foster whatever is implicit in them to the point where it will be fully explicit in the light of truth.”⁷⁴ As Daniel Soto explains, “different Catholic cultures have different perspectives on how they praise the Lord, [which] sheds light on a different corner of the Catholic faith.”⁷⁵

College ethnic Catholic communities represent a model for intercultural ecclesiology that might be more broadly termed “Emmaus communities,” which both allow for preserving cultural identity while fostering greater universality. This model differs from a diaspora model that does not offer a way to integrate diverse ethnoreligious cultures and from an assimilationist model that assumes ethnic Catholics will inevitably join parishes where the dominant expression of Catholicism is European American. Rather, this intercultural model assumes “cultures [should] nourish the Euro-American church, just as the Euro-American church needs to nourish a different culture.”⁷⁶

“Emmaus communities” would serve as intercultural bridges in the broader U.S. Catholic Church just as college ethnic Catholic communities serve as intercultural bridges on their respective campuses. Such “Emmaus communities” would incorporate intercultural theology into Avery Cardinal Dulles’ model of church as mystical communion. This model of mystical communion goes beyond the horizontal, “friendly relationships between [human persons],” and extends to a “vertical dimension—the

⁷³ Francis A. Sullivan, “The Evangelizing Mission of the Church,” in *The Gift of the Church*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 240.

⁷⁴ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, § 71.

⁷⁵ Daniel Soto, interview by author, October 23, 2018.

⁷⁶ Kenan B. Osborne, *Orders and Ministry: Leadership in the World Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 207.

divine life disclosed in the incarnate Christ and communicated to [human persons] through his Spirit.” Within this model then, the Church serves to foster a “mystical and invisible communion that binds together all those who are enlivened by the grace of Christ.” It emphasizes unity not achieved by human efforts but rather by God’s grace.⁷⁷

Intercultural theology “draws upon the wealth of diverse religious and cultural contexts of Christians in order to increase understanding about Christian beliefs and practices.”⁷⁸ In this way, it complements Dulles’ model by ensuring that the horizontal aspect of mystical communion incorporates “a context that understands and integrates [community members’] ethnic and cultural selves,” including the “shared life experiences, struggles, and worldviews [that] provide...a common ground.” In turn, this common ground leads to an openness “to authentically experience God.”⁷⁹ With regards to the vertical aspect of Dulles’ model, intercultural theology recognizes how every culture “has an intrinsic capacity to receive divine Revelation,” and so is attentive to the ways in which ethnoreligious traditions reveal God’s presence and activity in the world.⁸⁰

“Emmaus communities” could bring together “members along any of several dimensions—age, ethnicity, gender, etc.”⁸¹ The establishment of such communities, whether in parishes, schools, or other settings, would be a way that the U.S. Catholic Church could “modify its own structures and procedures in order to receive people of diverse cultures.”⁸² Not only would they reflect how “the Church...is not in some place nor is it someone else; we ourselves are the Church,” but they would respond to “the

⁷⁷ Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Image, 2002), 42, 43, 185.

⁷⁸ David Cheetham, “Intercultural Theology and Interreligious Studies,” in Cartledge and Cheetham, 55.

⁷⁹ Sharon Kim, 56, 138.

⁸⁰ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, § 71.

⁸¹ Wittberg, 48.

⁸² Gittins, 181.

increased decentralization, pluralism, and voluntarism of American religious life.”⁸³ One example of this is how the percentage of “parish shoppers,” has more than doubled since the 1980s, with nearly a third of Catholics living closer to a parish other than the one they attend. This trend is even stronger among younger Catholics and non-White Catholics.⁸⁴

For these “Emmaus communities” to be truly intercultural, they must provide ways for their mystical communion to be shared with others, given that “the unity of the human family does not submerge the identities of individuals, peoples and cultures, but makes them more transparent to each other and links them more closely in their legitimate diversity.”⁸⁵ The profound experience of mystical communion, like the Emmaus disciples’ encounter with Christ, should lead to a desire to bring that experience to others, so that “the diversity of cultures [might] carry [the Church’s] fruits of grace,” in a way that leads to “mutual enrichment and transformation.”⁸⁶

“Emmaus communities” could engage in reimagined versions of popular devotions to share these fruits of grace in the same way that college ethnic Catholic communities adapt devotions for multiethnic campuses. Despite the common perception that only “the uneducated, the poor, the immigrants, or socially marginalized persons...engage in...popular religious practices,” many “educated, socially stable, economically well-off churchgoers,” regularly engage in popular devotions.⁸⁷ While

⁸³ Pope Benedict XVI, *The Unity of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 65; Warner, “Immigration and Religious Communities in the United States,” 10.

⁸⁴ Bruce, 51.

⁸⁵ Congregation for Catholic Education, Chapter III, no. 36.

⁸⁶ Robert Kisala, “Ethnocentrism and Ethnorelativism,” in Stanislaus and Ueffing, 12.; Pope John Paul II, “Letter from Pope John Paul II to Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, May 20, 1982,” Pontifical Council for Culture, accessed December 8, 2018, <http://www.cultura.va/content/cultura/en/magistero/papa/JohnPaulII/fondazione.html>.

⁸⁷ McGuire, 67.

each popular devotion in itself may be “incomplete and partial, together [they] enrich our understanding of the full richness of Catholicism today.”⁸⁸

Second generation ethnic Catholics would be the ideal members of “Emmaus communities” to adapt and lead such devotions, as they are naturally inclined to bridge cultures. As such, they could create “opportunities for deeper intercultural learning,” which go beyond the “‘surface’ of culture: language, food, dress, dancing, etc.”⁸⁹ Popular devotions would enable fellow Catholics “to become familiar with the way different cultures worship differently, even within the same communion,” and so transcend a “narrow cultural articulation of what it means to be Catholic.”⁹⁰

“Emmaus communities” could serve as “a bridge as well as a source of blessing to their...neighbors,” in order to “enlarge our vision and challenge our often set ways.”⁹¹ Over time, these “mutually interacting but distinct subcultures,” brought together by these communities, could lead to “an integration of cultures in mutual recognition.”⁹² Such an integration would draw from the richness of many ethnoreligious traditions “to create a *new culture* in which all can live fruitfully.”⁹³ This would then make manifest how at the first Pentecost “[c]ultural difference was not destroyed but became the very instrument for a realization of a more profound spiritual unity,” a spiritual unity that would foster “a new vision of what [is] church.”⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Wittberg, 25.

⁸⁹ Kisala, 12.

⁹⁰ Robert Daly, “Eucharistic Origins: From the New Testament to the Liturgies of the Golden Age,” *Theological Studies* 66 (2005), 20; Wittberg, 46

⁹¹ Sharon Kim, 118; Bevans and Schroeder, 364.

⁹² Wittberg, 89; Congregation for Catholic Education, Chapter II, no. 28.

⁹³ Gittins, 22.

⁹⁴ Gaillardetz 2008, 37; Bevans and Schroeder, 364.

Appendix A

Interview Schedule*

Introduction: thank for participation, responses kept confidential and pseudonyms used, no right or wrong answers, do not need to answer any question that prefer not to answer.

Family / Ethnic / Catholic Background before college

- 1) Describe your ethnic identity and who and what most influenced your ethnic identity.
- 2) Describe your faith life *prior* to college and who and what most influenced your faith life.
- 3) In what ways are you ethnic identity and faith life connected?

College Ethnic Catholic Community and college experience

- 4) What motivated you to join [college ethnic Catholic community]?
- 5) How has [college ethnic Catholic community] affected your overall college experience?
- 6) How has [college ethnic Catholic community] affected your ethnic identity?
- 7) How has [college ethnic Catholic community] affected your faith life?
- 8) How does [college ethnic Catholic community] help you to bring together your ethnic identity and faith life?

College Ethnic Catholic Community practices

- 9) Describe a ritual, event, or activity that reflects how [college ethnic Catholic community] is an *ethnic Catholic* community?
- 10) How is your experience in [college ethnic Catholic community] similar to or different from other ethnic or Catholic groups you were part of *before* college or are now part of in college?

Conclusion: Any final thoughts, suggestions, or questions?

Thank interviewee for participating.

* Interview schedule terms *Ethnic*, *Ethnic Catholic*, *ethnic Catholic community*, and *college* adapted for each community; questions adapted for non-college ethnic Catholic community interviewees.

Appendix B

Survey Instrument

(Note: terms *ethnic Catholic*, *parents' language*, and *ethnic Catholic community* to be adapted for each community)

1. How would you describe your ethnic identity? _____

2. What is your gender? _____

3. What generation are you? _____

(1st – born/raised abroad, 1.5 – born abroad, raised in U.S., 2nd – parents born abroad)

4. Approximately what year did your parents/family immigrate to the U.S.? _____

5. Please describe your parents' educational background (Mark the ONE best answer with an "X"):

PARENT	No college degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate degree
Mother / Step-mother			
Father / Step-father			

6. How would you describe the people in the following environments where you grew up?

(Mark the ONE best answer with an "X")

PLACE	Mostly <i>not</i> of my ethnicity	Mixed (<i>some</i> of my ethnicity)	Most of my <i>same</i> ethnicity
Neighborhood			
School			
Worship Community*			

* Consider those with whom you regularly attended Mass and participated in church activities, not the overall parish.

7. What types of schools did you attend *before* college?

(Mark all that apply with an "X")

TYPE OF SCHOOL	Catholic	Private (non-Catholic)	Public
YEARS (approximate):			

8. Describe the following aspects of your life *before* college:

(Mark the ONE best answer with an "X")

LANGUAGE	Parents' language	Mix of parents' lang. & English	English
Spoken at home			
Spoken with friends			
Used for prayer and worship			
CATHOLIC WORSHIP	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Attended <i>parents' language</i> Mass			
Attended English-language Mass			
Served/lectored at <i>parents' language</i> Mass			
Served/lectored at English-language Mass			
ETHNIC/CULTURAL	Frequently attended	Sometimes attended	Never attended
<i>Ethnic Catholic</i> youth group			
Catholic (non-ethnic) youth group			
<i>Ethnic Catholic</i> (non-Mass) rituals/events			
Secular (non-Catholic) Ethnic events			

9. Who most influenced your faith growing up? _____
(e.g., parent/grandparent/relative/friend/priest/religious)

10. Is this person who most influenced your faith the same ethnicity as you? (Yes/No) _____

11. What year are you currently in college? _____
12. What is (are) your major(s)? _____
13. How were you introduced to *ethnic Catholic community* (e.g., friend/social media/flyer)? _____
14. How many *semester(s)* have you been a member of *ethnic Catholic community*? _____
15. Indicate your response to the following statements (*Mark the ONE best answer with an "X"*):

<i>Ethnic Catholic community</i> has helped me to develop...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A deeper prayer life / relationship with God				
A better sense of what it means to be Catholic				
A better sense of what it means to be <i>ethnic</i> American				
A better sense of what it means to be an <i>ethnic Catholic</i>				
Friendships with <i>ethnic Catholics</i>				
Friendships with non-Catholic <i>ethnic</i> Americans				
Friendships with non- <i>ethnic</i> Catholics				
Relationships with campus ministry / Newman Ctr.				

16. Indicate your response to the following statements (*Mark the ONE best answer with an "X"*):

Faith life in college	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel at home on my college campus				
Worship in college is similar to what I grew up with				
I feel at home at Campus Ministry / Newman Ctr.				
I feel at home at <i>ethnic Catholic community</i> gatherings				
<i>Ethnic Catholic</i> rituals/devotions are important to me				
Attending a <i>parents' language</i> Mass is important to me				
My worship and prayer life has changed in college				

17. How often do you participate in the following kinds of college organizations / events?: (*Mark the ONE best answer with an "X"*):

ORGANIZATION / EVENT	Regularly (e.g., weekly)	Occasionally	Never
<i>Ethnic Catholic community</i>			
Non-Catholic <i>ethnic</i> clubs (e.g., <i>Ethnic</i> American student association)			
Non- <i>ethnic</i> Catholic clubs (e.g., Bible study, rosary group)			
Non- <i>ethnic</i> , non-Catholic clubs (e.g., professional, Greek, sports, etc.)			
Mass sponsored by Campus Ministry / at Newman Center			

18. Have you ever been on a retreat with Campus Ministry / Newman Center? (Yes/No) _____
19. Would you recommend *ethnic Catholic community* to other students? (Yes/No) _____
If so, why? _____
20. What is the value that *ethnic Catholic community* is both *ethnic* American and Catholic?

Please feel free to provide any additional comments:

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

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