



The Impact of Routinary Class Prayers to the Spiritual Engagement of the Grade 12 students of Pasig Catholic College

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Abstract: The Routinary Class Prayers have been practiced in Pasig Catholic College. This study rationalized the impact of the Routinary Class Prayers to the Spiritual Engagement of the students. Specifically, this study aims to explain and discover whether these Routinary Class Prayers have a direct relation with the Spiritual Engagement (i.e. Implications on Spiritual Avidity, Spiritual Coldness, Spiritual Mindset, and Personal Outlook on Prayer) of the students inside the classroom. This study is delimited to discern only the Routinary Class Prayers and its impact to the Spiritual Engagement—excluding the structured prayers and its contents. This research entails a population of 647 Grade 12 Senior High School students of Pasig Catholic College, from which the sample size of 242 respondents was derived using a random sampling method. Multiple linear regression and a weighted mean were used to analyze the data gathered from the participants. Survey questionnaires were validated by a Catechesis teacher, Mr. Arjay Tangguilig, and a statistician, Mr. Allan Espenilla, from the Senior High School Department of the aforementioned institution, through Cronbach Alpha as a reliability tool. The results of the Multiple linear regression showed that the Routinary Class Prayers do not have any significant relationship with the Spiritual Engagement of the students. This result implies that the Routinary Class Prayers do not, in any way, affect nor has an impact to the Spiritual Engagement of the students.

Key Words: Catechesis; Spiritual Coldness; Spiritual Engagement; Spiritual Mindset; and Routinary Class Prayers

1. INTRODUCTION

Worship is a form of expressing one's faith and reverence for the Supreme Being that they hold their beliefs for. A method of such worship is prayer. In the context of the locale of this research,

prayer is an institutionalized mean of starting classroom activities. According to Dr. Erickson Javier, the Vice President of Christian Formation of Pasig Catholic College, prayer is "a loving conversation with God." By loving, he implies that prayer must be mutually intimate and sincere; "an

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act of love” in his account. By conversation, he means to say that prayer must be a dialogue, a two-way communication stream, wherein our relationship and connection with God are stimulated through prayer.

“The center of our Christian Faith is Jesus Christ. Hence he is the heart and center of catechesis (cf. PCP II 157-9; CCC 426-29). Thus the chief aim of this Catechism is to put Filipinos “not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.”

The previous statement of Dr. Javier supports this statement by the Catechism of the Catholic Church which ponders on the point that Jesus is the center of our faith, thus, communication with Him is vital for our faith, and that communication is prayer.

The researchers’ position in this prayer is to test if these Routinary Class Prayers (RCP) have an impact or relation to the Spiritual Engagement of the students measured using the parameters: Spiritual Avidity, Spiritual Mindset, Spiritual Coldness, and Personal Outlook on Prayer.

The significance of this paper lies on its objective to examine the classroom context of prayer, as the researchers’ aim to examine whether if these Routinary Class Prayers are ineffective in the classroom setting. This reflects a great deal because prayer is a normative practice in the tradition of Roman Catholicism. If prayer, which is viewed as the center of our faith in Jesus, is deteriorating and losing its essence, then it shows that there is an arising problem in our Christian practices. Furthermore, this shows that Roman Catholicism, which is a prominent religion in the Philippines, is somehow losing its essence. Additionally, this paper is significant for it will contribute new knowledge and there has been no studies regarding the stated topic with the stated set of objectives.

Moreover, this paper is also significant due to its implication towards the Spiritual Engagement and the practice of prayer, wherein it aims to provide reflection about this subject that needs an improvement, not only Roman Catholicism, but also of its followers, as religion serves as the basis of the moral imperatives of its followers and of society itself. Thus, this paper serves as an avenue for the furthering of Catholic Worship.

The relevance of this issue contributes a great deal of significance due to the fact that in the Philippine context, numerous Catholic institutions practice RCP as a part of their spiritual formation for the students. However, during the years of practicing these RCP, it was observed that it is not a contributor to the Spiritual Engagement of the Grade 12 students. Hence, the Catholic leaders can use the results of this study to reflect on the system they have implemented in order to cascade Spiritual Engagement. They can innovate, change, or enhance the RCP in accordance to the findings of the study.

2. MAIN CLAIMS

This paper aims to discern whether these Routinary Class Prayers have an impact or any significant relation to the Spiritual Engagement of the Grade 12 students. In this case, Spiritual Engagement will be measured through Spiritual Avidity, Spiritual Coldness, Spiritual Mindset, and Personal Outlook on Prayer.

The researchers hypothesize that there is no direct or significant relationship between the Routinary Class Prayers and the Spiritual Engagement, while the alternative hypothesis suggests that there is a direct or significant relationship between the Routinary Class Prayers and the Spiritual Engagement.

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The following are technical terms conceptually defined in alignment to how the researchers have used them in their paper.

Personal Outlook on Prayer is defined as a measure of Spiritual Engagement that refers to the perception and insight of the students regarding the Routinary Class Prayers.

Prayer as per Dr. Javier, Vice President for Christian Formation, is a loving conversation with God. By loving, it implies that prayer must be an act of love, something that is mutually sincere and intimate. By the word conversation, he emphasized on the word “dialogue,” meaning that there must be a mutual relationship, a two-way communication and connection between God and those who converse with Him through prayer.

Routinary Class Prayers are prayers recited before and after a class or a period ends, it includes the morning offering. However, these prayers are limited to the routine itself, excluding the prayers of remembrance such as the Angelus, and the 3 o'clock prayer.

Spiritual Avidity is defined as a measure of Spiritual Engagement that deals with the enthusiasm and zeal of people in expressing their faith, for instance, through prayers and continuous interaction with God.

Spiritual Coldness is a measure of Spiritual Engagement that refers to the loss of zeal or enticement towards a religion, eventually dropping it. This is also known as Spiritual Apathy or indifference towards God.

Spiritual Engagement is the bond or the connection between man and his spirituality, or in this research, a Catholic and his God. Spiritual Engagement is expressed in various forms, in this research; it mainly focuses on the expression of faith through prayers. It is measured through

Spiritual Avidity, Spiritual Coldness, Spiritual Mindset, and Personal Outlook on Prayer.

Spiritual Mindset is defined as a measure of Spiritual Engagement that deals with the thinking of individuals towards spirituality, or the mindset of an individual towards an act of expressing faith. In this context, it is the mentality of students towards the Routinary Class Prayers.

This paper provides an argument that a classroom is considered as one of the avenues for the development of the Spiritual Engagement of the students. In a Catholic institution like Pasig Catholic College, Routinary Class Prayers (RCP) are strictly observed. However, it is observed that there are students who disregard the RCP and it seemed as if the RCP do not have an impact to the students' Spiritual Engagement. Therefore, the researchers have ventured into inquiring whether these prayer routines and Spiritual Engagement have significance.

The foundation of the argument in this research is grounded in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) no. 2725 which states that “Prayer is a gift and a determined response.” Another basis states that “Prayer is not a duty that must be performed to ease obligation and to quiet conscience (Bounds, 2012). Therefore, prayer, as a moral act, falls in line as an obligation of a Catholic, not a duty.”

This study answered the null hypothesis wherein there is no direct relationship between the Routinary Class Prayers and the Spiritual Engagement of the students while the alternative hypothesis mark a relationship between the two variables. The researchers have resourced writings and literature from various sources to support these claims. One of the writings this paper incorporated is from the book of Atty. E.M. Bounds with a title of “The Reality of Prayer”, it states here that “Prayer is not a mere habit, riveted by custom and memory, something that must be gone through with, its value depending upon the decency and



perfection of the performance. Prayer is not a duty that must be performed to ease obligation and to quiet conscience (Bounds, 2012).” Therefore, prayer, as a moral act, falls as an obligation of a Catholic, not a duty. Thus, if prayer is an obligation, then it asserts as an attribution to our identity as Catholics. On the account of Atty. E.M. Bounds, it states that prayer is not a habit that needs to be memorized and a duty that must be performed just for the sake of conforming to it.

Another writing that this paper discusses is from the book of Dr. David G. Benner with a title of “Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as a Prayer”, which states that “Prayer is often more of an obligation that something arising spontaneously from desire. Prayer is frequently presented as a spiritual discipline. Disciplines are things that we do not naturally do but feel we should do because they are supposed to be good for us (Benner, 2010).” According to this context, prayer is looked upon as a discipline that we must do because it is morally just. It arises as an obligation rather than something that is intentionally done. Therefore, in this account of Benner, it presents the obligatory concept of prayer as a spiritual discipline, not a mandatory activity.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research has a sample size of 242 from a total population of 647 Grade 12 Senior High School students of Pasig Catholic College that was derived using a random sampling method. A Multiple linear regression, as well as weighted mean was used to analyze the data retrieved from the participants from the data collection instrument. A survey questionnaire was validated by a Catechesis teacher in terms of content and for the internal consistency, Cronbach Alpha was used as a reliability tool.

This paper utilized a mixed-method approach. The primary research instrument for the

study was from the eight Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) from the members of the Senior High School faculty. The secondary data source of this research came from a survey questionnaire within a 4-point Likert scale format containing six (6) sets of questions. This was distributed among the 242 respondents which were derived from a total population of 647. The survey questionnaires were used for confirmatory analysis.

4. FINDINGS

This research utilized a Key Informant Interview method (KII). These interviews came from teachers of the Grade 12 Senior High School Faculty of Pasig Catholic College. The following is a quotation from one of the teachers the researchers interviewed.

“Well at first they are attentive, they are listening, however as time passes, it really becomes routinary, meaning some students where they have to memorize, they memorize it, but you will see when the class starts to pray, that it's like they really memorize, but they don't understand what they are praying. Maybe they understand, it's a prayer in general, but as to the words and as to the meaning of the prayer, based on their actions while praying, you would really see that there's no internalization. So, you will also notice that when their teachers asks them to pray and to stand up, especially if they're busy, they're not paying attention and then when the instructors repeat it, that's the only time when they'll stand up and when teachers asked them to face the altar, then they'll face the altar. And those are some things so, it's memorized. They are interested up to a certain point, but as days pass, you would see that, it's just up to there. Not unless, when there comes a time when the teacher discusses or when the catechists discusses it again, that's the only time they pay

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attention, but it if is not, especially if the teachers forgets it, then they'll forget.

- *Mrs. Digna Delfino*

Another response containing a common point was from Mr. Aljerr Laxamana, wherein he stated that they only join the morning ceremony and prayers because they are mandated to, however; they display unwilling behavior which shows their lack of internalization. This response shares common implications with the response of Mr. Reynaldo Dizon II, Ms. Maria Laiza Umayam, Ms. Judith Dela Paz, Ms. Shane Antonio, Mr. Jan Jeffrey Catindig, Mrs. Eva Christine Nazareth, and Ms. Princess Camil Madronio.

The inferences made in this study are anchored in the data gathered through the survey questionnaires. The following statements shows the results of the items indicated in the questionnaire.

In terms of **Spiritual Mindset**

Out of 242 respondents, 212 or 87.6% agrees that prayer brings us closer to God with a mean of 3.29. This means that the respondents look at the prayer as a positive practice that helps them in their daily lives.

In terms of **Spiritual Avidity**

Out of 242 respondents, 184 or 76.03% agrees that prayer routines encourage devotion to god and recited solemnly that will make a true communication with God with a mean of 3.02.

In terms of **Spiritual Engagement**

Out of 242 respondents, 192 or 79.35% agrees that prayer routines intensify our zeal to communicate with God with a mean of 3.08.

In terms of **Spiritual Coldness**

Out of 242 respondents, 143 or 59.09% agrees that the Routinary Class Prayers are insincere when being recited with a mean of 2.70.

In terms of **Personal Outlook on Prayer**

Out of 242 respondents, 208 or 85.95% agrees that when you recite a prayer, you form a personal conversation with God with a mean of 3.36.

In terms of **Routinary Class Prayers**

Out of 242 respondents, 191 or 78.93% agreed that the Routinary Class Prayers enhance and develop our Catholic faith with the mean of 3.12.

These are the statistical representation of the numeric value of the data gathered through the surveys. These findings are supported by the gathered insights from the teachers through conducting a Key Informant Interview (KII) regarding their observations of the students during the Routinary Class Prayers. This implies that the Routinary Class Prayers, do not, in any way, have any impact to the Spiritual Engagement of the students within the classroom context.

5. ANALYSIS

Out of the eight Key Informants Interviews (KII), the researchers have synthesized according to the commonality of the informants' answer is that the students do not observe proper behavior or conduct when they are praying, and that the Routinary Class Prayers are not significant in engaging the student to God in the improvement of their Spiritual Engagement. They have also observed that the students only conduct the Routinary Class Prayers for compliance because it has been established as an everyday act in the classroom. It can also be inferred that the Routinary Class Prayers have become burnt-out routines that lose their essence and do not perform their function, which is to bring exercise to our Spiritual Engagement.



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From the numerical data gathered through the survey questionnaires, it is evident that there is positive reinforcement regarding the variables in the study. However, after undergoing statistical treatment, the results of the correlation between the Routinary Class Prayers and Spiritual Engagement, as a whole, showed that there is no significant relationship between the two, meaning the Routinary Class Prayers do not, in any way, have an impact to the Spiritual Engagement of the Grade 12 students.

6. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the Routinary Class Prayers are perceived by the students as essential to the enhancement of their Catholic Faith. Furthermore, the variables used to measure the Spiritual Engagement, particularly the Spiritual Mindset, Spiritual Avidity, Spiritual Coldness, and Personal Outlook on Prayer, have positive reinforcement from the response of the students. However, the response of the informants from the interviews imply that the prayer routines are being conducted only for compliance and that is has become a burnt-out practice. Additionally, this is supported by the results from the survey questionnaires when the Routinary Class Prayers were correlated to the Spiritual Engagement, wherein all of the variables showed a non-significant relationship, meaning that the Routinary Class Prayers do not have any impact to the Spiritual Engagement.

In the perception of the students, it can be seen that the Routinary Class Prayers are perceived as essential. However, when it comes to the practice and the manifestation of the importance of these routines, the students cannot see the integration of values in exercising Routinary Class Prayers. Furthermore, since the Routinary Class Prayers are burnt-out practices, their perception is not in accordance to the observation of the key informants wherein the

common implication states that the students lack internalization during these Routinary Class Prayers. Lastly, these Routinary Class Prayers are conducted in such a short time wherein this time constraint does not permit the internalization of these Routinary Class Prayers.

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