

THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE:
AN AUGUSTINIAN APPROACH TO A RITUAL ETHIC
ROOTED IN THE DYNAMIC OF VALUING

by

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Submitted to the Faculty of
The Catholic Theological Union of Chicago
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
the degree of
Doctor of Ministry

May, 2014

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Acknowledgements

One thing Augustine knew: you can't do it alone. I realized that especially in the work that is this thesis-project. There are many along the way that supported and encouraged me in this venture, but I wish to name a few whose involvement and insights affected the outcome of this study.

First, I wish to thank my thesis-project director, Ed Foley. He has been not only a thesis-project director, but in many ways a spiritual director, a companion on the journey, a friend. The members of my thesis-project board showed immense flexibility and care in helping me get this thesis-project off the ground, and were extremely helpful in their insights toward this final product. To Chrissy Zaker, Colin Collette and Gil Ostdiek, all I can say is "thank you."

I now turn to my Augustinian brothers, who as a community were always supportive. I especially want to thank Bernie Scianna, for his constant encouragement as well as with Joe Farrell and Jack Flynn, for taking the time to read, evaluate and offer critique to various parts of this thesis-project. I appreciate the support of another Augustinian brother, Tom McCarthy, who while president at St. Rita High School, gave me permission and support to pursue this project at the school.

From St. Rita High School I wish to thank the principal, Brendan Conroy and teachers Jerry Pazin and Kieran Kellam for allowing this study to take place during class time. As a fellow educator, I know that is a sacrifice. Also, I am grateful for the skills of Javier Solorio in making the survey web-accessible, and from Providence Catholic High School, I appreciate the time and effort Rosanne Grigoletti invested in formatting the survey results into usable information.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
TABLE OF CONTENTS	II
ABSTRACT.....	V
INTRODUCTION	1
THE HEART OF THE MATTER	1
METHODOLOGY	4
<i>Chapter Outlines</i>	5
<i>Chapter 1 – Ritual: I Know It When I See It</i>	5
<i>Chapter 2 – “I Am A Rita Man”</i>	6
<i>Chapter 3 – Traditions: Reflecting</i>	7
<i>Chapter 4 – Where Your Treasure Is, There Your Heart Will Be Also</i>	8
<i>Conclusion – “Always Keep on Walking”</i>	8
CHAPTER 1 - RITUAL: I KNOW IT WHEN I SEE IT.....	10
RITUAL THEORIES: SETTING THE STAGE	11
RITUAL THEORIES: THEORIES IN CONTEXTS	12
<i>Section Summary</i>	23
ADOLESCENT CONTEXT(S): POSSIBLE RITUAL FRAMEWORKS.....	24
ADOLESCENT CONTEXT(S) AND POSSIBLE RITUAL FRAMEWORKS: ANOTHER LOOK.....	29
MIMESIS AND RITUAL – MIMESIS AS RITUAL	31
<i>Section Summary</i>	37
CHAPTER 2 - “I AM A RITA MAN”	39

ST. RITA OF CASCIA HIGH SCHOOL: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION	39
THE SURVEY – BRIEF RATIONALE	41
<i>The Survey Process</i>	43
THE SURVEY AND ITS RESULTS	44
VALUES PERCEIVED AND EXPRESSED	49
FILLING IN THE BLANKS	55
TO CONTEXTUALIZE	58
CHAPTER 3 - TRADITION: REFLECTING	61
AUGUSTINE: OUR HEART IS RESTLESS	62
BEING AND DOING: INCARNATION AND PERFORMANCE, INCARNATION AS PERFORMANCE	69
<i>To Contextualize</i>	72
THE ORDER OF SAINT AUGUSTINE: ONE MIND AND ONE HEART ON THE WAY TO GOD	73
<i>To Contextualize</i>	78
AUGUSTINIAN SCHOOLS: CHRISTIAN FAITH COMMUNITIES	80
CORE VALUES AS SHARED LANGUAGE	81
<i>Truth-Unity-Love</i>	82
CONTEXTUALIZING THE CONTEXT: COMMUNITY AND RITUAL, COMMUNITY AS RITUAL	84
RECONTEXTUALIZING	89
CHAPTER 4 - WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO	92
WHAT IS OF VALUE?	93
REFLECTIONS	93
REFRACTIONS	98
WHAT IS THE POWER AND EFFECT OF RITUAL?	101
REFLECTIONS	102
REFRACTIONS	109
HOW IS RITUAL TRANSFORMATIVE?	112

REFLECTIONS.....	113
REFRACTIONS.....	120
SUMMARY ANALYSIS.....	124
THE EXPERIENCE OF ST. RITA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS	125
RITUAL THEORY: THE THEORY-COMPLEX.....	126
AUGUSTINIAN AND CHRISTIAN-CATHOLIC TRADITION	127
WE SEE IN A MIRROR, DIMLY	129
CONCLUSION - “ALWAYS KEEP ON WALKING”	130
THE METHODOLOGY USED TO TEST THE THESIS	131
THE PROCESS OF TESTING THE THESIS.....	132
THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT	134
ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES.....	136
DON’T WANDER OFF THE ROAD	137
ONE POSSIBLE PASTORAL RESPONSE	138
<i>Sitting Around the Table: Gathering the Community/Communities and Sharing Stories ..</i>	<i>139</i>
<i>Looking in the Mirror, Getting to the Heart of the Matter</i>	<i>145</i>
<i>Continuing on the Journey.....</i>	<i>147</i>
CLOSING THOUGHTS, OPENING REMARKS	147
APPENDIX A	149
APPENDIX B	150
APPENDIX C	151
BIBLIOGRAPHY	201
CURRICULUM VITAE	204

ABSTRACT

The author considers the interplay between values and rituals within a Catholic secondary school in order to develop a pastoral plan that speaks to ritual ethics. Using the results of a survey instrument with a small group of male students, the religious tradition of the school, and performance/praxis theory, the author explores a sample of the value-laden and ethics-laden rituals in the daily life of the young men. He found that the young men valued relationships and justice, and were keenly aware of ritual integrity and ritual malpractice, especially as expressed in the actions of their adult mentors.

INTRODUCTION

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The Seal of the Augustinian Order is a flaming heart, pierced by an arrow, with the backdrop of the Bible. In a sense, this symbol is a guiding principle for this work. In the Augustinian tradition, the flaming heart is not only a heart in love, it is also a restless heart: always seeking the truth, its purpose, its rest. The arrow seems to have pierced both the heart and the book, and that piercing connects them. This reminds us that in the Augustinian tradition, the truth is encountered in both the heart and the mind, the thinking and the feeling, the body and the soul: however these inadequate binaries are conceived, the two are inseparable. Augustine seems to capture that when he writes, “You pierced my heart with your word, and I fell in love with you.”¹

In this work, this author will attempt to explore those things that speak to the inadequate but useful binary of mind and heart: ordinarily through the linguistic metaphor

¹ Augustine, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, 46 volumes, Vol. I: *Confessions*, ed. John Rotelle et al, trans. Maria Boulding et al, 2nd (New York: New City Press, 2012) 185.

of values. This thesis-project will attempt to explore the relationship between values as expressed and values as lived within the ritual life² of students in a religiously sponsored high school. This exploration will utilize and place in relationship and dialogue resources that: 1) speak to the intimate connection between spirituality and adolescence, 2) provide insight to Roman Catholic and Augustinian formational values (including ritual/liturgical and educational), and 3) offer insights from ritual studies to this complex of relationships. These three resources, each to be explicated below in their own chapters, will be brought into dialogue in a penultimate chapter in order to discover or imagine how the various resources (dialogue partners) form and inform each other.

In the process, this author aims to accomplish a few specific goals. First is to engage in the identification of and clarification of expressed and lived values as ritualized. Second is to offer observations and critiques of ritual practice and malpractice in relationship to the values expressed and lived. Third is to provide a way of developing a pastoral plan rooted in a particular spirituality and its concomitant values, focused on the creation and nurturance of viable rituals and ritualization that honors in an authentic way the spiritual life of adolescents, and in this context, adolescent males.

As an alumnus of the school that is the focus of this study, as well as a teacher in that school and an Augustinian whose community sponsors the school, this author began to notice incongruences between the stated values of St. Rita High School,³ the various religious rituals celebrated, and the wider ritualization of the various communities within the school. This observation is not a judgment, but rather the point of entry for this

² Ritual life as understood in this study is both the ritual that is liturgy and devotion within the Roman Catholic and Augustinian traditions as well as the ritual life of students in the daily patterns of their scholastic, social, and familial interactions.

³ The three values of Augustinian schools are *Truth (Veritas)*, *Unity (Unitas)* and *Love (Caritas)*. These values and their importance will be explored at greater depth in chapters 2 and 3.

project. In this study, incongruence does not hold a necessary negative connotation unless there is ritual malpractice⁴ involved. This study is not intended to offer a theoretical or practical framework for controlling the behavior of the students through ritual and ritualization.

Ultimately, this thesis-project is envisioned as a pastoral activity, “a search for God through the pursuit of truth... [where Augustinians] see union with God through love and union with God and others in the school faith community.”⁵ Because Augustinians “see education as being about the whole person done in a community context,”⁶ the engagement of the whole person is paramount and in a study such as this, Augustinians - at least implicitly, if not explicitly - affirm that the ritual life of any one of our students, like Augustine, “represent[s] his window on the Gospel realized in his words, experience, and practice.”⁷ Hopefully as important, this study may be able to offer an instrument for productive self-critique for the Augustinians working in high schools in the United States for understanding how effective the values are being handed on as part of our tradition.

With the aforementioned trajectory in mind, this author wishes to be clear about his key presuppositions, which might also help clarify the parameters of this study

1. Values matter, whether Augustinian or not;
2. Rituals matter, whether explicitly Christian-Catholic liturgy or not;
3. Education/formation of youth matters;
4. The voice of youth must be honestly heard, valued and considered;
5. Rituals are value-laden, and for human beings are also ethics-laden;

⁴ Ritual malpractice speaks to ritual activity which - whether by ignorance, incompetence or intention - in anyway demeans, devalues or diminishes the dignity or worth of any individuals participating in the ritual. This author holds that ritual, because it mediates and interprets human relationships, *de facto* has an ethical aspect. Ritual malpractice is consequently an ethical breach.

⁵ *Handbook of the Augustinian Secondary Education Association* (New Lenox: Providence Catholic High School, 2010) 16.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

6. The ritual display of values with all of their ethical implications may or may not always be self-evident or acknowledged;
7. Some rituals, in all of their complexity, may express complementary or competing values at the same time, and even give rise to values previously unconsidered;
8. Within the Augustinian educational/formational frameworks, rituals are potentially transformative.

METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, this author will be using the model of practical theology proposed by James D. and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead in their seminal work *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*.⁸ Their method is comprehensive enough to stand on its own, but it is not so self-contained that it cannot be modified from within, utilizing other methodological practices and insights. To that end, we will also utilize some aspects of the method of Thomas Groome.

The Whitehead model of practical theology is eminently accessible. There are three areas or what they call “dialogue partners” to respect when approaching a pastoral situation: experience, tradition and culture. This series of dialogue partners - all nouns - need some verbs. The Whiteheads call that their “method,” or the set of rules of the conversation. For them there are three such rules: first, listen [while suspending judgment]; second put the voices to which you have listened into a mutual, respectful, but critical dialogue. Finally, out of the stewing of this critical dialogue, propose some pastoral response. While this author appreciates the Whiteheads model and method, there seems to be some necessary augmentation, specifically from Thomas Groome.

⁸ James and Evelyn Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Sheed and Ward, 1995).

Groome's insights in his ground breaking works⁹ provide nuances that flesh out the methodology of the Whiteheads even more. This author believes that Groome's methodology provides what could be interpreted as an Augustinian lens. It seems that Groome's insights regarding Christian formation will strengthen certain aspects of the Whitehead's model and method, especially regarding the relationship between tradition and experience. Groome's explicit attention to story and vision and their relation to the wider community provides a model of engaging values and rituals with an eye toward embodied action in the ritualization itself, and decision and/or action that flows from the process.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1 – Ritual: I Know It When I See It

We set the stage for this study by building a theoretical framework, first considering the development of ritual theory. Primarily using the insights of Catherine Bell,¹⁰ we will explore the pluriform reality that is ritual studies, and offer a rationale for the ritual theory that is at the foundation of this study: performance/praxis. Because the experiential focus of this thesis-project is adolescent males, we will consider the relationship between young men and spirituality/rituals through the work of Kath

⁹ Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998);

-----*Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1980);

-----"Theology on Our Feet: A Revisionist Pedagogy for Healing the Gap between Academia and Ecclesia." *Formation and Reflection: The Promise of Practical Theology*, Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

¹⁰Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

Engebretson.¹¹ The final part of the framework is the philosophical construct of mimetic theory, articulated by René Girard, accessible through the insights of Gil Baile.¹²

With these three dimensions of the framework in place, we can consider the experience of the young men as reflected in a survey and through anecdotes, as well as some of the traditions out of which they ritualize. The theory itself becomes a conversation as part of the context out of which these young men live.

Chapter 2 – “I Am A Rita Man”

In Chapter 2 we will consider the answers of the survey, the survey experience itself, and anecdotal evidence, attempting to discern what seems to be most pressing on the minds and hearts of the students. We will also begin to consider their relationship and value expressions in light of the ritual framework under consideration. Furthermore, this author will offer some tentative insights regarding values and spirituality as they are ritualized in the daily lives of the students. The survey responses provide some insight in to the interplay between the students and their various ritual contexts. Among these experiences, we will focus primarily, but not exclusively, on a retreat that they experience during their senior year, and an orientation program that they experience during their freshman year.

The interplay between these and other rituals and contexts will speak directly and indirectly to the various traditions in which these young men are embedded. Two principal traditions will be the focus of Chapter 3.

¹¹ Kath Engebretson, “Teenage Boys, Spirituality and Religion.” *International Journal of Children’s Spirituality* 9, no.3 (2004): 263-278.

¹² Gil Baile, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads*, (New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1995).

Chapter 3 – Traditions: Reflecting

Chapter 3 brings us to the exploration of the various interpenetrating traditions in which the students find themselves at St. Rita High School. With the backdrop of the ritual framework in Chapter 1, and the experiences of the young men presented in the survey along with some initial insights in Chapter 2, chapter 3 will focus on the Augustinian tradition as reflected in the life of Augustine of Hippo, especially through 1) his *Confessions* and sermons, 2) the history of the Augustinian Order, and 3) the context of the Augustinian educational system in North America as expressed in the *Augustinian Secondary Education Association Handbook*.

On the other hand, because Augustinians are inextricably connected to the Christian-Catholic tradition, we will also consider our ritually inclined value contexts and rituals in light of key Roman Catholic documents:

1. *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* ;
2. *Fulfilled in Your Hearing* from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and
3. *From Age to Age: The Challenge of Worship with Adolescents* from the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry.

The values that present themselves from these traditions will be considered in light of the previous two chapters. Questions will also be raised in order to see if there are any other values that may or may not be operative within the administrative/educational or communal dimensions of the life of the students, as well as if we can discern any operative values outside the context of St. Rita High School. Along with the Augustinian aspects of value, the chapter will root these values in Augustinian spirituality as the means by which the discussion of education and spirituality in the lives of young men

may be framed. It is here that we will consider the impact of spirituality on the acquisition and formation of values as lived out in the ritual of daily life.

Chapter 4 – Where Your Treasure Is, There Your Heart Will Be Also

After providing descriptions of each of the conversation partners, descriptions that also intimated some of the connections and disconnections between the various value expressions in the ritual contexts of the young men in the study, we now turn to the critical correlation, the dialogue that will allow for each aspect that we have considered to stand in complement and contrast to the values of the other two. We do this in order to gain insight to a possible pastoral response or responses to the foundational question *What values do students embody in their daily ritualizations?*

The conversation pivots around the following questions:

1. What is of value?
2. What is the power and effect of ritual?
3. How can ritual be transformative?

Using the image of the mirror that has been as integral a part of the study, we will then consider how the partners reflect each other (converge) and refract each other (diverge) when placed in dialogue with the questions. Following this critical conversation, this author will offer a summary conclusion, offering possible connections that may be helpful in the development of a pastoral plan.

Conclusion – “Always Keep on Walking”

In this final chapter, we will complete the methodological circle, and consider one way to formulate a pastoral response. The primary goal of this project is to put into practice the Augustinian vision of education as a community experience by testing to see

if and how the Core Values are being expressed in the ritualization of the students, and at the same time begin discerning how best to engage our students in the liturgical and ritual life of the school. Since it is the value of being a community that journeys together that underpins the spirituality and values of any Augustinian community, the pastoral response will include input from faculty and staff, and possibly parents and alumni. The “how” of these assessments is open for discussion.¹³

Where do we go from here?

The possibility of engaging the community in an honest discussion of values as expressed and lived is an important part of our journey to that knowledge and wisdom of which St. Augustine speaks. This author hopes that by actively engaging and utilizing the input of students, this sends a signal to them that they are not “objects” of educational practice, but subjects with “agency” in creating a viable community of learners. Of course, this leaves open the issue of the willingness of administration, faculty, and others in power to begin to see how rituals of teaching and administration may either express values in general and core values in particular, and be open to the critique that those various constituencies may provide. With this sense of mutuality in all having a stake in the community and the journey, this author suggests that a pastoral response can be developed as a product of the *ongoing conversation* that is education and formation.

¹³ During the course of the writing of this thesis-project, the administration at St. Rita High School has formed a School Culture Committee to address some of the issues that this project has raised (though not in consultation with this author). It appears that the committee is a primarily administrative think-tank rather than a community-based conversation. Students are involved in a peripheral way, on an as-needed/wanted basis, rather than integral partners.

CHAPTER 1

RITUAL: I KNOW IT WHEN I SEE IT

While most people know ritual activity when they see it, *what* are they really seeing? This author suggests that an answer to that question is revealed through another question: *How* are people really seeing? Ultimately, and this question is the most difficult to discern, we must move to the question of “*Are* people really seeing what others are seeing, and this in the interrelationship between person and persons, between groups, between person(s) and group(s)?” This last question hints at a fundamental proposition of this work: **ritual embodies value**. In fact, this proposition is even better posited as: **ritual is itself value in part, because it can accomplish a valuable purpose**. The inherent value of ritual does not reside solely in its ability to communicate a value outside of itself, although that is certainly one dimension; but even more, **ritual in and of itself is perceived to be valuable**. It is the dynamic of ritual being valuable that will be the focus of this work. In order to explore this thesis, we must first consider ritual itself. This chapter will explore briefly some key understandings of ritual, its effect in the life of individuals and communities (in this case, adolescent males), and how that effect informs

and transforms the participants, including the community (if transformation is, indeed, the point). This last point will be rooted in the context of a particular matrix of ritual theories.

RITUAL THEORIES: SETTING THE STAGE

It would be natural to move into the arena of religion and liturgy when considering ritual, and although important, the rubrics and language of religion and liturgy are no longer the *lingua franca* when considering ritual. The discipline of liturgical studies does remain a vital and viable partner in the discussion of ritual, and it offers important insights to the various conversations and debates;¹ however, the presumption that the study of ritual finds its fundamental meaning within religious rites is challenged precisely because of the growing engagement of various disciplines.

In the last century, the study and interpretation of ritual have undergone various perspective shifts. These perspective shifts occurred through the investigations of, and insights gained by, practitioners of the social and physical sciences. The arts, especially the performing arts, have also contributed valuable insights to this dynamic aspect of human life. With inquiry and theorizing done through these various disciplines, an overarching discipline called *ritual studies* has emerged. It is in this developing discipline that we find “a coalescing of belief across many disciplines that viewed ritual as a pervasive human activity, worthy of investigation and analysis.”²

¹ Liturgical/sacramental studies offer tools to engage with ritual from a theological perspective. As well, the conversations with other disciplines can inform the study of liturgy and impact its theological and spiritual implications and its performative/semiotic and ministerial ramifications.

² Edward Foley, "Ritual Theory," *The Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie Miller-McLemore (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 143.

It is because of this pluriformity of perspectives that those who study ritual are confronted with “a foundational dilemma: there is no standard, agreed upon definition of what constitutes a ritual, much less any uniform way of explaining what a ritual does.”³ What most theorists would tentatively agree to would be “the centrality of ritual practices over any preconceived systems for explaining those events.”⁴ This foundational dilemma and the subsequent tension that it produces have provided a depth and breadth not only to the particular discipline of ritual studies, but also to the various disciplines, that are in conversation regarding ritual. As divergent disciplines make up ritual studies, so too there emerge various theories that are contextualized within those disciplines. In the following paragraphs, the reader will discover that “in point of fact, there is no ‘ritual *theory*’ but only many and sometimes competing ‘ritual *theories*’” (emphasis added).⁵

RITUAL THEORIES: THEORIES IN CONTEXTS

Life is lived in a multiplicity of contexts. These contexts may be as obvious as place, or as subtle as intent. As well, when engaging in ritual, one must be aware of the contextual layers within and around the activities being studied. Also, the contextual framework out of which one studies provides another layer of “interpretive context.” With that in mind, we will briefly consider some foundational insights to ritual, along with a brief comment regarding context. Considering the scope of this study, the contextualization will be brief, and by necessity, incomplete. The purpose is to lay groundwork for the ensuing sections of this chapter.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 144.

⁵ Ibid.

As previously mentioned, religious rites and the language that studies those rites are no longer the standard when it comes to the study of ritual; however, it is important to recognize the foundational influence of this aspect of ritual studies. At one point, the study of ritual was under the auspices of religious training, focusing on various rites and rubrics. It was a specialized field, a niche within theological training that was reserved primarily for specialists: *churchmen*.⁶ When considering the various descriptions and understandings of ritual by ecclesial communities, we are confronted with a complex web of rubrics, words, values and (power) relationships that are embedded within the actions. It is from this web of multiple relating that theologies emerge. It is within this complex of communities and theologies that to attempt to name a unifying reality would seem foolhardy. However, one word that seems to have strong roots in most mainline Christian religious traditions is that of *liturgy*. The Orthodox community uses this term primarily as the name for its worship. Roman Catholics tend to speak of “the Mass;” but are familiar with the *Liturgy of the Word* and the *Liturgy of the Eucharist* as bound within that one activity of prayer, as well as the *Liturgy of the Hours*. Many other Christian communities as well as many Jewish seminaries have included the study of “liturgics” in at least some aspect of theological training.⁷

Etymologically, liturgy means “the public work on behalf of the people.”⁸

However, the theology underpinning this word in the context of worship describes liturgy

⁶ This fact of specialization and who is considered a specialist will be important later in this study.

⁷ This does not preclude other religious traditions and their studies of liturgy and worship. It seems that the term “liturgics” finds more use within Christian and Judaic circles.

⁸ *Liturgy* is derived from the Greek word “letourgia” (λειτουργία). This word is fundamentally a word connected to the smooth running of the “polis.” Although most religious words were borrowed from the surrounding society and its ethos, many became identified with a particular theological position up and against another. This author suggests that liturgy provides a level playing field in order to explore ritual

as the public work which is of a “service” to God and the world through, with and in Christ.⁹ Its public dimension is akin to that of the water works or electric company or any other “public work” of any community. It is of, by and for the community-in-Christ in its makeup, in its service, in its mission and benefits. The theology derived from an etymological study of this word recognizes a necessity as would any public work. As well, liturgy as the public work of the people is both an activity and the result of such activity. It is this dimension that will be an important consideration as this study develops.

Early in the last century anthropologists, biblical scholars, and scholars of the Ancient Near East began to explore the myths and rituals of ancient cultures as well as what was then termed “primitive” cultures of their own particular time. This intentional study was brought about in no small part as the result of the wars of colonialism and new nationalism, with the subsequent acquisition of artifacts and other antiquities, as well as the new travel opportunities for study now afforded as a result of conquests and claims. It is through this complex dynamic of new data that what Catherine Bell calls the *myth and ritual* school arose, with its various approaches. Besides the discussion over which takes precedence in human life (myth or ritual), each camp had ways of explaining not just that relationship, but also the relationship between the individual and the community, the community or the individual or the community and the individual and the deities, the role

within the religious arena as well as outside of the religious arena. This implies both the exclusion and the inclusion of the term *sacrament*. Sacrament is removed from the conversation of ritual precisely because it is included within a liturgical context. The reification of sacraments aside, at core they are intrinsic to ritual actions, and as such, cannot be considered as separate from the ritual act.

⁹ The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (7), states “in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members.” *Vatican Council II, Vol. 1: The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents*, Austin Flannery, OP, editor (New York: Costello Publishing Co., 1987).

of authority, the interface between the day-to-day world and the unknown and unseen world that though real, was elusive.¹⁰

It is from these various studies and theories that the pervasiveness of ritual became apparent. According to many within the *myth and ritual school*, there were, on the whole, recognizable patterns in both myths and rituals, whether or not they were related (either the patterns being related or not, or the myths and rituals being related or not). It appeared that these patterns had a certain rhythm and a particular “monotony” about them. This regular rhythm was reflected in nature especially. Many scholars began to see rituals as mirroring, in some way, these larger patterns of the natural world, and posited that the rituals that mirrored the patterns of the natural world also mirrored the varied yet related patterns of the cosmos, the totality of the universe, things seen and unseen, humans and deities, individuals and communities, creatures and creation, birth and death, health and sickness, wealth, sex and power, as well as the myriad taboos that surrounded the exigencies of human life and relating. Myth and ritual seemed to offer structure and order to the society.

A line of thought and theories that flowed from the *myth and ritual school* found its beginnings in Émile Durkheim. It was he who devised a sociological scheme that separated the world between the *sacred* and the *profane*, presenting religion as “a social phenomenon [with a] set of ideas and practices by which people sacralize the social

¹⁰ In her book, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, especially pages 1-89, Catherine Bell presents a dense survey of the development of ritual study, focusing on the fundamental ritual theories that have influenced this developing discipline. This author is offering highlights that are pertinent to this particular project.

structure and the bond of the community.”¹¹ For Durkheim, rituals are the means by which identification with the community is expressed and strengthened.

This sacralization of the community was bound up in the symbolic, especially totems and taboos. A new perspective emerged from the nascent social science of psychoanalysis with respect to the relationship between the community and the individual. During the height of increased mechanization and industrialization at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, emphasis became much more focused on the role of discrete parts. Subsequently, this focus on discrete parts affected even how humans understood themselves and their relationship to the larger world. The same mechanization that brought the assembly line that could create a product faster and cheaper also influenced how those who were part of the assembly line were also understood. A greater polarization between labor and owner began to intensify, but even on the more human level, workers never really were engaged with the finished product – the “work.” There was, it seems, a sense of aloneness, separation and isolation that permeated the psyche. It was in this environment out of which Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung began to consider the role of ritual. Both Freud and Jung took different paths. Freud, taking his cue from Durkheim, but in the reverse, posited that ritual, akin to a machine, “is an obsessive mechanism that attempts to appease repressed and taboo desires by trying to solve the internal psychic conflict that these desires cause.”¹² Jung offers a more benign analysis of myth and ritual. For him, myth and symbol provide for the expression of a transcultural and transhistorical medium, the “collective unconscious.” Ritual

¹¹ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 24.

¹² *Ibid.*, 14.

represented the unconscious in conscious life, even moving beyond the relationship between individual and community. In short, for Freud, ritual was the symptom; for Jung, the cure.

Maintaining the psycho-social dimension of ritual, we turn next to biology. In the early twentieth century, Julian Huxley, a British biologist, invented the term *ritualization* in his study of birds. Borrowing that same word, the mid-twentieth century psychologist, Erik Erickson, published *Ontogeny of Ritualization in Man* and later *Toys and Reason: Stages in the Ritualization Experience*. This borrowing, anchored as it was in biology, emerged from his insight regarding the nonverbal behavior patterns between a mother and infant. For him, ritualization had “a primarily adaptive function.”¹³ This adaptive function brought about integration within the individual, but also assisted in forming bonds outside of the individual, to the larger society. This sense of adaptation and development in Erickson’s psychology seemed to mirror the general optimism of the time – an innate development and evolution toward something better. As well, his borrowing from the physical sciences and connecting animal ritualization with human, moved ritual to a new level – the level of biology. In a sense, ritual is part of our DNA as human beings, it is in our bones.

Erickson’s insight on ritualization and play moves us to another matrix of theories, generally understood as *performance theory*. Aspects of this theory deconstruct ritual to its basic parts, reflecting in some way the post-modern proclivity toward such deconstructing. Bound within this interpretive perspective is the role of language,

¹³ Ibid., 32.

especially the concept of “performative utterances,” as posited by J.L. Austin.¹⁴ This dimension presents the power of the act of speaking, the semiotics, recognizing that in ritual, the words “do not *describe* the deed; they are the deed [emphasis Bell’s].”¹⁵ In fact, Frits Staal has proposed that “rituals do not have any meaning”¹⁶ without the accompanying words.¹⁷

With the deconstructing has also come a type of reconstructing within the tradition of performance theory. With contributions by Victor Turner, Kenneth Burke, Ronald Grimes, and J.L. Austin, among others, performance theory has coalesced around the issue of “how symbolic activities like ritual enable people to appropriate, modify, or reshape cultural values and ideals.”¹⁸ This is a fundamental change, as Bell suggests that “ritual as a performative medium for social change emphasizes human creativity and physicality: ritual does not mold people; people fashion rituals that mold their world.”¹⁹

This emphasis on human creativity and physicality appears to reflect our inborn tendency toward ritualization as observed by Erickson. It also suggests the importance of the human ritual-maker, not just as receiver of the effects of ritual, but also as the agent

¹⁴ Ibid., 68.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 69.

¹⁷ A recent example of this is the inauguration of Barak Obama as President of the United States in January 2009. During the swearing in, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court tripped over a couple of words in the prescribed oath as stated in the Constitution, and the President-elect, in a sense, filled in the blanks (with the proper formula) to cover the error. The festivities continued as planned...until the next day. In the Oval Office of the White House, the Chief Justice and the President re-did the recitation of the Oath of Office as it is described in the Constitution. There was a felt need to get the words right not just from the newly elected President but by the “chief interpreter” of the Constitution. The context of the inauguration itself did not, it seems, provide enough legitimacy – the words needed to be recited correctly by both parties. At the other end of the spectrum are the “words of institution” within Catholic liturgy. If a priest walks into a bakery and pronounces, “This is my body,” over a loaf of bread, nothing happens. Ostensibly the words, as important as they are, require the context of the liturgy (and all that particular ritual entails) in order to be efficacious.

¹⁸ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 73.

¹⁹ Ibid.

of those effects – not just on him/herself, but in the world at large. This is the reason that this particular theoretical framework can be somewhat frustrating for those who want to place ritual in only one context (usually religious). Performance theory allows for the gamut of human experiences, religious and non-religious, to be considered as part of the ingrained human capacity and thrust toward ritual.

Bell summarizes some fundamental commonalities in the various performance theories:

1. As an event, ritual “does not simply express cultural values...but actually effects changes in people’s perceptions and interpretations.” This is rooted in the physicality of the event, including movement;
2. Ritual is “framed” especially by modes of speaking. This framing is a “form of ‘metacommunication;’”
3. An important aspect of performance theory is the experience of transformation, that the ritual is efficacious in some way;
4. Performance is reflexive. It acts as a mirror for the community, and in a sense, those who engage in this reflexive act are in fact, an integral dimension of the ritual itself, not just “a part of” the ritual.²⁰

In a sense, a derivative of performance theory is *practice theory* or *praxis theory*.

This area of study takes performance theory to the theater of the interactions of daily life as “creative strategies by which human beings continually reproduce and reshape their social and cultural environments.”²¹ In praxis theory, ritual assists in the creation of meaning within the realm of human relationships – social, cultural, political, etc., including relationships of power. This meaning-making is the development of *habitus*. It is an appropriation and embodiment of the transformation that is part of ritual, as suggested in Bell’s summary above.

²⁰ Ibid., 74-75.

²¹ Ibid., 76.

The anthropologist Tal Asad provides another level to performance/praxis theory via the insights of Michel Foucault. Foucault posits that “cultural values and meanings exist only insofar as they are embodied in what people do.”²² Asad contextualizes this embodiment in his assertion of the historically bound understanding of ritual itself (contextualization of time), and its engagement with varying power relationships (contextualization of place/culture). In essence, not only the doing of ritual, but also the study and reflecting upon it and even the resulting theories of it are subject to context. This is an important insight, grounded in Foucault’s theory of the *technologies of the self*, which speaks of the importance of the embodied person being inscribed by ritual, becoming the embodied value that the ritual communicates and is in itself.²³ We, being embodied as persons, we ourselves are contextualized. This does not mean that we participate in a single context, even at the same time;²⁴ however, we as human beings are

²² Ibid., 79.

²³ Consider the tradition of *quinceañera* (the celebration of the fifteenth birthday of a young woman) within many Latino communities. The “quinceañera” is both the celebration as such and the young woman who is being celebrated. This integral connection hints at the young woman being not only a participant in the event, but also the source, the place, the ritual itself. She is the event. For example, the song, *Quinceañera* (Oregon Catholic Press, 1981), written by Juanita Villastrigo opens with: “Quinceañera, a las puertas de la Iglesia, rodeada de damitas, te encuentras, quinceañera.” Translated, this addresses the young woman as “quinceañera”. She is “at the doors of the Church,” (the capitalization intimates a larger communal consciousness); she is “surrounded by “young ladies” which would be better translated as “attendants” in this context. Finally, there is the reflexive verb “te encuentras” followed by “quinceañera.” This linkage connotes again that “you (the young woman) encounter yourself, you meet yourself, [and] you understand yourself” as “quinceañera.” For a more thorough treatment of the contours and complexity of this celebration, please see *Once Upon a Quinceañera: Coming of Age in the USA* by Julia Alvarez (New York: Penguin Books, 2007).

²⁴ In his book *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), pp. 5-6, Stephen Bevans offers a four part definition of context. For him, context “includes the *experiences of a person’s or group’s personal life*: the experiences of success, failure, births, deaths, relationships...; second, personal or communal experience is possible only within the context of *culture*...; third, we can speak of context in terms of a person’s or a community’s ‘*social location*’...; finally, the notion of present experience in our context involves the reality of *social change* [italics added].” Also, as can be seen from Bevans’ description, a particular context may have various contributing factors, what this author would consider *sub(con)texts*.

The complexities of context are the very reason why two people can be part of the same experience and not be part of the same experience at the same time; or why a person can relate his/her experience of a play

somehow connected (sometimes fleeting, and at times not willingly) to a particular place and time, with all the vagaries that that connection includes. This contextualization colors most everything we do.

In considering contextualization and inscribing through ritual, an important aspect to explore before concluding this section is the relationship between *ritual* and *routine*. As stated by Bell, one of the commonalities for those within performance theory is the importance of transformation through the ritual. What of routine? This author understands routine as those patterns in life that do not tend toward transformation but rather toward maintenance. These patterns allow us to maintain some control over our lives in a relative homeostasis. This is not to suggest that routine cannot at a point, become a transformative experience as ritual. There are those times when, in a routine, a person can experience an “aha” moment. More to the point, this author suggests that there is intentionality to ritual, intentionality toward transformation, which is not inherent in the patterning of routine.

What of “empty ritual?” Empty ritual, in a way is when ritual becomes routine, that is, when ritual lacks intentionality or if that intentionality is betrayed (ritual malpractice). The author believes this is the insight of Victor Turner as he speaks of “ceremony.” It is in this realm that we find alternative rituals being performed. It appears that the human person can sense ceremony, and ceremony is generally a way to maintain the *status quo*. The *status quo* is usually beneficial for those in power. Thus, we see

(for example) to another, where the other attends that play, and does not share the same sense of the play; or where the actors in a production of *Macbeth*, for example, can be costumed in Elizabethan outfits and perform in an abandoned factory, or conversely, be dressed as modern day power-brokers and played in a medieval chapel. This complexity of context is the essential insight and the primary challenge of performance theory.

alternative rituals being engaged in or created by those who feel disenfranchised, violated, uninspired, untransformed, or bored, and speaking and acting critically of “empty ritual.”²⁵ The author suggests that ceremony, like routine, has a place in the realm of ritualization. It may act as a way to maintain some sense of control and regularity in life; however, if unreflective or coercive in its practice, ceremony has the potential to impede, stifle and at times may even violate our natural biological, psycho-social and spiritual instincts toward growth and relationship, toward transformation.

It is here that a return to the consideration of liturgy may be helpful. As mentioned, liturgy is both the activity of “the public working for the common good” as well as that “work” that is the value for the community (i.e. water, electricity, etc.). Another dimension of this activity may be helped a bit by the concept of *opus*. In this sense, the work itself, in the activity of creating it and in its embodiment through the artist, and in the completed work as it is manifest, becomes as one continuous event, a transformative experience, a meaning-making, not just for the artist, but also for the larger community.

Moving into the realm of art allows the freedom to consider *work* and *the work* as *opus*, and thus broaden understanding to include that creative reality called *play*. This direction is almost counter-intuitive in that, rather than a move forward, it appears a move backward into the realm of childhood, the world of play. It roots ritual within some of the earliest experiences of human beings. Thus, rather than polar opposites, work and play seem actually to be two sides to the same coin. This relationship of work and play within

²⁵ This may also provide a means toward understanding addictions and the ritualization that is part of addictive behavior. In a sense, the many factors that impel us toward ritual, but especially the physical and social-emotional factors, may become short-circuited. This consideration may prove helpful when considering some of the rituals engaged in by adolescents.

the realm of ritual, especially when considered via *opus*, provides fertile ground for exploring many modes of ritualization in human experience: worship and football games, flash mobs and board of directors meetings, daily classroom experiences and riding in the bus to work, Nintendo and NASA, picket lines and grocery lines, graffiti and symphonies and any other ritualization that expresses the self in relation to the community. These ritual actions are expressions and critiques of values. It is in the expressing and critiquing that these activities can bring about at least the possibility of transformation for all engaged.

Section Summary

The preceding section of this chapter, focusing briefly on the origins and highlighting some subsequent theories of ritual, offers a glimpse as to the complex development of ritual theory from its beginnings. With this development in mind, Bell's insight that "ritual [and myth] is not a matter of clear-cut data to be recovered and analyzed"²⁶ offers a brief synopsis as well as an important caveat of what has been presented, as well as later developments. It is important to recognize that as the study of myth and ritual entered the 20th century, the significance of the role of ritual in the relationship between the person and society gained prominence. Also, the reality of *context* began to shape ritual theories as well as be shaped by them. The importance of relationship and context, then, especially as highlighted in performance theory (with the inclusion of the insights of praxis theory), makes this theoretical framework the most compelling for the undertaking of this project.

²⁶ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 21.

ADOLESCENT CONTEXT(S): POSSIBLE RITUAL FRAMEWORKS

What is adolescence?²⁷ Similar to ritual, one usually knows it when one sees it. There are various ways to “see” it, however. A “short-hand” way to “name” adolescence is to use the chronological age of the young person as the determiner. Hence, “teenager” is the common word for this part of one’s life. But also, the obvious and hidden biological, physiological, psycho-social, and even religious metamorphoses cue both the young person and those around him or her to the change that is happening.

Those undergoing this change confront in a most fundamental way, issues of sexuality, gender and masculinities/femininities, with concomitant roles, expectations and power differentials in place from their larger contexts. Because the physiology of adolescence unceremoniously moves a young person from here to there in the blink of an eye, there are many traditions – religious and cultural – that provide the ceremony in order to recognize the new status of the young person. In a sense, the larger community reflects what is happening to the young person – because this change is just that, a *happening to*. There is no real control in the changing. On the part of the larger group, however, the young person embodies the future of the group. Although apparently powerless before the power of biology and the power of the relationship to the larger group, there is much power (potential) within the young person.²⁸ It is this threshold of potential that is adolescence.

²⁷ It should be noted that adolescence is not the onset of puberty. Puberty is the first marker of sexual maturity. This sexual maturity and integrating of one’s sexuality is only a part of the work of adolescence.

²⁸ It could be suggested that if the larger society provides no means of tapping into the power of the adolescent, the power itself will seek a way to be honored. Thus, the initiations within gangs provide one way that the power is honored and expressed, albeit in a (usually) violent manner.

If adolescence is a threshold, a boundary²⁹, how does one navigate it as well as one can? This author suggests that to navigate it, one must engage with the following questions: *Who am I? Where am I going? Who am I going with? What is my value?* and finally, *So what?* These are fundamental questions in the human journey. These are questions that are human at its deepest level. But how do young men engage these questions? If we turn once again to biology, young men, unlike young women, have no *uniquely cyclical/patterned male* physical marker as to the onset of adolescence. With women, there is a definitive biological happening to mark their passage – and this with blood.³⁰ For men, their body almost betrays them. There is energy within, but it seems to present itself without the regularity and predictability of a woman’s cycle. As well, a young man’s body does not usually feel pain at his sexual maturity, there is no blood that signals in a graphic way this passage.³¹ It is no surprise, then, to see how cultures have tried to make up what appeared to be lacking in male adolescence by creating various initiation rites for males, ranging from circumcision at infancy and beyond, scarification, vision quests, and the like – and this usually under the auspices of initiated men. Being male, being human, demanded that one understand the ordeal that is life - and this through blood.³² One could suggest that this focus on blood, and its meaning in life, reveals a spirituality that is at once transcendent and visceral, personal and communal.

²⁹ The duration of this boundary, at least chronologically, seems to be edging further into the thirties, at least for those who live within “technological” areas of the world. This could be telling as we explore adolescent reality.

³⁰ Could this be considered a biological ritualization, programmed into female DNA?

³¹ Puberty usually precedes the first menses. So, although young men and women may have secondary sex characteristics, the threshold into the realm of adolescence is more definitive with a young woman.

³² It seems that young men intuitively understand the importance of blood. For example, in the ritual that is gang initiation or separation, there is the term “blood in; blood out.” In order to become a member of a gang, one must shed blood – either one’s own or another’s. To leave a gang, should one attempt it, the gang usually demands blood from the one who is leaving – usually his own. This author raises for consideration

It is to the area of spirituality that we now turn. Kath Engebretson attempts “to discover the ways in which teenage boys experience and express spirituality” and uncovers basic principles of spirituality and their variations in her study.³³ A primary reason given for this study is to explore “the absence of teenagers from the mainstream Christian Churches.”³⁴ Although her study focuses on teens in Australia, her study can apply, at least to some degree, to others, as she links the process to issues in the United Kingdom, “especially in terms of the highly multicultural and multi-faith population...and the growing prevalence of social problems among the young, which arguably can be linked with issues of meaning.”³⁵ It is reasonable to suggest that this reality is also a reality shared by young people of the United States.

Moving from the larger teenage context to that of boys, Engebretson offers the importance of gender differences in the way that young people engage with the transcendent. Besides citing studies reflecting the socialization of boys and girls in regard to religion, there were those studies, as well, that spoke to the language used in religious parlance. Less than the language used, it seems that the issue was how the language was interpreted by the listeners. Ultimately, for Engebretson, the study is important to help “those who work with adolescent boys to discover a language by which boys’ spirituality

gang initiation since there is a paucity of initiation rites within the larger culture that engage young men at this visceral level. The reader is also referred to *Adam’s Return: The Five Promises of Male Initiation* by Richard Rohr, O.F.M. (Crossroad Publishing: New York, 2004) as an introduction to a Catholic Christian, yet post-tradition, exploration of male initiation, and an attempt to provide rites of initiation and their rationale for a post-traditional, post-technological world. One concern regarding this movement is the socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds of those who participate in the retreats and gatherings presented. The appeal of this type of theory, spirituality and practice to men and young men in different social, economic, ethnic, cultural and geographical contexts is unknown.

³³ Kath Engebretson, “Teenage boys, spirituality and religion,” *International Journal of Children’s Spirituality*, 9:3, (2004), 263.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 264.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 265.

may be expressed.”³⁶ To that end, she devised a schema that offers key points for consideration following her study with the 20 teenage boys between 15 and 17 years of age³⁷:

- Spirituality is:
 - experience of the sacred other which is accompanied by feelings of wonder, joy, love, trust and hope.
- Spirituality enhances connectedness:
 - within the self, with others and with the world.
- Spirituality:
 - illuminates life experience.
- Spirituality may be expressed:
 - in relationships, prayer, personal and communal rituals, values, service, action for justice, connection with the earth.
- Spirituality may be named:
 - in new and redefined ways or through the beliefs, rituals, symbols, values, stories of religious traditions.³⁸

The interview questions provided the data for the schema. Interviewed by “a male teacher whom they liked and respected,”³⁹ they answered the following questions:

- What things are most important [to] you at this stage of your life?
- Do you have any spiritual beliefs and, if so, how would you express them?
- In what situations do you feel most happy and alive?
- Do you have any ‘rules’ that you try to live by and if so what are they?
- Who are the people to whom you feel connected?
- When things go wrong, what do you do to cope?
- What do you hope for in your life in the future?
- What special people have influenced you?
- What qualities do you admire in a man that you know?
- What do you think can cause drug taking and other destructive behavior among teenage boys?
- What do you hope for the world in the future?⁴⁰

³⁶ Ibid., 267.

³⁷ This study, held in Australia, does not give any ethnic, socio-economic or religious background of the young men, stating only that most attended Christian schools.

³⁸ Engebretson, “Teenage boys,” 269.

³⁹ Ibid., 272.

To summarize her initial findings, “spirituality is affected by life tasks and experience...the tasks and development issues of the teenage years, especially the development of identity and belonging, were the experiences where the feelings often associated with the transcendent, i.e. joy, peace, hope and freedom, were found.”⁴¹ According to this study, “the real site and starting point for spirituality was not conventionally understood spiritual or religious experience, but the experience of developing identity in and with others.”⁴² As well, she found that the young men expressed the importance of self-commitment and relationships with family and friends. And although they did speak to a sense of altruism, there was a “passive approach to big social and global issues.”⁴³ Finally, “beliefs were seen to be expressed through action, particularly through the way we treat others...In every case religious belief was unreflected upon.”⁴⁴

What is telling in her study, and not surprisingly so, is that although the young men interviewed spoke of prayer in a broad sense: “religious rituals were not generally mentioned.”⁴⁵ This author suggests that this is because of the literal language barrier of which she speaks.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 273.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 273-275.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 276.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 275.

ADOLESCENT CONTEXT(S) AND POSSIBLE RITUAL FRAMEWORKS: ANOTHER LOOK

Engebretson's study provides valuable information in considering the spiritual life of young men. However, this author suggests that there is, at foundation, a lack of communication. As mentioned in her study, actions reveal beliefs. It would be fair to suggest that religious rituals were not generally mentioned because, unreflective though they may be, these young men were ritualizing their faith in their actions. As well, it seems that there are some presuppositions at play that hobble what is presented.

As mentioned in her study, adolescent boys value their relationships with their family and their friends. Belonging to a larger community assists these primary relationships by providing *protective factors* or "external supports that provide:

- a belief system;
- social cohesion;
- caring and support through community resources;
- involvement with prosocial community members and belief in their values;
- high expectations and opportunities for participation;
- perceived importance of religion and prayer;
- availability of counseling from the Church."⁴⁶

The protective factors are important. But, without diminishing the importance of what Engebretson presented, this author suggests that a fundamental gap is in understanding the "how" of the spiritual life of adolescent boys. As mentioned previously, she states that her study was a means to assist those working "with adolescent boys to discover a language by which boys' spirituality may be expressed." The misstep

⁴⁶ Ibid., 267.

is to speak of a language, rather than consider the multiformity of languages that they do speak; these are what need to be interpreted. Certainly, there must be a way to assist teenagers to be self-reflective and move to a more intentional and conscious level, which she does suggest; however, to suggest that “religious beliefs as an expression of spirituality are peripheral and, if held, are closely connected with and derived from the family [and that] [p]rayer is used to express spirituality, but more common is a capacity for reflection, particularly through challenging activities”⁴⁷ does not take into account the array of languages that they *are* speaking. Even though hers was a pilot project, this critique is important to consider.

The movement to a new level, what Engebretson speaks as transcendence, is precisely what the protective factors of community can facilitate. However, one protective factor that must be included is that of *ritual*. Ritual allows transcendence to be glimpsed on many levels and in many ways. The thrust toward joy, love, trust and hope must be balanced by anger, isolation, angst and despair. These more difficult experiences can be an experience of transcendence as well. Also, the burgeoning sexual energy which seems to be the matrix for all these feelings must be engaged in a positive way.

This moves the discussion back to the importance of ritual. Case in point would be the interview process that Engebretson describes, the important aspect being how “teenage boys would talk much more readily to a male teacher whom they liked and respected.”⁴⁸ We are not privy to the event that was the interview; however, from her own assessment, she recognizes the value and efficacy of the safety of a familiar face to

⁴⁷ Ibid., 276.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 272.

that of “a female academic researcher whom they had never met before.”⁴⁹ This is not a small insight, and connects back to the dynamics of ritual and initiation.

MIMESIS AND RITUAL – MIMESIS AS RITUAL

At this juncture, it seems useful to consider the concept of *mimesis* and how it relates not only to ritual, but also to performance/praxis theory. *Mimesis* is rooted in the Greek *mimēsthai* (μιμεῖσθαι), meaning “to imitate.” Even more, in reference to this study, *mimesis* is “the deliberate imitation of the behavior of one group of people by another as a factor in social change.”⁵⁰ As well, the various theories of *mimesis* and mimetic desire portray an organic function that appears to be part and parcel of human existence. Within the study of *mimesis* and mimetic desire, there is a tension between whether and how this innate human dimension can either be for the welfare or woe of individuals and cultures.

Gil Baile, rooting his insights in the mimetic theory offered by Rene Girard states: “...when I speak of desire, or mimetic desire, please know that for me, as for Girard, the word ‘desire’ means *the influence of others*.”⁵¹ He continues

We humans are capable of learning, capable and sometimes eager to follow positive role models, and willing to emulate virtuous deeds, for example, all because of our mimetic propensities. *We are imitative creatures*....the issues are: Whom do we imitate? Does our imitation lead us toward or away from our authentic uniqueness? And, do we eventually turn our models into rivals?⁵²

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ “Mimesis,” Oxford Online Dictionary
http://oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/mimesis (accessed August 1, 2013).

⁵¹ Baile, *Violence Unveiled*, 112.

⁵² Ibid., emphasis added.

This author suggests that mimesis may assist in the interpretation of ritual behavior precisely because of the importance of the influence of others as well as the dynamics posed in the questions by Baile. In order to illustrate mimesis, Baile provides a scenario in a nursery where a child is surrounded with toys. A second child is introduced into the nursery. The child scans the room of toys and begins to reach toward one that the first child appears to be interested in. Of course, an argument ensues over who rightfully has possession of the toy.⁵³ But there is more to this altercation. According to Baile, mimetic desire is at play, with each child claiming, “I wanted that first.” The protestation would increase in intensity with a concomitant increase of desire in both antagonists. One question (at least to the children) would be: Why are you fighting? The answer would probably sound something like this: S/he won’t let me have the toy! The crux of the frustration and ensuing argument is pointing out who’s at fault for the inability to sate the desire for the toy. Each would blame the other, and we have in its nascent form, according to Baile (and Girard), the beginning of scapegoating and subsequent victimization. According to Girard, mimetic desire led to the first murder (by virtue of scapegoating) and thus culture began, and the subsequent religious attempts to rein in this desire. The nursery scene is the story of culture and civilization writ small.

But how conscious are we in our desires? Baile posits in his exploration of the nursery encounter that “there has probably been no conscious attempt to copy.”⁵⁴ That is

⁵³ Ibid., 116-118.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 117. According to Baile, copy and imitate are relatively synonymous. For him, mimesis is a non-conscious predilection, part and parcel of our humanity, similar to the stripes of a tiger, hidden though these stripes may be. He uses the term copy and imitate interchangeably as a conscious choice. The author of this study believes that there needs to be a nuance between copy and imitate. To copy is to duplicate, reproduce, recreate or mimic. There is a circular sense to it, externalizing one’s response to the mimetic desire as a sort of mask. To imitate implies a more intentional appropriation of the effects of the mimetic desire. If copying

why the term ‘imitation’ is not entirely satisfactory. It implies a degree of conscious intention that the term ‘mimesis’ does not necessarily imply.”⁵⁵ In more classically religious language, this desire could be likened to concupiscence and/or Original Sin. There are those who critique Girard’s foundational premise of “acquisitive mimesis” or “mimesis of appropriation,” as described by Baile. Some have suggested a “loving mimesis,” a “creative mimesis”⁵⁶ or as Girard himself has come to consider, a “good mimesis”⁵⁷ as a counter-balance of sorts. The resultant sacrifice that would flow from loving mimesis would not be a victim scapegoated, but rather a selfless offering for the other.

If, as Baile states, humans are imitative creatures, and if there are at least two plausible poles in the continuum of mimetic desire, then desire itself could be a web of both acquisitive and loving mimesis, interlocking, contingent upon experiences and contexts, where one is betwixt and between scapegoating and selfless love, but ultimately sacrifice. As stated in the scenario of the children, it is not the thing in dispute that is the focus of mimetic desire, but rather the “other,” the model/mediator; hence, the scapegoating mechanism (seeing other as object hindering the fulfillment of one’s desire), or the offering for the other (desiring to be like or to enter into relationship with

is to maintain an external locus, imitation presumes an internal locus, an incarnational or embodying dynamic. For example, Paul says, “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5) and “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).” As well, the invitation of Jesus in many of the Gospel stories to “Follow me” provides another layer to imitation. Finally, the Mass, wherein the community celebrates at the command of Christ (“Do this in memory of me.”), is a ritual pulsating with mimesis and with intentionality. And lest the reader think that imitation is more a spiritual and positive dynamic, consider the Nazi uniform, the tattoos of gang members, etc.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 117.

⁵⁶ Rebecca Adams, “Loving Mimesis and Girard’s ‘Scapegoat of the Text’: A Creative Reassessment of Mimetic Desire,” *Violence Renounced: Rene Girard, Biblical Studies and Peacemaking*, ed., William M. Swartley (Telford, PA: Pandora Press, 2000), 302.

⁵⁷ René Girard, *The Girard Reader*, ed. James G. Williams, trans. Yvonne Freccero, (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1996), 63-64, 269.

the other, losing oneself) plays out dependent upon the contexts and how those contexts stress either acquisitive or loving mimesis. If it is true that mimetic desire is non-conscious, could it be an aspect of ritualization as described by Erikson in his study between mother and child? The tangle of mimeses that the child is: desiring the mother for the relationship and the benefits of that relationship; the same true for the mother in relation to her child. Are these ritualizations an acting out of mimetic desire? And if so, is mimesis in our DNA?

There is another aspect of mimesis that moves closer to ritual. When considering the definition offered by the Oxford Online Dictionary, mimesis is “deliberate imitation” with “social change” as the outcome. Social change is not value-neutral. To put it more positively, social change expresses a value (desire). This value is the impetus and the outcome of a deliberate imitation of one group by another. One group has *influenced another* (the Girardian understanding of desire) in such a way so that another group *intentionally* imitates the other group. The issue is that rather than a non-conscious human trait, there is a sense of intentionality in this definition. There is also a relational dimension that triggers the desire. Although seeming to fly in the face of what Baile presumes in his statement that mimesis is not a “conscious attempt to copy (see footnote 55),” the intentionality of mimesis may be considered by using ritual theory in view of the correlation between this intentionality and performance/praxis theory as described earlier in this work. It appears that mimetic theory and ritual theory have what could be considered a hand-in-glove relationship.

At this point, it is important to consider the questions that Baile asks in regard to mimesis. The author suggests that exploring these questions through an example of an

initiation ritual pattern will elucidate the basic premise of this project as well as allow a model of interpretation.

In male initiation – particularly in traditional societies – there is a pattern that seems quite widespread if not universal. The male initiate is taken from the realm of childhood (the security of the home) where the woman has primary influence, at least while the man is out hunting. The boy is either ceremoniously led by a man or men to a particular place away from the familiarity of the home, and either with a guide or guides, usually with periods of isolation, along with ritual initiation (usually a wounding of some sort), and finally a return to the community with the identity and position of an adult male and the rights and responsibilities that ensue.

With this brief outline of one form of male initiation, one can see the importance of the answer to the question: *Whom do we imitate?* One of the outcomes of initiation is to identify with and imitate another – to be different at some psychic level. The influence of the mother and the community of women and children is supplanted by the influence of the male community. Even though Engebretson’s study does not allude to the young men having experienced any initiation as such, her understanding that these young men would “talk much more readily to a male teacher whom they liked and respected” than to “a female academic researcher whom they had never met before” reveals an understanding of human relationships that are often not considered as important for men, let alone young men. The male teacher whom they liked and respected is a model, a mediator as such by the very fact that they like and respect him. This does not diminish the influence of women in the life of these young men; however, it is important to consider the aspect of an appropriate relationship for any given context.

Through the initiation ritual in more traditional societies, a young man is usually educated, or better, formed (by the male guide or guides, usually elders) into the expectations of what it means to be a man in that particular community.⁵⁸ This education comes through story-telling, admonitions, and through tests of endurance (physical, emotional, etc.), as the young man leaves the world of childhood behind. The role of the ritual is to lead the young man to his authentic uniqueness. This is where the trials of endurance break down his old self-understanding so that he can come to a new self-understanding – this through such events as the bestowal of a new name, wounding, marking, etc. It is through these events that the young man discovers his unique identity within a larger matrix of male relationships.

This new way of relating moves to the compelling question: Do we turn our models into rivals? It seems a trite truism that oftentimes what a person admires about another, after time becomes that very trait that frustrates, and therefore hinders the attaining of desires. Considering the initiation ritual as briefly described, an aspect that may or may not be overtly engaged in, but is present, is that of becoming an adult male and therefore, though welcomed into the “brotherhood of man,” the initiate finds himself now a rival for authority and probably most pressing, sexual partnering. In a sense, coming to a new self-understanding also comes at the expense of a certain ambivalence to this group to which you now belong.

One can see the dynamic relationship between mimesis and ritual. The questions that Baile posed in regard to mimesis can also be asked at some level of ritual. First,

⁵⁸ This more traditional ritual seems to be less connected to the post-technological reality in many parts of the world. However, as mentioned before, there seems to be a desire for something, as related in #28 or #32 above.

Whom/What do we imitate (based on desire, that is, the influence of the other or others), not just as individuals, but also as communities and contexts? This can be an authentic attempt at liturgy that is organic and an intentional rehearsal (read imitation) of the Reign of God. Or it could be the ritual slaughter of Jews, political dissidents, homosexuals and the like by the Nazis in order to imitate that perfect Aryan race. Does this imitation lead us toward or away from our individual/communal uniqueness or identity? An example of leading toward that uniqueness is the relationship between husband and wife. On the other hand, groupthink as expressed in gangs as well as corporate offices subsumes the authentic uniqueness of the other for the sake of group survival. Finally, Do we turn our models into rivals? This question may seem out of place in the context of ritual, but just as surely as there is the possibility of the scapegoating mechanism rooted in this rivalry, there is also "...love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor..."⁵⁹

Section Summary

This author presents Engebretson's study as both a foundation and a foil. The insights gained from her study present the ongoing struggle of those who are charged with ministry to youth, and are feeling inadequate to the task. While her study hints at some issues (and admittedly, it is a pilot study), This author suggest that though solid in the areas of identity and community, of mission and values, and of spirituality, Engebretson's study does not adequately consider nor interpret/translate the ritual language/s that is/are already being expressed.

⁵⁹ Romans 12:10. (*The New Revised Standard Version Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Unless otherwise noted, all biblical texts are taken from this source.

This author suggests that one entry to interpretation is through the use of insights from the field of the study of mimesis. It seems that ritual study, especially in the area of performance/praxis, and mimesis (balanced between acquisitive and loving) have the possibility to enhance the understanding of ritual and values, since the mimetic desire is precisely about that which one values, even though obscured and exposed by the relational dynamic between the “antagonists.”

What person, young or otherwise, hasn't heard someone ask them “*If all your friends jumped off a bridge, would you jump off, too?*” The question is not as frivolous as it appears. It reveals the deeply biological nature of ritual(ization) and mimesis. It also hints at a conscious decision to follow through on one's desires. It is with these considerations that we explore the experiences of a group of young men at St. Rita High School.

CHAPTER 2

“I AM A RITA MAN”

ST. RITA OF CASCIA HIGH SCHOOL: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

St. Rita of Cascia College Preparatory High School (St. Rita) is an all-boys Catholic High School on the south side of Chicago. It has been in existence for over 100 years, guided by the Augustinian friars of the Midwest Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel. In 1990, the Augustinians purchased the building and grounds of what was once Quigley Preparatory Seminary South of the Archdiocese of Chicago. This moved the campus from its original site at 63rd and South Claremont, where the author of this project attended school from 1978 to 1982, to its present location at 77th and South Western.

With the acquisition of the building and grounds came more up-to-date classrooms and office space, and plenty of land that could be used for athletic venues as well as other expansion projects. Through this purchase, the high school gained a new chapel. The Shrine Chapel, as it is called, is not only the space that houses the St. Rita of

Cascia¹ Shrine (with the devotions that surround her veneration), but also the place where the freshmen gather on their first day on their high school journey, and it is from there that they graduate four years. For the administration, the chapel is an integral part of the life of the students.

At the time of this study² there were 708 students attending St. Rita. The four classes included: 192 freshmen, 180 sophomores, 162 juniors and 174 seniors. The ethnicities represented and reported are as follows: Caucasian – 503 (71%), African-American – 92 (13%), Hispanic – 82 (12%), Mixed/Other – 23 (3%), American Indian – 4 (.5%), and Asian – 4 (.5%). The reporting of religious affiliation is a bit complex. There are those who reported themselves as “Other Christian” and those who stated what Christian community they belong to. In order to see the “big picture” this author will combine the numbers here, but provide a more detailed breakdown in **Appendix A**, page 149. According to this schema, the numbers are: Catholics – 597 (85%), Other Christians – 74 (10%), Jewish – 1 (>1%); None – 19 (3%) and No Answer – 17 (2%). The students come from primarily working class families with middle to lower-middle economic income situations. Many commute from the suburbs because of the draw that St. Rita has

¹ St. Rita of Cascia was an Augustinian nun, who after the murder of her husband and the prayed-for death of her two sons lest they lose eternal life should they succumb to the activity of *vendetta*, entered the convent (not without difficulty), and through her spiritual asceticism received the stigmata through a wound on her forehead, said to be caused by a thorn from the crown of thorns. More tellingly, she is considered the patroness of impossible and hopeless cases, and bears the title of “Peacemaker” for the way that she lived her life as a wife, mother, widow and nun in the pursuit of bringing about reconciliation to the various families in her region. A more comprehensive account of her life can be found in *The Precious Pearl: The Story of St. Rita of Cascia* by Michael Di Gregorio (New York: Paulist Press, 2003).

² This count is accurate as of 18 November 2010 through a spreadsheet provided to this author by the administrative offices of St. Rita. The other information that this author is presenting is through the spreadsheet. The author does not have access to the rationale for the way they have categorized ethnicity and religious affiliation. It is a distillation of the registration that was completed by the parent/guardian of the student.

for many boys. Most students live in the city and commute using the provided bus services, public transportation, or automobile.

Academically, St. Rita does very well in standardized tests, college level courses (Advanced Placement), college entrance (ACT, SAT) and in the acquisition of scholarships. Students who need extra assistance are part of a more intensive educational experience that will insure them the opportunity to succeed. It is also considered a sports powerhouse, especially in the area of football, capturing the Illinois State Football Championship (Class 7A) as recently as 2006, and winning the Chicago Prep Bowl in 2010.

THE SURVEY – BRIEF RATIONALE

Since this project is more akin to a “first step” in the process of discerning the values ritualized in order to begin to develop a comprehensive pastoral plan (liturgical, service, etc.)³, those seniors at St. Rita who are at least 18 years of age were invited to participate in a survey. There are a few reasons for this. First, as seniors, they have had four years of experience of the various rituals and process of ritualization. Second, by surveying only those who have reached the age of majority, this project could begin in relatively short order. As stated, this is the first step in what will hopefully be a comprehensive process towards a community dialogue regarding the rituals we celebrate as well as the development of a liturgical pastoral plan. To that end, the statements and questions on the survey attempted to engage the students in those experiences of the expressed and lived values at school, as well as leading beyond school. Areas of

³ This would indicate the necessity of a similar survey for faculty and staff.

exploration included, but were not limited to, their own knowledge of the core values (*Veritas, Caritas, Unitas*)⁴, their assessment of how those values are integrated in the institution's life as well as in their own lives. Some key points in the survey included aspects of the *Tolle Lege Experience*⁵ in which they all participated when they first entered St. Rita, the curricular and extracurricular activities and relationships in which they are involved, the liturgical and devotional life in which they participate, and finally life beyond the confines of the school.

The intended survey method was to employ a familiar model: using the St. Rita website and students' personal student IDs for logging into the survey. The IT Department of the school agreed to create and house the survey instrument. However, the IT Department utilized Google as a means to create and house the instrument. In practice, this assured the anonymity of the participants even more, in that they all were given the same access code to the survey, without needing to log-in using their own school ID.

At the end of the survey, the respondents were asked if they would be willing to speak to someone in Campus Ministry (considered by many to be the "neutral ground" of the school) to further explore their answers. The hope is that the information gleaned from these conversations will augment the survey questions by eliciting anecdotal

⁴ The core values will be further explored in the chapter 3, which speaks to the Augustinian tradition.

⁵ The *Tolle Lege Experience* marks the beginning of acculturation to the Augustinian community that is St. Rita High School. It derives from the beginning of St. Augustine's journey, where he heard voices like children singing "Tolle Lege! Tolle Lege!" This simple children's song means "Take (and) read." Augustine saw this as a message, found the Scriptures nearby and opened them to Romans 13:13-14. Thus began his embrace of Christ and the community of believers. It is in this spirit of a new reality and identity in the spirit of Augustine that St. Rita provides this important initiation experience. After a time of welcome and engaging the new student and his parent(s)/guardian(s) in conversation, building the start of relationship, a covenant is read and signed by all present (the student, his parent(s)/guardian(s), and the school representative). Please see **Appendix B**, page 150.

evidence. With survey results in hand, the ministry team could use those results as a tool for dialogue and development in any future considerations for ministry activities.

The Survey Process

After having pre-tested the survey with 8 alumni in January 2011 and adjusted questions as necessary, the survey was open for wider participation (see #6). This author's initial thought that the survey would not take more than 20 minutes needed to be adjusted to between 20 and 30 minutes. Also, a consideration of the number of students available to provide useful results needed to be made.⁶

Two teachers were asked if they would be willing to use some of their class time to take the students to the library computer lab for the survey.⁷ They agreed and the results come from the 88 seniors who participated in the survey that was administered in the computer lab of the library during the class periods of the two teachers. The survey was divided into ten sections: 1) self-identification in religion and ethnicity; 2)

⁶ This author has taken the end of each month from December 2010 to April 2011, ascertained how many seniors will be 18 by that date as well as what that number looks like as a percentage of the class. The number of 18-years-olds and the percentage of the senior class follows:

December – 66 (38%)
 January – 83 (48%)
 February – 96 (55%)
 March – 108 (62%)
 April – 126 (72%)

It seems that for any reliable study, the options are to survey between the beginning of March and the beginning of April. Even though the April percentage (end of month) provides a greater base of information, the fact that the seniors are coming to the last month or so of school, and focusing on last classes and finals, a survey such as this will not garner that much interest or attention. Another reality is that teachers are also focused on final classes and final exams as well; so using about 20 minutes of class time at this juncture may be impinging too much on their teaching time. In the end, the decision on the date came to April 6 with a few on April 11, totaling 88 students and responses. A total of 20 students declined to participate in the survey. No reasons were given for their declining this invitation.

⁷ The survey process itself was out of the author's hands in that this author was out of town during the survey experience. Therefore, any anecdotal evidence other than the interviews, come from information provided by the teachers.

involvement in extracurricular activities; 3) familiarity with and understanding of the core values; 4) the experience of the core values in various dimensions of school and personal life; 5) people of influence in their lives; 6) their understanding and expression of faith; 7) the experience of faith and community at St. Rita High School; 8) general experience and understanding of school traditions/devotions; 9) questions on how they spend their time and other resources; 10) a chance to offer any other observation that they felt important and not covered in the survey. Students were also invited to volunteer for a confidential personal interview in order to expand on their survey answers by putting their name in a section. This would be the only way that a respondent could be identified.⁸

THE SURVEY AND ITS RESULTS

The first and second sections of the survey (To view the entire survey and its results, please see **Appendix C**, pages 151-200) were the most basic, gathering the relevant demographic information. The first section asked about self-identification in religious background. The following responses squared relatively well with the school population.

Buddhist	1	1%
Catholic	73	83%
Christian	9	10%
Jewish	1	1%

⁸ The survey process needs to be reconsidered in light of the focus of this study. If the core values of an Augustinian school are truth, unity and love, one could infer that the communal dimension of Augustinian life supports these values. If that is the case, another part of the process could include a roundtable conversation with those who would be willing to discuss not only their answers, but also as a means to explore more deeply the implications and ramifications of the values that are ritualized.

Muslim	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
Other	4	5%

The second part asked the students to self-identify in the area of ethnicity. The following responses, though close to the school population, revealed a slight increase for the group identifying as white, non-Hispanic, and a lower percentage of both African-American and Hispanic students, with the Hispanic self-identifiers outnumbering the African-American self-identifiers, which is not reflected in the general student population.⁹

African-American	7	8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	1%
Hispanic/Latino	9	10%
White, Non-Hispanic	64	73%
Multi-Racial	6	7%
Prefer not to say	1	1%

The third section focused on involvement in student activities. This area was divided into two groups. The first question in the section asked that only those who had *never* been involved in any student activity complete this section. Out of 88 students, 55 answered that they had never been involved in any student activity. That would translate to about 60% of the students not being involved in student activities.¹⁰ Out of these 55 respondents, 25 answer that even though they have not participated in any activities, they

⁹ The school's ethnic/racial nomenclature differs from that used in this survey. This author suggests that, though a topic for further discussion, this discrepancy does not significantly impact the results of this survey or the interpretations that may be had.

¹⁰ Anecdotal evidence would suggest a smaller percentage; however, student activity does ebb and flow with interest. Also, many activities require a uniform and equipment that are an additional expense. Finally, the survey instrument may need to be more precise if this type of survey is to be done in the future for programmatic reasons.

have attended activities either “often” or “very often”. The number of those who responded that they “seldom” or “never” attended activities totaled 22.

The remainder of respondents who self-identified as participating in activities were given the opportunity to choose not only the activities in which they participated, but also the academic class/year in which they participated. This provided an opportunity for them to offer a fuller picture of involvement throughout the years. A cursory observation reveals that most sports peaked in the first year of high school, and declined in membership in the last year. This seems realistic in that sports tend to self-select as the young men move into the more demanding and skilled rolls of the varsity team. Of all sports (and all activities), bowling was not selected for any year.

Another note of interest is the fact that though sports participation decreased from the first to fourth year, other non-sport activities remained relatively stable (though lower in participation – the exceptions being the Knights of Augustine and the mission collections), and there was an increase in participation in Campus Ministry.¹¹

The denser part of the survey engaged the students in expressing their understanding and competence in the core values of the school. This seems to be where the survey hit a bit of a snag. Although the information gathered is useful as a baseline for future projects, it is not clear that it is useful as a diagnostic. Rather than rehearse the

¹¹ This author suggests that there may have been some misunderstanding regarding how to answer. For example, the National Honor Society is only open to juniors and seniors, and yet there are responses for all years. Also, as will be seen in another part of this examination, there appeared to be a less than serious attitude in answering some of the questions, including racial slurs and vulgarity. This phenomenon will be explored more fully in this work. Be that as it may, there is a noticeable increase of participation in Campus Ministry, and the general trends bear out anecdotally. Thus, the inconsistencies within the survey answers are intriguing. It seems that that the personal interviews that occurred about a month later offer a balance to some of the questionable survey responses.

various answers, it may be more beneficial to offer what this researcher considers the core of what was given, nodding to variations that necessarily will occur in such a survey.

When it comes to the core value of TRUTH (*Veritas*), a preponderance of the answers spoke to honesty. However, there was more to this sentiment. Many spoke of honesty to self and others. It seems plausible to suggest that students were grounding their understanding of honesty in relationship and expressed in their own way that truth is a lived reality that is in and of itself a call to integrity.

Their description of the core value of UNITY (*Unitas*) provides an insight to the context of St. Rita as it is experienced after four years. Again, with the understanding that there were responses outside what could be considered the general consensus, many spoke of unity within the school from a familial perspective. They often spoke of family and brotherhood. Another dimension, though less prevalent, is the image of friendship and a sense of mission (i.e., working together for a common goal).

The students' description of LOVE (*Caritas*) clustered around the qualities of "respect" and "compassion." What is interesting in this understanding is the expression of what this author would call "anti-values" and "alternative values." The anti-values would be those values that are diametrically opposed to the expressed values. Alternative values are those values that, though not diametrically opposed, offer an insight to either how the students are integrating the expressed values, rejecting the expressed values or offering in their own way a different set of values. Some examples of alternative values include: service, social networking/socialization, the importance of athletics, identification as Rita Men and to a lesser extent, Augustinian. It may be important to consider from clues in the

survey and in anecdotal evidence how the values, anti-values and alternative values interact in the life of the school.

To explore more explicitly, anti-values can be considered those beliefs-in-action that undermine what is professed publicly. One could suggest that three fundamental anti-values at St. Rita High School are: sexism,¹² racism, and a nonchalant attitude toward academic dis/honesty. There may be those who like to shock by using such epithets as f*g and n*****r, or making remarks like “that’s so gay,” or shouting the chorus of “girl” when a young woman might be walking through the halls.¹³ Along with other curse words and phrases, the appearance of these words in this particular survey, especially when it is anonymous, presents another possible area of consideration: maybe these young men, even though they are unaware of what and how they are doing this, are actually pointing to the influences of family, friends and media at a level that is akin to a second nature response.¹⁴

¹² This includes both an aggressive and vocal anti-homosexual attitude as well as a somewhat complex disrespect for women. This will be explored further, but a brief recognition of adolescent insecurity (especially sexual) as well as the prevailing attitude of the sponsoring religious institution (the Roman Catholic Church) may provide at least the beginnings of a contextual understanding, without condoning such behavior.

An anecdote to consider: At St. Rita the band and football are linked. It becomes a pressure for any student who wishes to be part of both, but there is a “gentlemen’s agreement” that at a certain time during football practice, band members who are part of the football team are excused to practice with the band. With that in mind, a student shared that when he was a freshmen, he was part of the football team and the band. He reminded the coach that he needed to go to band practice, and the coach responded, “Oh, I didn’t know you were with those f*gs. Go ahead.” The student never mentioned it to administration, but stated to me that band members are treated in similar ways all the time. The student shared this with me when he was a senior; it occurred when he was a freshmen. To his credit, and to the credit of many of the students, they still belong to both organizations.

¹³ One must also consider the consequences, both the positive instant gratification (peer acceptance and cohesion, disrupting the normal flow of the learning environment, etc.) and the lack of effective corrective measures. This must also be coupled with the all-male environment and the various stages of maturity within the four year span of high school.

¹⁴ The author experienced one instance of this value dissonance in a class for freshmen. The class focused on Augustinian Values, especially the core values. Offering a scenario about a lost wallet with \$300, but with identification (coincidentally, the identity was that of the teacher). One student from each class offered

This lack of awareness is not that uncommon. The next section of the survey on how the students see themselves, their peers and the faculty/staff living out the values offers some clues on what the students are actually “seeing.”

VALUES PERCEIVED AND EXPRESSED

Students were provided statements to which they could respond on a scale of one to five, with one corresponding to “Strongly Disagree” and five to “Strongly Agree.” One area that seemed to present a preponderance of responses was the one indicating that the student neither agreed nor disagreed (3). Of all the responses, this category received 20% to 40%.¹⁵ The notable exceptions were when presented with how comfortable they were in relating and explaining the core values (18%), whether or not they felt valued at St. Rita (16%), the influence of family on the way one acts in daily life (13%), and the influence of friends on the way they act in daily life (16%). Telling as well was the influence of faculty/staff, including the Augustinians (28%), their religious upbringing (23%) and their relationship with God (24%) in the way that they act in daily life.¹⁶ Ultimately, the respondents feel that they are valued as members of St. Rita (70%) and will continue to be influenced by the core values for life (67%).

what he would do should he find the wallet. With the identity of the teacher, they all stated that they would keep \$100 and give \$200 back. When challenged about this theft, all four reasoned that they could have kept all the money, suggesting that they would give themselves the reward for their act of honesty. When pressed to a different scenario of an unknown person, they found no reason at all to return the money. Believing that some of the comments were offered for shock, after further exploring, it appears that there is a definitive self-referential view of reality, beyond the normal adolescent self-absorption. Even more, the conversation in this exercise, if extrapolated to the survey results, reveals not only a fundamental self-referencing, but a tendency toward a lack of self-reflection.

¹⁵ It could be argued that this category be considered negligible. However, it can provide a sense of what is important to the respondents. Could the larger percentages of agreeing or not agreeing reveal a broader sense of disinterest?

¹⁶ An area to consider is how the students understand the lived reality that is “St. Rita.” As it relates to the feeling (lack of feeling?) regarding the influence of the faculty/staff, religion and God. This is important considering the Catholic and Augustinian dimensions of the school.

When presented with statements on their trying to live the core values, the students responded in the affirmative (4 and 5) in the following contexts: in school, 63%; at home, 60%; with friends, 50%; in classes, 64%; relating to teachers, 56%; treating other students in various instances in school, 64%; in sports and activities, 58%. Without other years of survey results, the present statistics present a baseline that at least provides food for thought.

When provided with the statements of others trying to live the core values, the following affirmative (4 and 5) answers arose: most students in classes, 35%; most students and teachers in their interactions with others, 44%; teachers' actions toward the particular respondent revealing an understanding and embracing of the core values, 51%; most students living out the core values in various instances at school, 34%; most students in sports or activities, 39%.¹⁷

In the area of other influences, without surprise, 82% were in agreement on the strong influence of family.¹⁸ Tellingly, the influence of teachers and Augustinians garnered 46%, and 42% for their parish or faith community, 74% for the influence of friends, 61% for their religious upbringing, and 65% agreed or strongly agreed on the influence of their relationship with God.¹⁹

¹⁷ These results will provide much material for the dynamics of the critical correlation that will follow later in this work.

¹⁸ The survey does not specify whether a positive or negative influence.

¹⁹ As a follow-up to the questions of influence, the students were asked who they admire and why as well as who they would most like to be and why. What is interesting in the responses is the wide range of people who are admired and seen as worthy of imitation. The people who most influence are parents and family members. For those seen as role models, the students answered that they sought to imitate family members, sports figures, religious leaders, and even teachers. However, though offered in various ways, there was not much depth as to why a person was seen as worthy of imitation.

In the area of faith and the living out of their faith tradition outside of St. Rita, there is an interesting dynamic. When presented with the statement about their knowledge of the basics of their faith tradition, 85% agreed or strongly agreed. It is evident that knowledge does not translate to practice with the follow-up statements, except within a family setting. In the statement relating celebrations of religious and cultural traditions within their families, respondents stated a 65% agreement with a 23% in the area of neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Statements that focused on particular practices were somewhat consistent, although differing markedly from their practice. In the area of stating that they participated in regular (almost weekly) worship, 35% agreed/strongly agreed, 32% neither agreed/disagreed, and 33% disagreed/strongly disagreed. When it came to participation in worship through forms of ministry, 28% agreed/strongly agreed, 31% neither agreed/disagreed and 42% disagreed/strongly disagreed. Statements regarding engagement in parish/worship community events outside of worship found that 30% agreed/strongly agreed, 31% neither agreed/disagreed, and 40% disagreed/strongly disagreed. It is worth noting the relative equality between the three general categories. Where there was a trend toward the areas of disagreement, it came in the individual engaging in a more intentional participation.

Another area of interest is in the realm of prayer. Over half of the students (54%) were in agreement that they prayed regularly, even outside of St. Rita; however, there is that third (34%) that neither agree nor disagree. Students were asked to elaborate on how, when and where they usually pray. This section did not present any surprises. However, there is not much offered using words that speak of relationship (i.e. *talking* to God).

Though not explicitly presented, this seems to follow from the relative ambivalence of their relationship to God as presented in a previous area of the survey and this work.²⁰

A section of the survey focusing on the experience of faith and community started with a statement rooted in a basic assumption and practice, that, though a part of St. Rita is a relatively recent addition with a concomitant emphasis, i.e. the Novena in Honor of St. Rita of Cascia.²¹ The tradition of the Novena dates over 100 years, begun by the founder of St. Rita, Fr. Francis Green, O.S.A. He was intent on beginning a parish and school under the patronage of St. Rita of Cascia. The novena, though started by him, was not an integral part of the mission of the high school. The novena was and continues to be held at the St. Rita Shrine Chapel that houses the St. Rita Shrine.

At present, the St. Rita High School community is invited to be part of the St. Rita Novena through a modified and abbreviated version (about four minutes) every Thursday before classes begin. This includes a brief litany, novena prayer and the *Hymn to St. Rita*. In the survey, when presented with their attendance at the weekly novena, 16% stated that they attend often or very often, and 10% preferred not to say. This leaves 74% who seldom or never participate in this prayer.²²

²⁰ This is purely conjecture, as the survey did not have a way for the respondents to offer how comfortable they were in speaking about matters of religion, faith and their personal spiritual practices.

²¹ The Novena began as a yearly Solemn Novena that leads up to the feast day of St. Rita of Cascia on May 22. Approximately 10 years ago, the present Shrine Director and the prior of the St. Rita Monastery community located at St. Rita High School created a monthly Novena Mass every first Thursday of the month, and open to the public. Students are recruited as altar servers for the Solemn Novena and the monthly novena.

²² Two topics covered by the survey considered the songs that are ubiquitous at most of the high school's events: the *Hymn to Saint Rita* and the *St. Rita Fight Song*. 77% of the students stated that they agreed with the statement that they know the *Hymn to St. Rita* by heart and they sing it and 66% know the *St. Rita Fight Song* by heart and sing it. The *Hymn* is sung at every Mass celebrated (an innovation since the 100th anniversary of the school), as well as athletic events on the home field, and the *Fight Song* is sung at every game and even at the first Mass of the year (as a way to shock the freshmen). The author does not know why there is the discrepancy between the knowledge and singing of the two songs.

When it came to the broader liturgical life of the school and their involvement, the students offered the following. In assessing their own involvement in the prayer services offered by singing and praying along, the students claim 42% participation often/very often, 37% seldom/never, and 22% prefer not to say.

Keeping in mind the percentages noted in the previous paragraphs, the students were asked if, after Mass, they felt strengthened in their faith, connected to others, and encouraged to make a difference. With the statement in the positive, 39% strongly agreed/agreed, 19% disagreed/strongly disagreed, and 42% neither agreed nor disagreed. Coupled with this focus, the students were asked to rate the effectiveness of the homilies/sermons/reflections at the various religious events to them and their reality. Again, presented in the positive, 39% strongly agreed/agreed, 19% disagreed/strongly disagreed, and 42% neither agree/disagree.

In the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (offered twice a year to the whole school community during Advent and Lent in a more formal setting, available upon request during the course of the school day, and offered in the context of the *Kairos*²³ retreat) 43% strongly agreed/agreed to appreciate the celebration, 19% disagree/strongly disagree and 38% neither agree/disagree.

²³ *Kairos* is a four-day retreat (Tuesday after school to Friday at about 5PM) that is usually offered four times a year, three times for about 30 seniors and the last one, for about 30 juniors (some who would be student leaders for at least the first *Kairos* of the following school year). This mandatory experience occurs off-campus at the LaSalle Retreat Center in Plano, Illinois. During that time, the students experience reflections by student and adult leaders who are with them on the retreat, and in each small group; prayer experiences, including Mass and the chance to celebrate Reconciliation; large group and small group dynamics; as well as sharing life as a community. Even though *Kairos* is part of many different high schools, it has been expressed as an experience of Augustinian living (and by extension, an experience of church).

In the results of the responses as to the impact of liturgical celebrations on the lives of the students is relatively consistent. However, there seems to be a disconnect when asked about the importance or value of engagement in the prayer life of the community. When asked to agree or disagree with the statement that it is important for students to be involved in preparing the prayers and liturgies, 46% strongly agreed/agreed and 43% neither agreed/disagreed. In another statement interrogating the importance of the students being fully involved by responding, singing, and having other active roles, 47% strongly agreed/agreed and 44% neither agreed/disagreed. It appears that the results present a group of those who value involvement and those who are indifferent.²⁴ A minority disagreed/disagreed strongly.

Although faith involvement appears to be a value at both the school and community-wide level (as professed by the administration, and at least implicit throughout the survey responses), the raw numbers and the percentages reveal that given the chance to engage in the worship and spiritual life at St. Rita, 17% involved themselves in Campus Ministry activities (serving at Mass, reading at Mass, etc.),²⁵ 20% were members of the Knights of Augustine (K of A), 3% participated in Augustinian Youth Events (Student Augustinian Values Institute (SAVI), Exchange Students,

²⁴ This seeming indifference may also be an indication of a lack of comfort in speaking to the religious nature of the survey.

²⁵ An anecdote to consider: The author and a major administrator of the school were part of the end of the year assembly for the students. In this assembly, there were games and events between the various houses in order to win the Claremont Cup for the next year. As one of the junior athletes was playing, the President mentioned what a good baseball player the student was. Making mention that as Director of Campus Ministry, the author relayed that this student is often found in the Campus Ministry office with other students. The administrator looked at me and stated: "Really? He doesn't seem the type."

Augustinian Youth Encounter), and 10% participated on mission/service trips.²⁶ When it came to the weekly Augustinian Mission Collection, 35% reported as participating by giving a donation.

While not being explicitly religious or connected with the Augustinians *per se*, the responses to three activities that have a service focus and a tangential faith connection are: 28% were members of the National Honor Society (NHS),²⁷ 5% were members of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), and 16% participated in St. Baldrick's Day events.²⁸

If the response to worship could be interpreted as tepid at best, it is interesting to note that when presented with the statement designed to discover if they did wear or use religious items that have been given to them during their time at St. Rita, 68% strongly agreed/agreed, 12% disagreed/strongly disagreed and 19% neither agreed/disagreed. This apparent divergence will be considered in a later chapter.

FILLING IN THE BLANKS

Part of the survey allowed for free-form short answers. Most questions were two-pronged: a subject to be addressed and then the follow-up question "why." The students would ordinarily answer the question, but most did not attempt to answer the follow-up "why." The author does not understand the rationale behind not answering the full questions. Another aspect that the author did not foresee was the use of anonymity to

²⁶ The Knights of Augustine, service trips, and the other Augustinian Youth Experiences are by application and/or invitation. The author does not have access as to the number of students that applied.

²⁷ The National Honor Society membership is formed by application/invitation, and moderated by an assistant principal.

²⁸ These figures are based on all respondents, not only those respondents who claim to have been involved in activities in any of the past four years. The author suggests that this offers a fuller picture of involvement, if not engagement.

provide “humorous,” at times sarcastic, and at times vulgar, answers to the questions. Again, the author does not understand the reasoning behind this since the respondents chose to participate in the survey.²⁹

Turning to the free responses, one can ascertain that the spiritual capstone for students is the *Kairos* retreat. According to the survey, this retreat has had an impact on many, if not most, of the students. Many students mentioned *Kairos* as the best religious experience at St. Rita. However, when asked what the best experience at St. Rita was, *Kairos*, though mentioned 15 times, is vastly outnumbered by comments about sports and championships (34 times). Interesting to note, but a variation of people and friends was mentioned on its own 11 times, and expressed or implied in the areas of sports (eight times) and *Kairos* (four times). To put this in perspective, relationships and friendships were mentioned or implied in the top three experiences a total of 23 times.³⁰ There were at least eight responses that offered a null or negative experience, including two incidences of bullying (the respondents being one of the perpetrators [1] or a passive

²⁹ One could suggest that these types of answers could compromise the validity of the survey. That may be so. However, the author contends that such answers place in greater relief the subject of this study. One could easily dismiss these answers with the hackneyed “Boys will be boys.” However, considering that the students accepted to be part of the survey, a certain responsibility to answer appropriately seems reasonable. Were they being playful? Were they participating because it was a twenty-minute respite from a class that had no real meaning to them since graduation was all but certain? The four students who offered to speak with the author stated that they took it because they knew me and wanted to help me. The survey responses are what they are. They may not be necessarily consistent, but as mentioned in this work, the answers are authentic – as long as one understands that authenticity is expressing one’s understanding of self and the world as reflected in the various contexts one finds oneself. Part of adolescence is coming to terms with the various contexts, and learning how to act in each one. It is a daunting task, and there are bound to be missteps. Whether written consciously or unconsciously, the responses – all the responses – express and critique the values of the various contexts in which these young men find themselves. Given that, the survey offers valuable information.

³⁰ An argument could be made for the addition of the Band Trip (mentioned 3 times), and the two Augustinian experiences mentioned, Augustinian Youth Encounter and SAVI (1 time each), which would then total to 28 times. The realm of friendships and relationships (peer and adult) appears to be expressed, if not fully appreciated, by the students.

bystander [1]). Finally, without exploring this more fully, five responded that leaving was the best experience. They responded either as “leaving” or “graduating”.

Lastly, the author met with four of the students who offered to meet, the others declining because they were not the ones who offered their names to be interviewed. The ethnic identification of the interviewees was: Caucasian, non-Hispanic, African-American, Bi-racial (African-American and Caucasian, non-Hispanic) and Hispanic. Without knowing the exact ranking of each one academically, they ranged in the top 50% of the class, one at least in the top 5%.

The point of the interview, as stated on the survey, was to expand or clarify any of their survey responses. One of the respondents wanted to state that he wanted to change his answer regarding racism. He stated that he doesn't see any racism at St. Rita, and wanted to clarify that from his survey answer. This author asked him why the change of heart and he shrugged and stated that he thought about it a bit more. When pressed to explore this, he became quiet, and the interviewer took the cue.

All the interviews were conversations that leaned a bit toward nostalgia as students reminisced about their four years at St. Rita High School. When negative issues were presented by the interviewer, the students would express that they have seen or heard of things like racism and sexism happening, but they did not participate. They also considered the conversations that the school has had regarding racism and sexism as overreacting to the words and actions of a few. When asked about racist and sexist

epitaphs, the respondents regarded most of it as playing and not necessarily mean-spirited nor inappropriate.³¹

TO CONTEXTUALIZE

“It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.”³²

- Sir Winston Churchill

The intention of the survey was to gauge the students’ understanding, acceptance and expression of the values that are espoused at St. Rita High School. Though encountering some issues regarding willingness to participate and seriousness in participating, the survey does act as a legitimate marker of the lived reality for the majority of the students. What seems most apparent is that there is a spilling over or leaking from various other contextual realities that are competing for the attention and loyalty of the young men in the context of St. Rita High School. This competition of contexts includes a competition of values.

Context influences belonging. It may or may not come as a surprise that relationships (usually understood as friendships or being part of a team or group) were of a high value, and it seems this sense of relationship even influenced some of the

³¹ Could this be school spirit becoming groupthink, rooted in nostalgic rewriting of the past? Could it be as simple as not being aware? As of late, the faculty and staff have been discussing these issues more intentionally, especially with the ethnic diversity at St. Rita and with the fact that there are a number of women teachers and staff.

³² Winston Churchill. “The Russian Enigma.” Broadcast 1st October 1939. The Churchill Society: London. <http://www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/RusnEnig.html> (accessed January 21, 2014).

respondents in their questionable answers.³³ Because context influences belonging, belonging can be experienced (or not) and understood in many different ways. For example, we belong to the human race, on this planet, a particular genus and species; we belong to a geographic and cultural group, a socio-economic group, even our birth family. This type of belonging is outside of our control; it tends to the more statistical, even though there may be varying levels of visceral or emotional responses on our part given our interpretation of a particular context or contextual interplay.

The more common understanding of belonging, often named a “sense of belonging,” is also a response to a particular context or contextual interplay. This is often interpreted as a general comfort and ease in one’s environments, with one’s relationships, etc. However, it can also be considered the relative ease by which one engages with one’s particular contexts, regardless of one’s comfort or positive regard for the contextual reality. This author believes that the intentional engagement is what creates the sense of belonging.

But what of one’s *desire* to belong or even not to belong? The author suggests that it is at this point that we can consider the *value* that is belonging. As a desire, as a value, it is an act of volition. One may desire to belong or not to belong (and thus belong to alternative contexts) in a particular situation. This desiring, this movement toward belonging, is also a movement toward meaning. Thus, one’s desire not to belong to a particular context suggests the desire to belong to one that gives one a greater sense of meaning (and value).

³³ There was no directive that the survey was to be done without sharing. It was presumed. The author discovered that this was not the case. Though not an optimal environmental situation, the cross-talk that was part of the process is telling in how it affects results.

What of those scenarios where one does not experience a sense of belonging, and therefore movement toward meaning can be stymied or even re-routed: an abused spouse who feels that there is no way out of the relationship; the man who is working a soul-killing job, who finds because of his age, that he has nowhere else to turn; and finally the little child who is reaching out to her parent for comfort and security, and finds a stone wall instead? In a sense, the above scenarios, a very small sampling of possibilities, to be sure, depict “inverted belonging:” feeling trapped. Feeling trapped speaks to a form of contextual conflict. The author suggests that our movement toward meaning, because it is part of our human nature, will find a way to belong, generally toward more life-giving contexts, but also to those that may be considered asocial or anti-social. It may even move toward a deep disengagement (physically, emotionally, mentally) from the context in order to preserve that meaning, to preserve that innate desire to belong, to preserve one’s sense of value – somehow, somewhere, to someone, and/or with someone.

What Sir Winston Churchill spoke about Russian involvement in World War II in 1939 in the quote that begins this section may speak to the actions of the students (and maybe all humanity). Churchill finished his statement with: “The key is Russian national interest.” If context influences belonging, belonging has the potential to benefit us on many levels. The ritual that was the survey event offers a glimpse as to how this particular group of students navigated through various contexts. What they did in how and what they responded, whether consciously or not, nods toward a benefit, a benefit that they may not even be able to articulate, even though they ritualize it.

CHAPTER 3

TRADITION: REFLECTING

In order to explore the traditions out of which the students of St. Rita of Cascia High School live, it may be helpful to consider the physics of a mirror. A mirror presents two reflections: the reflective surface, as well as the glass that covers it, both mirror the subject.¹ In essence the subject is viewing two images of him/herself, although they appear as one unless the subject studies closely the reflection. In context of this study, it may be helpful to speak of various images/reflections of the Augustinian tradition. It is possible to study each layer of the tradition separately; however, in light of this particular work, it is best to name the layers and allow the tradition to reflect as it does upon a living subject. Furthermore, considering the scope of this project, any reflections caught will be merely fleeting glimpses of a larger, multi-dimensional reality. The author will explore on three layers of the Augustinian Tradition: Augustine of Hippo, the Augustinian Order, and the Augustinian Secondary Education Association. In a sense, each layer of the Tradition could become the subject being reflected. This integrated relationship is important to understand as each aspect is considered. Because the

¹ In photography, this phenomenon is called “ghosting.”

Augustinian Tradition is rooted in the ecclesial community, this chapter will also consider that Church Tradition that has been expressed in select documents of the Second Vatican Council, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry.

AUGUSTINE: OUR HEART IS RESTLESS

The tradition starts at the root: Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 CE). Augustine is probably one of the most influential thinkers and theologians of the West - named one of the four great doctors of the Western Church, the others being Gregory the Great (540-604 CE), Ambrose (337-397 CE) and Jerome (347-420 CE). This influence is in no small part due to the varied reactions to him and his thought throughout history. He and his thought have been both admired and vilified – and everything in between. How, then, could he not have an impact? At present, extant works of Augustine include over two hundred books, over four hundred sermons and over three hundred letters. Arguably one of his best-known works is the *Confessions*.

The *Confessions*, along with being an autobiography of sorts, is also an overheard prayer. When one reads the *Confessions*, one may be surprised with the candor of Augustine. This candor is certainly honest self-revelation and reflection; however, coupled with Augustine's literary skill and dramatic style, it becomes a rhetorical device that engages the reader/listener so that the reader/listener may perceive the deeper nuances of what he is presenting. In this work, one discovers that even though it is written ostensibly to respond to his (Augustine's) critics, the reader is actually overhearing a conversation between God and Augustine (and obviously, only one side of that conversation). Through it all, one discovers Augustine to be a complex man, with some apparent complexes. It is without question that Augustine was brilliant, but he hated

school. He was a handful for his parents (Patricius and Monica), doted upon by both, and yet his relationship with both was ambivalent for most of his life. He fathered a son, named Adeodatus, through an unnamed woman who was the light of his life, and who, because of social convention, he was unable to marry. He was highly sensitive and intellectually keen, some could say somewhat neurotic. He was a seeker, who engaged in ancient Greek philosophy as well as the philosophy of Mani (d. 274 CE), the founder of Manichaeism (which he later tried to refute, while at the same time being influenced by some of its thought even as a Christian); gregarious; fiercely independent, yet he desired and treasured deep relationships, even in his bad behavior. Yes, he was a complicated man of extremes. It almost seems appropriate then that this man who is remembered (maybe a bit too much) for his formulation on original sin is, on the other hand, called the *Doctor of Grace*.

Considering the breadth of Augustine's works, this author will focus on just a few to highlight what have been considered some his foundational experiences/insights and how they have been interpreted and appropriated to this point in time. The author realizes that this approach is potentially problematic because of the breadth and depth of Augustine's corpus. Nonetheless, the reader is invited to consider the aspects presented as reflections in the mirror, catching a glimpse, knowing that there is more than just the reflection.

A running motif throughout the *Confessions* is that of the *journey*. This journey is both the journey within oneself and beyond oneself, the journey to oneself and through oneself, to others and through others, to God. A reader of the *Confessions* can get a sense of this dynamic as Augustine moves to and from places and relationships. His was a restless heart, even after his conversion experience. As one can glimpse, an important aspect of the *Confessions* is that, for

Augustine, his life (and by extension, all human and created life) was intimately bound in the lives of others and in the life of God.²

The *Confessions* is considered to be the first western autobiography, and as such, the author contends that to engage in autobiography, the living of one's life and reflecting upon it, is more than an exercise in narcissism, at least when considering the foundation that is the *Confessions*. Rather, the sweep of one's story is caught up in the sweep of God's story. This is true even when one considers the world as Augustine wrote of it in the *City of God*.³ One needs to consider the *Confessions* a mature work. This is not a daily blog, or diary, or even a journal. This is a deeply reflective work whereby Augustine returns to his life to reflect upon it, and attempts to recontextualize it. As such, there is probably some revisionist history happening, but even that is a way to reflect and make meaning. The human story, whether that is the human self-story or the human group-story, is lived in one's skin, and in a particular time and space.

² The *Confessions* are replete with Augustine's intuition of this integral union. For example, he prays: "Is there any room in me for you, my God? Even heaven and earth, which you have made and in which you have made me – can they even contain you? Since nothing that exists would exist without you, does it follow that whatever exists does in some way contain you? But if this is so, how can I, who am one of these existing things, ask you to come into me, when I would not exist at all unless you were already in me...No, my God, I would not exist, I would not be at all, were you not in me. Or should I say, rather, that I should not exist if I were not in you, from whom are all things, through whom are all things, in whom are all things? (*Confessions* I, 2:2)" "*Confessions*," = Rotelle I/1, 14-15.

Augustine speaks to the scriptural insight of "all in all" in this passage: "Yet all these things which you fill, you fill with the whole of yourself (*Confessions*" I, 3:3 = Rotelle I/1, 15)." This cosmic unity is not the result of an impersonal force, but rather a personal relationship: "...O good and all-powerful God, who care for each of us as though each were the only one, and for all alike with the same tenderness you show to each (*Confessions*" III, 11:19 = Rotelle I/1, 55)."

Finally, in his well-known 'hymn', Augustine prays: "Late have I loved you...you were within, but I outside, seeking there for you...You were with me, but I was not with you...I tasted you... (*Confessions*" X, 27:38 = Rotelle I/1, 203)." He alludes to the reality of being filled with the totality of God, of being within God, and yet not being fully aware – *I was not with you*. However, he speaks to having his appetite whetted, and desiring even more.

³ Though seemingly pessimistic in tone toward the earthly city, Augustine's engagement in the world of politics and religion (both were tightly intertwined) focused his understanding of the incompleteness in the world that reflects the inherent incompleteness within each person. The earthly city is a necessary evil which ultimate destiny is to fail in the advent of the City of God. The author of this study suggests that some of the pessimism results in the latent Manichean tendencies in Augustine. This is not to dismiss the work, but to put it into context. As well, Augustine is writing this as an empire falls. Being the insightful and articulate man that he was, how could he not speak to the paradox that is the human soul writ large in the empire crumbling around him? For many Christians of that time, it gave them hope as they journeyed on their pilgrimage from the City of Man to the City of God.

Essentially, then, Augustine understood at a visceral level, his story, the story, as *incarnation*. To be clear, the author does not use the word *incarnation* solely as a theological word describing the embodiment of the Second Person of the Trinity in Jesus of Nazareth. Certainly, that is a dimension. However, this author is suggesting that the Incarnation proper reveals the modality out of which the human person encounters reality in general, at least within the Christian tradition.⁴ Augustine expresses this in the *Confessions*.

For Augustine, one dimension of meaning-making in his life was his incessant search for “the truth.” After many years of searching for this elusive “truth” – both within himself and outside of himself, he came upon the startling discovery that he was, in a sense, looking only at the outside edges of the mirror.⁵ It was only in the heat of inner turmoil, where he describes “all this argument in my heart raged only between myself and myself”⁶ that the definitive conversion and discovery of the “truth” came about for him.

In the story of his conversion, Augustine and his friend Alypius are in the home of another friend. Augustine speaks of the agitation within his being, as it seems thoughts and questions begin to swirl up to consciousness with even greater intensity, this especially after his various encounters with Ambrose. In his deep agitation, he runs to the adjacent garden, followed by Alypius, and in the garden he struggles. He leaves Alypius and throws himself under a fig tree. In the midst of his inner turmoil, he hears the voice of a child singing a simple song: *Tolle!*

⁴ See #2 above.

⁵ Ancient mirrors were worked brass, pounded to a convex shape, polished so that the center was reflective. The outer edges of a mirror were less refined, and though somewhat reflective, distorted the reflection of the person. To get the clearest reflection, a person needed to focus attention upon the very center of the mirror. The image of the mirror became a robust symbol in the spiritual writings of a number of mystics. See *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Capuchin and Ignatius Brady, OFM, translators, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986) 204, footnotes 2 and 4. In a later work, *Francis of Assisi: Prophet* (New York: New City Press, 2001), Armstrong states that “[t]he ‘mirror’ tradition initially was based on St. Augustine’s varied use of the image especially for the scriptures which, according to him, offered examples or mirrors of holy living” (208).

⁶ “Confessions” VIII, 11:27 = Rotelle I/1, 155.

Lege! Tolle Lege! – Pick it up and read! Pick it up and read! Because he did not notice any children in the area, he took what he heard as a sign. He remembers that he placed the book of the letters of Paul on the bench near Alypius before he left. He returns to that place, takes the Scriptures, opens the book and his eyes settle upon: “[L]et us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.”⁷

After reading this passage, Augustine states: “I had no wish to read further, nor was there need. No sooner had I reached the end of the verse than the light of certainty flooded my heart and all the dark shades of doubt fled away.”⁸ For Augustine this was the defining moment in his journey to the truth. Not that he had arrived, but rather that he finally committed to this particular way.

Even more, the author suggests that Augustine’s journey to grasp the truth was finally understood as “putting on” the truth – incarnating, enfleshing that which he was seeking. In this new understanding, he began to intuit the “humility of God,” and the implications of that

⁷ Romans 13:13-14.

⁸ “Confessions” VIII, 12:29 = Rotelle I/1, 156.

humility.⁹ Here was God, willing to empty God's self into the vagaries of time and space – and this humility of God became the very humanity of God, and this, not only in Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁰

It may seem to the reader that we are spending an inordinate amount of time in situating the incarnating dimension of Augustine and his thought/spirituality. While that might seem true, it is our intent here to reinforce the importance of the Incarnation (the Christ-event) in Augustine's own focus toward relationships, especially friendships in community. In a sense, the Incarnation is the greatest act of deep unity and friendship; and Augustine's conversion was not necessarily a sea change, but rather a push into the arms of the truth, arms he was seeking and attempting to move toward, arms of a friend.¹¹ For Augustine, this integral union/friendship through, with and in Christ interpenetrates all of creation, and embodies all people (especially the poor), and sweeps human life and all of creation into the life of God. This reality he names *Totus Christus*.¹²

⁹ Augustine makes this path to humility clear in the following: "So let us follow the ways he has shown us, especially the *way of humility, which he himself became for us*. He showed the way of humility by his teaching, and he constructed it by suffering for us. He wouldn't suffer, you see, unless he humbled himself. Who could kill God unless God humbled himself? ... But how did he humble himself? John himself tells us: *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us* (Jn1:14)... In order that the Word which could not die might be able to die for us, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Being immortal he took on mortality in order to die for us and by his death kill our death. This is what the Lord did, this is what he offered us. Being great he humbled himself, being humbled he was killed, killed and risen and lifted up on high, in order not to leave us dead in hell, but to lift us up on high in himself in the resurrection of the dead, having lifted us up for now in faith and in the confession of the just.

So he gave us the path of humility. If we keep to it we shall confess to the Lord, and not without reason shall we sing *We will confess to you, O God, we will confess and call upon your name* (Ps 75:1)." ("Sermon 23a," 3-4 = Rotelle II, 69-70), emphasis added. Notice the identification between Christ and the path of humility.

¹⁰ 'Humility' and 'humanity' share the same Latin root, *humus* (dirt, earth). The author suggests that this relationship is the root of the prayer of Augustine in "Soliloquies: Augustine's Interior Dialogue" II, 1:1 (Rotelle: 55): "God, who is always the same, may I know myself, may I know you. That is my prayer." This knowing intimates that deep personal knowledge that one really only may come to know of oneself and (maybe) one's beloved. Augustine also speaks to this humility/humanity connection in several of his sermons on Matthew 25, where Christ answers the question: *Lord, when did we see you?* It is to say at one level, that God-discovery is self-discovery, and self-discovery is God-discovery. At another level, because of the enfleshing that has been spoken of, it is understood that God is embodied most especially (it seems) in the poor.

¹¹ Consider #15 below.

¹² "[For] the Word was made flesh and dwelled among us. The Church is joined to that flesh, and Christ becomes the whole, head and body." "Homilies on the Epistle of John," I/14, 1:2. *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*. Boniface Ramsey, ed. (New York: New City Press, 2008).

Augustine came to understand that the truth he was seeking was Jesus the Christ. Therefore, to know is to know with both mind and heart, and best to say with one's heart-mind, akin to the concept of space-time. The mind and heart, though distinct, are inseparable to Augustine's way of understanding, precisely because the truth is a person, and not merely an object to grasp, or quantifiable facts, or the nimbleness of mind and articulateness to express the object or the facts, in order (oftentimes) to secure one's power over another – whether that be power over ignorance or another person. Rather, the truth that has embraced him, and that he has put on (embraced), implies a dynamic, interpersonal relationship that engages and expands both the mind and heart. This is foundational as he begins his *Confessions* with: “Yet all those things which you fill, you fill with the whole of yourself....Are you not everywhere in your whole being, while there is nothing whatever that can hold you entirely?”¹³

It is to this dynamic relational reality and its implications that we now turn. After his conversion and baptism, Augustine formed a community, modeling that community after the philosophical/academic communities of his time, but also the primitive Church as recounted in the Acts of the Apostles. Considering Augustine's temperament and purpose, it is not a surprise that this first community was comprised of his friends and family. It is in community that Augustine (and the members of the community) expresses that deep friendship that is the Incarnation. In fact, by belonging to the life of God, the members of the community literally belong to each other – and this is not only in the small community at Thagaste.¹⁴

¹³ “Confessions” I, 3:3 = Rotelle I/1, 15. It is this sense of holding all, while not able to hold all, that creates the dynamic tension in other aspects of Augustine's life. For example, one can see the relationship between sin-grace, body-spirit, journey-home, and as mentioned in this work, heart-mind.

¹⁴ Thagaste (present day Souk Ahras, Algeria) was Augustine's boyhood home and the site of the first community which he founded after his baptism.

In the beginning of the *Confessions*, Augustine says: [Y]ou have made us and drawn us to yourself, and our heart is unquiet until it rests in you.”¹⁵ This oft-used quotation illustrates the journey motif – being drawn, unquiet heart, desire for rest. However, the author wishes to focus more on the use of the singular in the description of the heart. He speaks of “our” heart. The singularity of the heart possessed by all reveals an understanding of that belonging explored previously in this work, as well as in Book I, 3:3 of the *Confessions*. This sense of integral union plays against the very real longing and desire that he attributes to the human condition.

BEING AND DOING:

INCARNATION AND PERFORMANCE, INCARNATION AS PERFORMANCE

It may prove useful to take the insight of integral union as Augustine presents it to the issues of his day. For Augustine, the conundrum was that even though we are filled with the fullness of God (and by extension, filled with each other), we still desire and long for the fullness of that fullness. This longing is an effect of our sinfulness (sin being in a sense, a vacuum).¹⁶ Yet, God fills each of us, even in our brokenness, fills the world, even in its brokenness, and we are in God, even in our brokenness. Logically, it *does* make sense: God does who God is. Therefore, the Incarnation makes sense.

¹⁵ “Confessions” I, 1:1 = Rotelle I/1, 14.

¹⁶ The dictum “nature abhors a vacuum” would hold true in this sense. Yet, in some ways, the image falls short, since as presented, God fills us even in our sinfulness. The question arises then: Is there really a vacuum? We may consider a more apt image through an accepted understanding of sin from the Greek, *hamartia* (ἁμαρτία), that of the archer “missing the mark.” This may prove more satisfactory as the longing is about both the intentionality and the result. In a sense, one may hit the target (those things that share the same space as the absolute center), but are not in and of themselves the actual target, the point. It can be presumed that an archer will attempt to hit the mark; it can also be presumed that our desire and our longing is toward the point – God. And, even if one shoots directly opposite, the point of shooting, the sense of intentionality, presumes a choice to not aim at or near the intended target. This may also prove helpful in understanding Augustine’s idea of sin, especially his formulation of original sin, in that another aspect of *hamartia* is that used in Greek tragedies – the fatal flaw of the hero.

Taking this idea to an action many are familiar with, the reader is invited to consider the Eucharist, and what Augustine has to say:

So what you can see, then, is the bread and a cup; that what even your eyes tell you; but as for what your faith asks to be instructed about, the bread is the body of Christ, the cup the blood of Christ....So if you want to understand the body of Christ, listen to the apostle telling the faithful, *You though, are the body of Christ and its members* (1 Cor 12:27). So if it's you that are the body of Christ and its members, it's the mystery meaning you that has been placed on the Lord's Table; what you receive is the mystery that means you. It is to what you are that you reply *Amen*, and by so replying you express your assent. What you hear, you see, is *The body of Christ*, and you answer, *Amen*. So be a member of the body of Christ, in order to make that *Amen* true... *Be what you see, and receive what you are*.¹⁷

A more modern take on this may look like this:

We cannot love God unless we love each other. *We know him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone anymore.* Heaven is a banquet, and life is a banquet too - even with a crust - where there is companionship. We have all known the long loneliness, and we have learned that the only solution is love, and that love comes with community.¹⁸

This author suggests that the 'being' and 'receiving' as Christ is the same insight that Dorothy Day offers in her statement about "knowing." Knowing is another dimension of engagement with the truth. It would suggest that both Augustine and Day have a sense of what it means to be a *member* of the Body of Christ – it is an organic "belonging to" – God and each other.

On the anniversary of his ordination as a bishop, Augustine preached: "Where I'm terrified by what I am for you, I am given comfort by what I am with you. For you I am a bishop; with you, after all, I am a Christian."¹⁹ There is a power in the almost insignificant – in the prepositions – *for* and *with*. The inclusion of "after all" indicates how deeply Augustine

¹⁷ "Sermon 272" = Rotelle III/7, 300-301, emphasis added.

¹⁸ Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness: The Autobiography of the Legendary Social Activist* (1952; reprint, New York: HarperOne, 2009), 285-286, emphasis added.

¹⁹ "Sermon 340," 1 = Rotelle III/9:292.

identifies with, and understands what “putting on Christ” really entails. It is from this “with-ness” that the “for-ness” flows. These two little words are like hinges, fastening a door, and at the same time allowing it to move as necessary. This understanding of Augustine’s will be revisited later in the chapter as it pertains to the Order that carries his name.

Finally, it is possible to move this exploration of the tradition to a more explicit level of performance. In his article, “‘We Are Your Books’: Augustine, the Bible, and the Practice of Authority,”²⁰ Michael Cornelius McCarthy offers an insight to the Word (made flesh) by stating:

We have to work hard, therefore, to remember that in context the efficacy of the word, and thus also its authority, lies within the verbal and dialogical encounter. At the height of his career as bishop, for instance, Augustine addresses an Easter Sunday homily to a group of newly baptized ‘infants’ about the sacraments they had received the previous night. In the course of his sermon, Augustine urges them to put aside the “silly stories” of their pagan past and to concentrate rather on scripture. Since they cannot read the Bible themselves, Augustine tells them: ‘*We here are your books. So pay attention*’ (*Sermon 227*, see Augustine 1992: 254). Although the bishop ostensibly refers to his own duty to read and explain letters to the illiterate, *his self-identification with scripture* as the *one who voices it* underscores a different kind of authority, which calls for a hermeneutics attending more closely to the more interactive context of the Bible’s oral exposition.²¹

Preaching may seem like an individual action; however, the use of “we” provides insight to the performance of the Word, as McCarthy notes: “The Word for Augustine is the Word-Made-Flesh, and the biblical *revelation of that Word occurs in highly interactive, interpersonal space inhabited by creatures of flesh and blood in a communal setting*. There the ‘voice’ is heard.”²² Finally, when considering Augustine’s presentations on the Psalms, McCarthy brings home the central point of incarnation as performance:

²⁰ Michael Cornelius McCarthy, “‘We Are Your Books’: Augustine, the Bible, and the Practice of Authority,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75:2 (2007), 324-352.

²¹ “Sermon 227” = Rotelle, III/6, 254, cited by McCarthy, 332, emphasis added.

²² *Ibid.*, 335.

For Augustine, the psalms are the ‘voice of the whole Christ,’ which actualize the open exchange between God and the church. The dynamics implicit in such a theology lead us far beyond an understanding of exegesis as uncovering the discrete reference behind the biblical signs. As Augustine’s own understanding of the Incarnation deepens, the biblical sign itself does not point to as it embodies the signifying reality (Cameron 1999a: 80). *Those who perform the ‘text,’ in other words, become its living subject.*²³

To Contextualize

There is a certain “democratizing” factor when one considers Augustine in light of the performance aspect of (the) Incarnation in relation to his life and ministry. Whether it was in “picking up and reading” or “preaching,” Augustine “became what he received.” But this was the result of a dynamic, dialogical and interpenetrating, even sacramental, relationship among the Divine, Augustine and the community. This relationship also suggests a more tentative mode of engaging in theology, a tentativeness that is not very often (if ever) associated with Augustine. This tentativeness is not a tentativeness rooted in lack of knowledge, but rather rooted in the understanding of the dynamics of dialogue within a community. McCarthy pointedly states that “although Augustine’s posthumous influence on Christianity is immense and wide ranging, the authority he exercises among his contemporaries is far more modest and contextual.”²⁴

The author of this study concurs with McCarthy’s insights that the reason that such a high number of students of Augustine overstate his influence is because they “approach him as readers of a stable corpus of texts rather than hearers of his spoken words. It is precisely his writings *as writings* that have established the monological potency attached to him.”²⁵ This insight to understanding Augustine may prove valuable as this work progresses. In the dialogical

²³ Michael Cameron, “The Christological Substructure of Augustine’s Figurative Exegesis,” *Augustine and the Bible*, Pamela Bright, ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 74-103 as cited by McCarthy, 338, emphasis added.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 324.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 326.

process that is incarnation, the reader may discover in Augustine a practical theologian offering particular answers to particular questions and issues, not necessarily seeking to answer for the ages. After all, how could he, when he understood the Word as living and active, not just within the text but also within the community, conversation partners all dialoguing together?²⁶ It seems right, then, to hear Augustine say:

Accordingly, dear reader, whenever you are as certain about something as I am go forward with me; whenever you stick equally fast seek with me; whenever you notice that you have gone wrong come back to me; or that I have, call me back to you. In this way let us set out along Charity Street together, making for him of whom it is said, *Seek his face always* (Psalm 105:4). This covenant, both prudent and pious, I would wish to enter into the sight of the Lord our God with all who read what I write, and with respect to all my writings...²⁷

THE ORDER OF SAINT AUGUSTINE:

ONE MIND AND ONE HEART ON THE WAY TO GOD

When speaking of the Order of St. Augustine (Augustinians), one is speaking of an entity that had its beginning in 1256.²⁸ It is important to recognize that Augustine established a community at Thagaste, created another community in Hippo after he was ordained a priest (much to his surprise), and created another community after his ordination as Bishop of Hippo (even more of a surprise).²⁹ This community-founding roots itself back to Sermon 340,³⁰ and his insight of being a bishop for the people, but more importantly a Christian with them.

²⁶ This dialogue intuits the reality of the Incarnation – as expressed in each individual and the community. It could be said that because of humanity’s sharing in the Christ-event, each person and community is also an event, a performance of God.

²⁷ “The Trinity,” I, 1:5 = Rotelle, 68.

²⁸ There is an ongoing conversation over the “beginning” of the Order. The prevailing thought is 1256; however, there are some Augustinian scholars who are suggesting 1244.

²⁹ Augustine did form a community of sorts during the time after his conversion and before his baptism. This community was located in Cassiciacum, near Milan. He gathered family and friends around him in a villa offered by a friend, and enjoyed this time of “holy leisure.”

It would be advantageous to situate these foundations within the events of Augustine's life in order to understand what he did and why. As mentioned in this work, after his baptism, Augustine and some family and friends formed a community in Thagaste. His sole desire was to continue his quest of deepening his relationship with God through the friendship that comes in community. It was on his family property that he created this monastery, surrounded by Adeodatus (who later died), other family, and friends.

During a visit to Hippo during the winter of 391, in order to interview a potential member for the Thagaste community, while at Eucharist in the cathedral, a group of attendees grabbed Augustine and moved him to where the bishop, Valerius, was preaching, and all called for his ordination to the priesthood. Valerius happily obliged. Augustine accepted this surprise, and when one considers his understanding of community life in relation to the Church, it makes sense. His community was to model the early Church. This modeling also included engaging in the ministry of the Church as a community, and as a member, in whatever way called. For indeed, in his understanding, when called by the community (the Church), one is called by Christ. After his ordination, he took a couple of months back at Thagaste to prepare for this change in his life.

Upon his return to Hippo in the early spring, he entered fully into his new ministerial life. However, the tug of community life compelled him to ask Valerius the permission to form a community in Hippo. Valerius agreed, "and thus was born the first urban monastery."³¹ Although there are conflicting accounts, it is said that Valerius surreptitiously ordained Augustine

³⁰ See #19 above.

³¹ Joseph T. Kelley, *Saint Augustine of Hippo: Selections from Confessions and Other Essential Writings, Annotated and Explained* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2010), xxi. This is an important development, as this willingness to go even into the city will influence what will become the Order of Saint Augustine. It should be noted that while bishop, a monastery of women was also founded in Hippo. During the lifetime of Augustine about thirty-five monasteries dotted northern Africa.

coadjutor bishop before the former's death in 395 (a somewhat questionable act since Valerius was not the Metropolitan). When he became bishop, Augustine sold off his family's property, save the house which was for the community, and gave the proceeds to the poor. The life of Bishop Augustine was filled with activity and the comings and goings of those seeking counsel, comfort, and even justice. This activity certainly impacted his monastic community.

Recognizing the disruption to the monastic life that his life as a bishop caused, Augustine moved out, gathered together a community of ordained who shared ministry in the church, and formed a new community.³² This monastery thrived until shortly after his death in CE 430, succumbing finally to the invasions by the Vandals. There were other monasteries formed in this tradition by members of his community who were called to episcopal ministry elsewhere (among them, his friend, Alypius and another friend, Possidius, who also wrote the first biography of Augustine).

After Augustine's death in 430, and the subsequent fall of the Roman Empire, the Augustinian community, like any other institution, adapted in light of the changing social, political and religious realities. Nascent Canon Regular communities that were fleeing to various parts of Europe from Africa established Augustinian monasteries. Also, during the Early Middle Ages, there were small bands of hermits who attempted to live the life set out by Augustine. Their primary focus was solitude and prayer. Most were laymen, and each group had its own founder as such, with very little engagement in the public ministerial life of the Church.

In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council was convened by Innocent III. A far-reaching Council, the canon that is germane to this part of the work is Canon 13, whereby no new orders may be formed. The rationale for this canon is ostensibly not only to curtail confusion among

³² This community and communities like it are the early foundations and roots of the Canons Regular.

people, but also to stem the growth of any inherently heretical groups. The Rules that were accepted as part of this canon were: the Augustinian Rule, the Benedictine Rule, the Carmelite Rule, and the Franciscan Rule. Of course, the various hermits living under the Augustinian Rule presumed themselves safe from any interference or possible suppression. However, the years following Lateran IV found the existence of these hermits tenuous at best. The Church was in full reform-mode, and the existence of these various communities left the church authorities somewhat perplexed; and since the hermit communities didn't seem to fit any pre-conceived idea of a religious order that had been promulgated as of late, they were held suspect.

In 1244 Pope Innocent IV gathered those hermits who were in Tuscany and formed them into a group that functioned as one juridical body as an Order, following the Rule of Augustine. They were known as the Order Hermits of St. Augustine. Finally, in 1256 Pope Alexander IV united all the still-existing small eremitical groups under the auspices of the Hermits; these included those who followed the Rule of Augustine and the Rule of Benedict. This event is known as the *Grand Union*. It is from here that the followers of the Rule of Augustine become fully one Order, part of the Mendicant Movement of the High and Late Middle Ages.

With the development of the Order of St. Augustine from the communities at Thagaste and Hippo to the Grand Union, a brief reflection on the Rule of Augustine is in order.³³ Even though the Order as such is a product of the Mendicant Movement of the Middle Ages, the Rule has been in existence since the early years of Augustine's episcopate. In the case of such a presumed pedigree, one of the first works of the Order, after the Second Vatican Council, in an attempt to go back to its roots, was to date and authenticate as best as possible, the Rule as

³³ To continue on with the development of the Order would be beyond the scope of this work. For a more complete history please see Balbino Rano, OSA, *Augustinian Origins, Charism and Spirituality*, John Rotelle OSA., editor (Villanova: Augustinian Press, 1994).

received to that point in time. In his book on the Rule, Adolar Zumkeller, OSA writes to its authenticity: “Apart from the opening sentence...the text in its entirety is no less authentically Augustinian in style and content than the Saint’s *Confessions* or *City of God*.”³⁴ Zumkeller makes this statement about authenticity on the strength of the studies done by Augustinian scholar Tarcisius van Bavel, OSA, who researched the nearly three hundred extant copies of the Rule, including fifteen from the first hundred years during and since Augustine’s episcopacy. A different question, since the various copies were addressed to men and women groups, was to what type of community was the first Rule given. To this question, Zumkeller relies on the findings and insights of Luc Verheijen, OSA. Zumkeller concurs with Verheijen, who, because of the manuscript tradition, is led to believe that “the rule for men is the original one. He [Verheijen] dates it for good reasons in Augustine’s first years as a bishop and believes it was written for the lay monastery at Hippo.”³⁵

The Rule itself consists of eight chapters. The most telling aspect of the Rule is its flexibility. Though precepts are given, there is always concession toward the need of each individual member. These concessions are the result of the foundational principle which stands at the head of the Rule: “The main purpose for your having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart.”³⁶ There is a sense of movement toward God, seen especially in the Latin phrase *in Deum*. This intentionality reflects that aspect of journey, of pilgrimage, that is a hallmark of Augustine’s spirituality. This sentence alludes to the primitive Church as expressed in the Acts of the Apostles, especially Act 2:42 and 4:32.

³⁴ Adolar Zumkeller, OSA, *Augustine’s Rule* (Villanova: Augustinian Press, 1987), 12.

³⁵ Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Rule*, 13.

³⁶ “The Rule of Our Holy Father Augustine,” I: 3. *Rule and Constitutions of the Order of St. Augustine*; English text prepared by Michael Di Gregorio; (Rome: Pubblicazioni Agostiniane, 2008), 9.

Attesting to the integral nature of union with God and one another, the Rule continues: “Let all of you then live together in oneness of mind and heart, mutually honoring God in yourselves, whose temples you have become.”³⁷ The Rule does not have an explicit ministerial or apostolic component. One could say that it is presumed and understood when one considers the foundation as the early Church as expressed in Acts. One can also infer that this oneness is at its core, God, in each member, and another performance as incarnation. The life of the community is rooted in this oneness of mind and heart, and so the precepts that follow are meant to merely express in concrete ways this oneness.³⁸

The last chapter of the Rule, Chapter VIII, focuses on the observance of the Rule. It notes: “The Lord grant that you may observe all these precepts in a spirit of charity as lovers of spiritual beauty, giving forth the good odor of Christ in the holiness of your lives...And that you may see yourselves in this little book, as in a mirror...”³⁹ It is hard not to refer to Sermon 272 in the understanding of the Rule.⁴⁰ The Rule is embodied, much like the Word, and is revealed in a “highly interactive, interpersonal space inhabited by creatures of flesh and blood in a communal setting. There the ‘voice’ is heard.”⁴¹

To Contextualize

It may seem odd and even unnecessary to recount the history of the Augustinians when one considers the impact of tradition. Wouldn’t this author have served the same purpose by

³⁷ “The Rule,” I: 9. *Rule and Constitutions*, 11.

³⁸ To engage any more deeply into the precepts of the Rule would be unnecessary for the scope of this study. For an introduction to such study please see the cited work by Zumkeller.

³⁹ *The Rule* (VIII: 43-44) “Rule and Constitutions”, 33.

⁴⁰ “Today begins the book which is called the Acts of the Apostles. Anybody who wishes to make progress has the means of doing so. When you assemble in church, put aside silly stories and concentrate on the scriptures. *We here are your books*. So pay attention, and see how the Holy Spirit is going to come at Pentecost...So the Holy Spirit comes, fire after water, *and you are baked into the bread which is the body of Christ. And that’s how unity is signified.*” “Sermon 227” = Rotelle III/6:254-255, emphasis added.

⁴¹ McCarthy, 335.

enumerating various themes, hallmarks or values that the Order professes and presumably live by? Yes. However, to recount the story is to reflect the life of the order in the life of Augustine and vice versa. This is not to say that Augustine is the founder of the Order. It would be disingenuous to consider him that, especially after tracing the history of the Order. Augustine is considered the spiritual Father, and the Order that bears his name simply “one in mind and heart on the way to God.”

But that does beg the question of purpose. First, in considering the charism of the Order, the reader can see that unlike the Franciscans (poverty), the Dominicans (preaching), the Jesuits (teaching), the diocesan clergy (parochial ministry) and many others, the Augustinians do not have a stated ministry or mission within the Rule.⁴² The author suggests that the charism of the Order is simply that of the “baptized community” – church. Rooted in the image of the primitive Church as recounted in Acts, ministry flows from the community and as the community. This is where Augustine’s insight on his role of bishop is understood most keenly as a community. The Augustinian community, like Augustine, is called to be open and available to serve as the Church

⁴² A charism is a gift for the larger baptized community. This gift may very well be articulated in the Rule and expanded on in the Constitutions of a particular community. However, one must also consider a perceived charism understood by non-professed members of a community. A perceived charism is not one that stands in opposition to the expressed charism, but rather, because it is either more accessible or more idealistic, is considered valuable and raised up for emulation; therefore the perceived charism, is the “charism received.” For example, in the Later Rule (1223), St. Francis of Assisi states that “The rule and life of the Friars Minor is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of their own, and in chastity (“The Later Rule,” *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Capuchin and John Foley, OFM, editors; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982.), 136. He understands what he is offering the Church. The brothers who commit to this way of life understand to a greater and lesser extent what they are offering the Church. At this point in history, there seems to be a leaning toward the idea of *minority*, an identification and solidarity with the poor, which does include the idea of poverty. However, almost from the beginning because of the pull of Francis’ personality and witness, many believers and non-believers will offer at least a “short-hand” version of the charism of the Franciscans – the charism received – poverty. Francis is agreed to have followed the Gospel with heroic zeal; for many, his being called *alter Christus* is a statement of fact. However, the author suggests that he is accepted as *alter Christus* precisely because of a term of endearment from the larger community: *il Poverello* (the Little Poor One). In a sense, then, a charism is a two-way (multi-way) exchange of gift – the gift given, and the gift received, the concomitant expression of that gift.

needs and calls. Simply put, an Augustinian can say in the spirit of Augustine: For you, I am a “minister,” and with you, after all, I am a Christian.⁴³

AUGUSTINIAN SCHOOLS: CHRISTIAN FAITH COMMUNITIES

The study of tradition moves this work toward one particular ministry: secondary education. The *Handbook of the Augustinian Secondary Education Association* (ASEA) will be the primary document on which this section will be focused. The *Handbook* consists of twenty-eight pages presenting its (the Association’s) mission statement and purpose; the structure of the Association; the organization, mission and vision of Augustinian schools; Augustinian core values; the Augustinian Values Institute (AVI); the Student Augustinian Values Institute (SAVI); Augustinian schools and the New Evangelization; Institutional Identity and Expression of the Core Values; Outstanding Faculty Awards; and the Seal of the Augustinian Order. For a brief work, it covers many areas in the life of an Augustinian school.

The author proposes that the *Handbook* is the context out of which Augustinian schools, including St. Rita High School, ground and express themselves and their living and learning, and this, within an Augustinian framework. An important designation for Augustinian schools is that of *Christian faith communities*⁴⁴ where “everyone – staff, faculty, parents, students, alumni – is nurtured by and encouraged to share in a common faith and grace-life in Christ.”⁴⁵ This fundamental premise is based upon the life of Augustine, the Rule, as well as the lived experience of the friars. This author suggests that “in Christ” reflects the incarnational and

⁴³ This author suggests that the charism and purpose are intertwined, performed, one with the other, and thus the Constitutions of the Order can state: “The purpose of the Order consists in this, that united harmoniously in brotherhood and spiritual friendship, we seek and worship God and work for the service of his people. In this way, we share in the Church’s work of evangelization bringing the Good News to the whole world ‘so that we may transform the world from within.’ This is our witness.” “Constitutions” (I: 13); *Rule and Constitutions* 47.

⁴⁴ *Handbook*, 8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

performance dimension of the Augustinian Tradition. But how does the school express the tradition so that it can be understood? Or is it better to ask: How does the school understand the tradition so that it may be expressed? What language or languages does it use?

CORE VALUES AS SHARED LANGUAGE

According to the *Handbook*, “the Core Values are a critical element of the day to day life of the organization...the Core Values have an impact on every member. They can shape, inform, and inspire the daily activities and culture of the organization.”⁴⁶ Continuing on, it states that “to be effective, (however), the core values, whatever they are, must be...true...easy to express...have multiple layers of expression.”⁴⁷ The document then presents the understanding of value within the context of the ASEA and Augustinian schools. Since this is a key point, and one we will explore more fully, the citation is quoted in full: “To ‘value’ something is to hold it dear, give it priority, and look for ways to enhance it. ‘Good’ values enhance our human experience and contribute to the common good. In moral life, they represent our best strivings and aspirations. In professional life they are expressed in standards of excellence and service.”⁴⁸

The *Handbook* speaks of “congruence between practice and foundational positions”⁴⁹ and *alignment* “to suggest the ways the ordinary and essential school activities may be done with greater intentionality.”⁵⁰ It also states that “values become ‘real’ only as they are put into practice.”⁵¹ We will explore this statement later in this chapter. This move toward codification of Augustinian Core Values seems to have been as a result, direct or otherwise, of the decline of

⁴⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

those entering religious life, as presented by John Sanders, OSA, and presented in the *Handbook*.⁵² The imperative question was: *How do we hand on and form others in the Augustinian Educational Philosophy?*

Ultimately, three values surfaced as the core values of Augustinian education: Truth, Unity, and Love. These values presented themselves through “reflection on the life and teachings of Augustine, the Orcasitas letter⁵³ and the US Provincials’ vision paper.”⁵⁴ These values “are the signature set of over-arching and integrative aspects of Augustine’s life and teaching. They represent life-long characteristics of Augustine’s life and represent his window on the Gospel realized in his words, experience, and practice.”⁵⁵ At core, the “Augustinians are engaged in the search for God through the pursuit of truth. They seek union with God through love and union with God and others in the school faith community. This Vision of Education unites Augustinians as they fulfill their educational ministry and demonstrate their core values.”⁵⁶

Truth-Unity-Love

The **Truth** (*Veritas*) that we seek in an Augustinian school is a truth that we seek *together*, “we search as members of a community.”⁵⁷ This vision moves us to recognize that “the goal of education is advancement toward union with God, who is truth”⁵⁸ where “its primary purpose is for the exchange between students and teachers which leads to wisdom and spiritual truth.”⁵⁹ It is in this exchange that Augustinians “attempt to free our students from excessive

⁵² Ibid., 13.

⁵³ Miguel Angel Orcasitas, OSA, “The Augustinian School and the New Evangelization,” in *Handbook* 21-23. Orcasitas wrote this document as Prior General, presenting it 22 October 1993.

⁵⁴ *Handbook*, 15.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

occupation with the material world, to challenge them through questioning, to help them pursue the greater complexities of truth within themselves, and to offer our own insights to truth learned through our own experience and contemplation.”⁶⁰

According to the *Handbook*, **Love** (*Caritas*) is understood as a “pursuit and a practice”⁶¹ where “love of God and love of neighbor are intimately united.”⁶² The educational/formational process is “seeking union with God [that] involves not only the intellect’s pursuit of truth, but also the heart’s pursuit of God through love.”⁶³

Education in the Augustinian tradition then is an act of love as shared by a community of teachers and students, all disciples of the Christ, the Interior Teacher. “The practical conclusion is that an Augustinian school constitutes a Christian faith community in which everyone – staff, faculty, parents, students, alumni – is nurtured by and encouraged to share in a common faith and grace-life in Christ.”⁶⁴ **Unity** (*Unitas*) is that practical conclusion, that practical love that moves the community as one mind and one heart to God.

So rather than abstract ideas and noble concepts, these values are rooted in the very real life and journey of St. Augustine, whose prayer from his *Confessions*, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord; and our hearts are restless until they rest in you,”⁶⁵ has become the framework for Augustinian education. This admission of and surrender to the pilgrimage of seeking God as a community colors every aspect of an Augustinian’s life.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ “Confessions” I: 1, as quoted in the *Handbook* 7. This author suggests that there are practical implications in using the plural “hearts” as opposed to the original singular “heart.”

⁶⁶ The Augustinians have extended the understanding of who is an Augustinian as such. Those engaged in the life and mission of the friars are considered to be Augustinians. Of course, not all are vowed, but faculty, staff, parents, students, parishioners, etc. who are part of the community, are part of the community.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE CONTEXT:

COMMUNITY AND RITUAL, COMMUNITY AS RITUAL

As has been presented previously in this work, the Augustinian charism, as such, is the baptized community, and the ministry that flows from it. This naturally moves this work to a consideration of being rooted within the larger ecclesio-liturgical tradition (a reality which the young men of St. Rita High School may or may not fully experience and/or appreciate). Since this study is ostensibly one that focuses on ritual, it seems appropriate to turn to the first document of the Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. In that document, the bishops speak of “that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of liturgy.”⁶⁷ In fact, they go on to say that “this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else.”⁶⁸ The author suggests that this primary focus must be considered in light of the Introduction to the aforementioned document:

This sacred Council has several aims in view: it desires to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church. The Council therefore sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy.⁶⁹

It is this first paragraph of the document in which the Council expresses its belief as to why the liturgy is the source and summit of Christian life. In essence, the liturgy is the Christian life. The author of this study suggests that the subsequent foundational documents - *Dei Verbum*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Lumen Gentium* – expand, in some way, upon what “fully conscious, active

⁶⁷ “Sacrosanctum Concilium,” (14), *Vatican Council II, Vol. I*.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., (1).

participation” looks like. The documents that are promulgated later in the Council attempt to speak to more particular aspects of church life.

From the larger ecclesio-liturgical tradition, we move to a more local tradition. After Vatican II the United States bishops created the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) as one way to engage with the sea change that was the Council. The bishops, as a college and as leaders in their own dioceses, have attempted to articulate and express the vision of Vatican II. Many of their decrees and pastoral letters have impacted liturgical practice (the celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation in new forms, communion in the hand as well as offering both the bread and the cup, etc.). Some of these changes have not been without controversy, especially the inclusion of women in active ministerial roles. But taking their cue from the Council constitutions as well, they took to heart their role in speaking to the major social issues of their time, even to today: abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, racism, war, poverty, family, sexuality, environment, and economics. Their documents and their statements on these subjects were also met with greater and lesser enthusiasm, as well as criticism.

There is one document that seems to connect the liturgical and social aspects of the tradition, and to this author’s mind, it is a somewhat forgotten document. In the document *Fulfilled in Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly*, the bishops reflect upon the preaching role of the presiding celebrant at Mass. Ostensibly this document is a reflection for those in the liturgical role of preaching. However, this author suggests that it also offers valuable insights to the conversation that is this study.

In recapitulating the *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, the document *Fulfilled in Your Hearing* states that “the proclamation of the Gospel is primary. The other duties of the priest are to be considered properly presbyteral to the degree that they support the proclamation

of the Gospel.”⁷⁰ In considering what “proclamation” is, the document continues that preaching “can cover a wide variety of activities in the church. A life of quiet faith and generous loving deeds is proclamation; the celebration of the Eucharist is the proclamation ‘of the death of the Lord until he comes.’ But a key moment in the proclamation of the Gospel is preaching.”⁷¹ Recognizing the different contexts and modes of preaching as well as the different ministers, it states “the proclamation of the Word of God is the responsibility of the entire Christian community by virtue of the sacrament of baptism.”⁷²

This author believes the previous statement is pivotal in understanding the integration that speaks to the ecclesio-liturgical tradition as in the move of *Fulfilled in Your Hearing* not to the priest nor to the homily, but rather to the assembly. The articulation of this insight is not perfect, as the section that is presumably focused on the assembly speaks much on the preacher. However, the document states that “[t]he community that gathers Sunday after Sunday comes together to offer God praise and thanksgiving or at least to await a word that will give a meaning to their lives and enable them to celebrate Eucharist.”⁷³ It goes on to say that, “[t]he preacher acts as a mediator, making connections between the real lives of people who believe in Jesus Christ but are not always sure what difference faith can make in their lives, and the God who calls us into ever deeper communion with himself and with one another.”⁷⁴

But if we take seriously that by virtue of baptism, preaching is “the responsibility of the entire Christian community,” the community itself is the mediator of the message. Therefore, even though the bishops suggest that the document may be a beneficial tool for dialogue, this

⁷⁰ *Fulfilled in Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1982) 1.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 2.

⁷³ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

author proposes that the gathering of the baptized, whether that is at Eucharist or any other Christ-centered (read communal) gathering, becomes the privileged place because there is “sharing of personal experiences, of expectations and frustrations, and...mutual support”⁷⁵ which will be in itself “the renewal of preaching in the church today.”⁷⁶ By extension, if there is renewal of preaching, there is a renewal of the community, and vice versa.

The document speaks of “the community that gathers Sunday after Sunday.” Certainly the writers of *Fulfilled in Your Hearing* are not suggesting that these are the only ones, who when present, offer praise to God, and seek some meaning in their lives. There are many who gather **not** Sunday after Sunday. How does the community preach to them, and vice versa? There are also those who don’t necessarily feel heard or valued within the community, whether they gather Sunday after Sunday or not. These questions are important in order to recognize how the community is incarnating its baptismal identity and mission or not, how or how not it is living out those values as articulated in foundational church documents.

Turning now to the subject of this study: How do the underlying values from Vatican II and *Fulfilled in Your Hearing* play out in the lived experience of young people? A more “youth-directed” cluster of values that are expressions of the Vatican II experience and the attempted integration of that experience within an American context are offered through the 1997 document of The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, *From Age to Age: The Challenge of Worship with Adolescents*. In this document, the writers make a clear connection between the charism of adolescents (vision, questioning, service, enthusiasm, prophecy) and the “Principles for Vibrant Worship with Adolescents” which are celebrating youth involvement in

⁷⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

the life and mission of the church; inviting and accepting their authentic participation; attending to the larger assembly in respect to age and culture; rooting and fostering their spiritual life and prayer in a relationship with God; effectively preaching the word; and having a youthful spirit in music and song.⁷⁷

One issue that must be considered in light of the gifts that young people offer and the values presented for vibrant worship is how to integrate between the two as well as how to integrate worship and daily life. What does “fully conscious and active participation” look like in liturgy and in their lived experience? The documents are useful; however, we must return to what this author considers a principal insight of *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*: the *community* is the mediator of the message (emphasis added).

As this study considers youth, it may be even more appropriate to say: the communities are the mediators of the messages.⁷⁸ Certainly not without its own complexity, are those values (not always congruent within a particular source or between sources) that are spoken of and witnessed to by family, friends, organizations, media, etc. These values were brought into greater relief through the survey answers of a select group of students at St. Rita High School and discussed in Chapter 2.

To be sure, young people are exposed to a matrix of values and value sources (communities) from which to choose and live. These values are expressed in the various activities into which young people choose to put or not put their energies. In the case of the locus of this study, St. Rita of Cascia High School, the author also suggests that the rituals that these

⁷⁷ See *From Age to Age: The Challenge of Worship with Adolescents*, (National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Winona: St. Mary's Press, 1997) 48-75.

⁷⁸ This is not to say their population is the only population that shares in multiple communities, with multiple messages.

young men are engaged in reveal their particular value matrices as well as shed light on those value matrices which they do not necessarily value, and, in fact, may devalue.

RECONTEXTUALIZING

As mentioned previously, the author will explore at least two statements in the *Handbook*, and this through the interplay of mimetic theory and a performance theory. The *Handbook* states on page 12: “To ‘value’ something is to hold it dear, give it priority, and look for ways to enhance it. ‘Good’ values enhance our human experience and contribute to the common good. In moral life, they represent our best strivings and aspirations. In professional life they are expressed in standards of excellence and service.” It also states on the same page that “values become ‘real’ only as they are put into practice.”

At first blush, these statements appear reasonable, and that they are, as values are multi-valanced realities. In the case of the core values, members are called to hold and enhance this “thing” named as *Truth*, or *Unity* or *Love*. Yet, if the Augustinian Tradition is seen as a paradigm of valuing, another dimension of the values arises. *Truth* is a person; *Unity* is a person; *Love* is a person. These values are possessed by God in their fullness, are not only attributes of God, but the very essence of the Divine, dimensions of God’s “person”ality. These values are expressed as Trinity, incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth, extended to and through the community through the Holy Spirit.

By reconsidering values from this perspective, they become not only an object of desire, but also the desiring itself. Values can be perceived as action. And what is valued, what is desired, is the One who is Truth, Unity, Love. This moves us into the realm of mimetic theory,

and the role of desire.⁷⁹ What is desired is not the thing possessed, but rather the person who is possessing. This calls into question the statement “values become real only as they are put into practice.” This author contends that the desire/desiring itself is valuable because when placed within the Augustinian (Christian?) context, the person being desired (valued) is God. In the same context, but from the more personal interactive perspective, to desire another is to value them as one who possesses what the one desiring already possesses and yet longs for, akin to a magnetic pull. Inherent in the naming of the longing is to recognize what one values. This author proposes that longing is a dimension of truth in the naming of the longing, unity in the inchoate understanding that this is part of the human condition, and, love in its very desiring and reaching out, reaching beyond, reaching within.

The human condition is such that incarnation is part and parcel of existence. It is true that values are to a certain degree practiced (desiring is a type of practicing) by the very fact that they are desired. To engage with values at a performance level moves one to a modifying of sorts of the values. Rather than the value enhancing life (simply the “pure” *Truth*), the community could enhance the value in its engagement with it, in its own expression of the value, not just as a conversation partner, but also as the expression itself, as a dialoguing community. What McCarthy says of the Word-made-flesh, this author posits is also true for the integrating valuing engaged in by the community in that it “occurs in a highly interactive, interpersonal space inhabited by creatures of flesh and blood in a communal setting.”⁸⁰ Integrating valuing provides a way to name dimensions to the value, dimensions that surface from the community dialogue (which includes personal interactions, and actions in ministry or otherwise). The author suggests

⁷⁹ Please refer to the discussion of mimetic theory in the chapter entitled *Ritual: I Know It When I See It*.

⁸⁰ McCarthy, 335.

that this integral valuing is different than what the *Handbook* describes as “Markers of the presence of the value, what does (the value) look like?”⁸¹ Markers seem to imply the effects of the particular value. This is important; however, as mentioned previously, the author is suggesting value as *action*. Thus, in this alternative formulation, **Truth** could be *truth-telling, truth-seeking, questioning, etc.*, **Unity** could be *unity-building, community-sharing, etc.*, and **Love** could be *befriending, brothering or sistering, embodying, etc.* Of course, the core values, since they are a Person, are living and active, expressed in the life and ministry of the community and its individual members.

This way of thinking does not necessarily suggest a change in the core values. What is being proposed is to use more fully the Augustinian dynamic, a dialogical and communal method, so that static core values may become an act of engaged integrating valuing where the community performing the values “become[s] [the values’] living subject”⁸², precisely because this integrating valuing “occurs in highly interactive, interpersonal space inhabited by creatures of flesh and blood in a communal setting.”⁸³ To the author this could move Augustinian communities (schools and otherwise) to a more authentic engagement with God and each other, and truly perform, reveal, and en flesh the valuing that is being “one mind and one heart on the way to God.”

⁸¹ *Handbook*, 16-17.

⁸² McCarthy, 338.

⁸³ McCarthy, 335.

CHAPTER 4
WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS,
THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO¹

Using McCarthy's previously invoked insight that "revelation of [the] Word [-Made-Flesh] occurs in highly interactive, interpersonal space inhabited by creatures of flesh and blood in a communal setting... [and that it is] [t]here the 'voice' is heard,"² we now enter into a dialogue that will hopefully offer new insights to the role of values, the power and effect of ritual in valuing, and how ritual is transformative in light of values. Furthermore, using the earlier image of the mirror, we will consider how these aspects converge (reflect) and diverge (refract) when placed in conversation with each other. Relying upon the Whiteheads and their image of a dialogue between three conversation partners, the three conversation partners in this thesis-project will be the experience of the young men of St. Rita High School as revealed in the survey, ritual theory as it is understood in performance as well as mimetic theory, and finally Augustinian Tradition.

¹ Matthew 6:21.

² McCarthy, 335

WHAT IS OF VALUE?

In Chapter 2, having considered the self-reported experiences of the St. Rita students, it appears that relationships are a priority for the young men who took the survey. These relationships run the gamut of those formed during a Kairos retreat, to being on an athletic team, to those that are connected to family and friends outside of school. All of these relationships influence their value frameworks. Through the insights of ritual studies, we find that performance/praxis theory coupled with mimetic theory (theory-complex) presents value as desire, an apparently inborn drive that we ritualize from a very early age. This desire moves toward a change in relationship, generally for the benefit of the one who is desiring (though not always), and this change in relationship can have either positive or negative motives or results. Also, this desiring can either have primarily an individual or group locus. Finally, when we consider the Augustinian Tradition, we see that, at least from one credible perspective of Augustinian education, there are three values named: truth, unity and love. However, along with that mode of naming values, there is an overarching - though sometimes unnamed - concern for the value of integrating (i.e., as revealed in the *Confessions*) or incarnation. From an Augustinian perspective, this integrating, as personal as it is, would be done within the context of community.

REFLECTIONS

As we consider what is of value, it is important to consider how each dimension reflects upon and impacts the other. Turning first to the reflective relationship between the experience of the young men and that of performance/praxis and mimetic theory, we see that at the core, the two are in agreement. Fundamentally, the value is relationship.

There are ways that the two augment each other in regard to relationship. It is to this positive aspect that we now turn. This author proposes that using the operative questions that were offered in each of the areas (although not always in the same chapter) could be one viable way to engage each of the conversation partners.

It was suggested earlier in this project that among the many questions young men are probably asking, five are germane to the conversation at hand: *Who am I? Where am I going? Who am I going with? Am I valued?* and finally, *So what?* These are questions that strike to the heart of self-identity, meaning and relationships. But these questions are seldom (if ever) verbalized. However, given the opportunity to look at themselves, vis-à-vis Kairos, taken outside of their normal daily situation, we find that contrary to much of the machismo and bravado that often exists among adolescent boys in the US, they do value their relationships – and these relationships are not just the expected friendships. We also found that even though winning championships was offered the most as the best thing that happened at St. Rita High School, and this among non-athletes and non-participants as well, the experience of Kairos and the experience of friendship from athletic involvement were on a par.

At another level, surprising and yet not, was the value that the young men placed on the importance of involvement. This involvement was evident, and somewhat expected, in the extracurricular area, including both athletic and non-athletic involvement; and at least a third of those surveyed agreed, at least in theory, to the importance of involvement in the religious life of the school. This involvement was both in the planning and participation of the religious events. An interesting note was the large number of respondents who wore explicitly religious/devotional objects given to them,

especially in their first week at St. Rita, during the *Augustinian Experience* for first year students.³

Without impugning the religious motivations behind their wearing of these articles, this author suggests that a factor toward the wearing is a sense of belonging to the larger community, especially since the wearing of these articles is not mandatory. This belonging has a few layers. As mentioned previously in this work, belonging can be a certain “sense of being at home” even in a difficult situation. And sometimes putting on something, gives someone that sense of belonging, as we have seen in the impact of the words of Paul (putting on Christ) in the life of Augustine. However, there is another sense of “putting on.” That would be the sense of faking it – in some way lying or hiding.

This moves us to what could be considered the underbelly of the survey results. The value of relationship could lead some to be putting on their allegiance. This is not a necessarily sinister intention. Some may want to fit in, and conversely, not stick out as being different. As well, there could be the danger of “groupthink” when things are put on unreflectively, even reflexively, which may indicate a sense of feeling threatened or at least unsafe. As well, there is the “putting on” that though faking it, is a jesting, a joking. This author suggests that the survey event, as well as the responses, reveal these multiple layers.

Turning now to performance/praxis theory and mimetic theory (called the theory-complex in this work), we can see that performance/praxis, when coupled with mimetic theory, provides a similar context of relationship, especially in the area of desire. There seems to be a push-pull when it comes to the questions *Who am I?* and *Who am I going*

³ The *Augustinian Experience* is a weeklong event that assists in orienting the new students to the culture and values of St. Rita High School; this through activities, presentations, prayer experiences, and meeting upperclassmen as well as their teachers.

with? These two are integrally connected when tied together with the question *Am I valued?* We can take this to the level of desire. *Am I desirable?* and *What/Who do I desire?* This is not necessarily a sexual question; however, it could be considered a question about sexuality, especially in the understanding of masculinities, and how that understanding influences what it means to be an embodied male person, desired and desiring in that embodiment. At a more human level, it touches upon all the relationships that the young men have or had.

As well, when one considers performance/praxis theory in light of mimetic theory, and the natural selection (self- and otherwise), that occurs in the pairing and grouping of friends, and especially teams, it seems that when one's "brothers" become rivals for a particular role in the community, on the team, etc., the dynamic of scapegoating can become activated. This author suggests that racial, homophobic and misogynistic slurs are signs of this dynamic. The offensive comments in the survey may point to that. However, without engaged dialogue, that is speculation.

But what of the seemingly genuine positive regard for their classmates that was expressed in the survey, the sense of unity? This paradox could be the paradox of adolescence. This is where the questions *Who am I?* and *Who am I going with?* reveal the push-pull that was intimated. It is in this dynamic that we can see a bit more clearly the threshold in which these young men find themselves, a threshold that many may find difficult to navigate, and so put on other personas, ways to express their desires, desires about which they may not even be aware.

Having reflected upon the experience of the students with the use theory-complex, we now turn to considering the reflective dynamic between the theory-complex and the

Augustinian tradition. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the values at play (core values) in the tradition as expressed in the educational ministry of the Augustinians are truth, unity and love. However, these are not objects to be attained, rather, encounters with the One who is the embodiment of the values, and in fact, is the values themselves.

This incarnational dimension connects well with the performative aspect of the theory-complex. Also, when one considers the theological event that is the Incarnation, it appears to offer insight to the mimetic dimension as well, at least in the role of desire (love). As well, it is in this relationship that we can see how the questions *Who am I?* and *Who am I going with?* move toward *Where am I going?* The question, *Where am I going?* can be considered in at least two ways. In one sense, this question can be of someone who is not sure where to go, maybe lost on the way, or even confused as to the direction, the point, the goal. This aspect of the question can be asked of oneself or another. The other dimension of this question speaks to an intentionality, a planned decision about one's direction and purpose. This aspect of the question is usually a self-directed question, a purpose-driven question. This author suggests that both dimensions of this question speak to the meaning of life. Speaking to the meaning of life, to purpose, we see this question expressed most fully in the area of praxis in the theory-complex. This points to a more integrated understanding of the question *Am I valued?* That is to say that embodied value moves toward meaning, and meaning is value-in-action.

Finally, and in a sense returning to where we started, we come to the relationship between the Augustinian tradition and the experience of the students at St. Rita High School. In this relationship, we see that the young men have the ability to verbalize and oftentimes actualize the values. From first blush, it appears that for the most part, the

students get it. However, the survey event and even some of the answers reveal that there is a long way to go in “putting on” the values that the community espouses. In a sense, that “lack” proves the incarnational dimension of the values in that this is a *process* of putting on, of becoming what the students are encouraged and challenged to integrate in their own lives.

As mentioned before, the tradition also speaks to the meaning-making that is part of the journey. The fact that a large number of respondents spoke to the values having an impact on their lives in the future offers an insight as to the everyday ubiquity of the values rather than simply the statement of the values. A deficiency in the survey was following up on the how of that impact.

REFRACTIONS

We now turn to the refractive dimension of this conversation. Although the areas that we have considered above do complement and augment each other in many different ways, they also challenge each other. This author suggests that the very areas of reflection are the roots of the refraction; or better, by looking more closely at the reflections, we begin to see the ghosting, those things that, if not looked at closely, seem fine, but are really a bit out of focus and misaligned. This author suggests that the unanswered question of *So what?* may be able to assist in this dimension of the conversation.

We start again, considering the relationship between the students’ experiences and the theory-complex. As was pointed out earlier, it is the aspect of relationships that ties these two conversation partners together. We have intimated that relationships are important in both areas. The divergence seems to come in the intentionality and quality of

relationships that develop. The biological rootedness of desire tends toward a benefit, and in essence, though we say that the theory-complex values relationships, the relationships are basically ethics-neutral.⁴ This could be seen as a downside to the theoretical framework presented above in chapter 1. However, such a framework could provide a kind of a foil in the way one could interpret the value of the relationships from which one is seeking benefit. Because this framework speaks to ethics in its silence on ethics, it has the potential to challenge, if not compel one, to consider the ethical implications of one's relationships and why those relationships are valued. It is because of this engagement, that the author suggests that possible answers to the question of *So what?* are the questions *How human is this desire?* as well as *How beneficial is this desire for human beings, including the one being desired?* These questions, not only value-laden but also more pointedly ethical, can challenge the young men who choose to de-value another, especially in light of the penalties usually exacted for the devaluing of another (at least when caught). What was the benefit of saying or doing what was said or done, considering the personal, interpersonal and communal outcome?

In light of the survey responses as well as the survey event itself, the experience of the young men offers a certain authenticity as to their own multiple contexts and the threshold that is adolescence. They have never been adolescents before. This is a new experience, and their relational matrices are adapting to their new physical and psychosocial realities. In a sense, do they really know what is of benefit? Their desires are often – maybe even mostly – tied up in short-term impulses and episodic events. So

⁴ While other species might "value" different actions or others of their species, they do not have the reflective frameworks for considering the ethics of such valuing.

intrinsically they know that they tend toward relationships and belonging, but their judgment as to which relationships to nurture is still in the process of development.

It is in this situation that we now turn to the relationship between the tradition and the theory-complex. If the theory-complex could be seen as ethics-neutral, the Christian and Augustinian tradition is necessarily not only value-laden but imbued with a Judeo-Christian ethic. This is not to set them up as a dichotomy, but rather as a point of reference, for this author suggests that both offer similar challenges to the experiential piece, especially in light of their divergences from each other.

As mentioned, both the theory-complex and the tradition value incarnation, or embodiment. The incarnational thrust in the theory-complex tended toward desire. Because of the mimetic dimension, this could provide a benefit to both the desirer and the one desired, or one or the other. However, this desiring can also be frustrated, leading to the scapegoating mechanism. In the tradition, there is also a sense of incarnation/embodiment. However, the value expression is not so much value-neutral, and really not even value-laden, as personal. This moves the values from an objective “desire” to a subjective acting-out, or better, becoming the value.

We now turn to the last relationship to consider: the tradition and the experience of the young men. As mentioned, the values espoused by the Augustinian schools are truth, unity and love. *So what?* So what of truth if there continues to be academic dishonesty? So what of unity if there continues to be racism, heterosexism, and misogyny? So what of love if there continues to be bullying? The experiences of the young men challenge the espoused values, take the core values to task. They seem to have gotten (received) the core values without “getting” the core values.

What of the tradition, then? What does it have to say? Once again, we must consider the insight of Augustine in “putting on” Christ and what that meant for him. The values, if done in the context of incarnation, of putting on, become an experience of becoming the value, rather than appropriating the value, this especially when we consider that God is the fullness of Truth, Unity and Love, and so it is impossible to possess God. Because of this insight, the question *So what?* moves to the point of meaning-making, rather than meaning-recognizing, being the value instead of merely speaking of value. It is from this process of considering values that we now move to the role of ritual in valuing, or more precisely, asking the question *What is the power and effect of ritual?*

WHAT IS THE POWER AND EFFECT OF RITUAL?

In attempting to explore the question about the power and effect of ritual, we will first need to come to a common understanding of *power*. Power is *potential*, it is the innate ability to act or influence (oneself, others or one’s environment). In short power is energy. In discussing this potential in light of ritual, we need to understand that ritual is an exercise in power; it is an unlocking of energy, and based on the trajectory of this study, this author suggests that the energy (power) behind ritual is desire.

The effects of ritual may or may not necessarily be tied to the power (desire) being exercised or expressed. In fact, the desire for good or for ill could actually be stymied or assisted (and therefore, modified) by powers (desires) and circumstances outside the desirer’s control. The effect of ritual will also be within the desirer and (more than likely) the people or environment impacted by the desire. It is in this area of effect that the discussion moves to an ethical plane, precisely because personal relationships are involved.

REFLECTIONS

We begin once again with considering the convergences between the experience of the young men of St. Rita High School and what we are calling the theory-complex. Remembering that a principal convergence of values between these two areas was that of relationships, a question that comes to mind is *How are these relationships ritualized?* It could be said that the power of ritual for these young men lies in the desire for *relationships-in-action*. Returning to the survey, there is a marked inclination toward engagement and involvement. As mentioned earlier, the young men spoke of friendships and brotherhood, especially in light of their shared activities. It could be suggested, then, that the activities in which they are engaged provide the arena out of which they ritualize their values. But aren't a number of these arenas already circumscribed with a certain relational paradigm? Are the students just "fitting in" to a pre-determined set of relationships?

It appears that in this situation, there is value congruence. That is to say, the students have accepted and are comfortable within the parameters of the various arenas because they share the similar values. Although not always a perfect fit, there is a certain tolerance for variance within the contexts. In short, there is a sense of "putting up with" some things for a larger goal, the benefit outweighs the deficit. It could be suggested that such is the reason that many are attending this particular school, focusing on these particular areas, engaged in these particular relationships and relationship activities.

Yet what of those rituals that, though not immediately attractive to the young men, they engage because there is a mandatory nature to them? This author does not only mean religious rituals, although that will be an example, but also the larger educational

environment, especially classes, even the dress code. Of course, students know that they are required to attend classes; but why did they choose St. Rita High School? What about the culture of the school attracted them? And if it wasn't the culture (value matrix in all of its complexity) of the school, what was it that brought them to this place? The answers to these questions could be telling, are undoubtedly pluriform and probably should be pursued in subsequent studies.

Nonetheless, the new students are present at St. Rita High School, and one of the first things in which they participate is the *Augustinian Experience* as a class. It is during this time that they are given the yearly school pin, an Augustinian cross on a piece of string so that they can wear it, as well as the Our Mother of Good Counsel scapular.⁵ We return to the value that is relationships, the putting on (and the various ways to interpret that idea), and we can suggest that there is something in the ritual at the *Augustinian Experience*, coupled with the ritual (and threshold) of starting high school, and it appears that one of the principal effects of this complexus of symbols and rituals is the aura of a sense of belonging.

Such belonging, however, is a two-edged sword. At the same time, while becoming part of the larger St. Rita High School experience, where they experience value congruence, these young men also discover competing values and rituals at play as they seek to find their place – in class academically, in activities, and on the athletic field.

These young men, who with one voice claimed themselves to be Rita Men and

⁵ The Augustinian cross is a wooden cross that bears the seal of the Augustinian Order on top. The scapular consists of small white cloth squares connected by the two upper corners of each with a thin white ribbon. There is an image of Our Mother of Good Counsel on the obverse of one square and the seal of the Augustinians on the obverse of the other square. Many of the young men who wear this scapular will roll the squares together, tied by some of the ribbon, and wear it in that manner. Ostensibly this is to make it less intrusive during sports. A testament to the amount of wearing of these is the regular flow of students who come looking for a replacement for a lost or broken cross or scapular.

Augustinians, are now engaged in the mimetic dynamic that oftentimes leads to scapegoating. This author suggests that some of the crass, vulgar and disrespectful answers on the survey are symptoms of the scapegoating mechanism.⁶ This is not to justify this type of behavior, but rather one way to contextualize it.

When we consider the theory-complex, we see that there is congruence with the students in what is one of the powers of ritual in this context: the valuing of relationships. Also, the praxis dimension of the theory-complex, in which there is a trajectory toward change (as well as the concomitant mimetic dynamic), reveals that there is also an augmentation of the already complex relational realities into which the young men have already entered, and in some ways have already accepted.

This desire toward relationship also has a component of what we could call power-competence as well. That means that, at one level, although ritually becoming a Rita Man, each incoming student still must grow into what that might mean for himself. However, when one is ritually “vested” with things Augustinian and “Ritan,” the immediate presumption (effect?) for many might be an understanding that they have now arrived. The investing with the cross, the scapular, the pin, and even the uniform, may effect within the young man not only a sense of belonging but also a sense of full membership. This author is not suggesting that such is undesirable; however, it is problematic if one considers the effect of the various other rituals that speak otherwise in many ways, especially in the concept of earning a place. After all, haven’t they already

⁶ Besides the ritual of competition for a place on the team or in class ranking, an aspect to the scapegoating mechanism is the larger school culture and those who possess the greater power in the classroom and on the field. At times it appears to the students that, for the sake of advancing the school via a winning sports team, coaches will co-opt the ritual and place in boys who are considered sure-things. This is also perceived by some in the recruitment of young men even from other high schools. To be clear, this is a common occurrence in many high school sports programs. This type of co-opting not only stymies the desire, but also short-circuits what the young men are told about the culture and value-focus into which they have been received.

been invested with identities by their family and friends, previous allegiances to little league teams and school choirs, after school clubs and random associations with peers? And, while many of these investitures have been graced and wondrous, some might have been experiences of ritual malpractice.

These young men are confronted by St. Rita High School and its array of rituals, some of which could be interpreted as a blessing or grace, and some of which could be experienced as oppressive and ritual malpractice exercised by new mentors and guides. The confusion of this encounter with both grace and malpractice could be exacerbated by at least one other ancillary value that energizes many of the young men who choose to be educated at St. Rita High School. That value is the desire for justice. Justice, at its core, is about how one relates to others. Often part of a desire for relationships among relatively healthy adolescents is a desire for a relationship that seems “just.”

The questionnaire results suggest that - while not explicitly asked - just relationships are relationships in which the individual is not erased, is not degraded, is not ignored. This is a justice that it seems they would prefer to extend throughout all of their relationships, including with those in authority: whether that be their teacher or principal, parent or captain of their athletic team. This desire for relationships that are also just - an implicit kind of “tandem desire” - is complicated by the mimetic dynamic among the participants. This complication refers back to the understanding that although “equal” members of the larger school context/culture desiring relationship with each other, the students are also competitors in various other contexts within the school.

A way to understand this is through the dynamic of sibling rivalry: I love my brother, unless he gets in my way. However uncomfortable this rivalry may be,

understood in the larger context, and the value congruence as explained above, there is a certain tolerance. A young man may have to compete with a teammate for a position. Only one can earn that position. The one who doesn't is now faced with the dilemma of maintaining a relationship with the victor, even though it stings. Again, within given parameters, most of the young men understand the back and forth that is competition and teamwork. Frustration occurs when their sense of justice is stymied, especially by those who they perceive should know better, as in a teacher or coach seeming to show favoritism. This not only offends the sense of justice, but also has the potential to negatively impact the students' relationships, with each other as well as the authority.

To focus this dynamic a bit more, we must remember that in the theory-complex, the desire is always toward a benefit. What is the benefit of relationships that one might consider "just" for these young men in these particular situations? As noted earlier in this chapter, generally speaking adolescence is a liminal time for these young men. Therefore, they are navigating unknown areas of their lives. At one level, many of them - even most of them - are self-conscious and self-absorbed; at another level, in this author's experience, many are altruistic. The benefit, the effect of justice, is a conundrum for them in that they are caught between justice for themselves (I get what I want, because that keeps my relationships in balance - for me), justice for others (a sense of empathy and understanding because of sharing the same space and time, etc.), and finally that justice often ritualized that demands a certain responsibility from those who are charged with their growth (and to whom they surrender a bit of themselves to, for the sake of relationship, as in the example of the teacher or coach above).

It is at this point that we can consider the congruent relationship between the theory-complex and the tradition. When we consider the effect of ritual between these two partners, we are able to see in greater relief the ethical dimension fundamental to humans ritualizing. This dimension was intimated in the previous paragraphs dealing with ritual malpractice. To speak of malpractice, one speaks of ethics and ethical behavior. To speak of justice, one speaks of relationships, and therefore, one speaks to ethical behavior.

Both of the partners of the theory-complex and the experiences of the young men at St. Rita High School speak to value-embodiment and integrity as value-in-action. It seems that it is through this shared value-matrix that both speak to justice in particular, to ethics in general, but in their own frameworks. The theory-complex analogically speaks to justice as the inner-relationship of the ritual dynamic; it can be interpreted as speaking to ethics by its silence. All that really matters for many of these young men is that the desire is fulfilled.

In the Judeo-Christian biblical tradition, one way to understand justice is that it is *right relationship*. Right relationship could be understood as that integral and integrating relationship within oneself, among others, and with God. As proposed in chapter 3, the power of ritual is not only about the desire being fulfilled, but about how that fulfillment will affect values that this thesis-project interprets in terms of previously-defined *justice*. This seems apparent in the broader ecclesial desire for full, active and conscious participation, not just in liturgy, but as this author mentioned in chapter 3, in the life of the larger community.

We now turn to the convergent relationship between the Christian-Catholic and Augustinian tradition and the experience of the young men at St. Rita High School. As previously mentioned, the slice of tradition we have previously explored speaks to full, active conscious participation in the liturgy. In the language of *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, there is hoped for an “ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful.”⁷ Also, the United States Catholic Bishops noted that preaching “is a responsibility of the entire Christian community.”⁸ Finally, we move toward Augustine, who in his preaching extolled the newly baptized to pay attention to him (and to the larger community) when he said, “We here are your books.”⁹ In these three citations, we can sense a certain thrust that is ritually rich. Ritual is a full, committed embodiment that necessarily has an effect on the ecclesial community and the world. The major trajectories of the tradition we have explored in all of its pluriformity consistently speaks to the engagement of all members for all members and beyond.

From the Augustinian educational perspective the potential effects of truth, unity and love are precisely full active conscious participation by all, and again, in all areas of the school. The young men at St. Rita High School stated their desire for relationship and engagement in the survey, not only in their student activities, but also in their recognition that students for the most part should be involved in the planning and participation of the liturgy, as well as their belief that they would embody the core values beyond their high school years.

⁷ “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,” 1. *Vatican Council II, Vol. 1.*

⁸ *Fulfilled in Your Hearing* 1.

⁹ “Sermon 227;” Rotelle III/6:254-255.

REFRACTIONS

We have considered thus far how the power and effects of ritual are reflected in each of the areas of this study. We now turn to how they diverge, refract, and ghost. As mentioned, it seems that - as apparent in each of the previous reflections - we can actually discern the refractions through the reflection. In considering the student survey responses, we return to the values of relationships and justice which seem to be the energy behind the rituals of these young men. As mentioned, adolescence as contextualized at St. Rita High School is uncharted territory for these young men, who are learning to grow up as they grow up. This is evident in the wide array of relationships that they have and explore, test and reject - often through the various school activities in which they invest. As previously mentioned, these young men appear to be seeking what will first benefit them individually. This is one of the key things that drives them to explore, to seek success, to dream. On the other hand, in all of this youthful enthusiasm they are bound to make mistakes and step on toes. In short, they are growing up. At times, their own competing desires trip them up and stymie, divert, and sometimes even dampen this potential within. If anything, they ordinarily suffer not from ritual malpractice, but from ritual inexperience. They could benefit from the assistance of those around them to navigate not only cognitively but - maybe more important – ritually – this critical time in their lives. This seems to echo in their survey answers that, for the most part, indicate that the adults in their lives do have a major influence. This data compels us to consider the ritual malpractice they have experienced in their lives, and its ethical overtones.

When we consider the theory-complex, we see that there are really no safety nets for those who are engaged in the ritual dynamic. Each ritual is its own event and will do

what it needs to do. It is true that one learns how to ride a bike by riding a bike, but at times training wheels and/or another accomplished in the skill to assist is an asset. This is why the theory-complex is so compelling. It provides for myriad outcomes between the poles of scapegoating and positive change.

In light of this perspective about the relationship between the theory-complex and the tradition, we see that the effects of ritual within this pairing are capable of speaking again to issues of meaning, especially in the area of ethics. Ironically, the convergence of these two voices of the tradition and the theory-complex also highlights their divergence as well. The power of ritual within the theory-complex, at least in this relationship, is tied to an objective: the fulfillment of the desire. The effects upon other partners in the relationship are only considered in their ability to assist in the fulfillment of the desire.

The slice of the tradition as we have presented it does demonstrate substantial care about the objective of the desire, and how the process (ritual) and the fulfillment or nonfulfillment of the desire affects others. This author suggests that because of the Judeo-Christian ethic imbedded in the Christian tradition evoked in this thesis-project, the value will be considered in light of its intention beyond the fulfillment of the desire; in fact, there will be faces and names put onto the desire and its effects. The question will not necessarily stop at *Is my desire being fulfilled?* but will necessarily move to *How does the fulfillment of my desire or lack thereof impact my relationships, as a whole and with each individual?* It is here that the effects become not only personal but more importantly communal, and therefore saturated in humanistic if not in Christian ethics.

Finally, we move to the relationship between the tradition and the experience of the St. Rita High School students as reflected in the survey. Continuing on a theme

initiated in the previous paragraph, we consider that the values we explore both in the tradition chapter and also in the experience chapter are not just about relationships but relationships-in-community. The effects of ritual, then, could be to impact the community in some relational way while respecting each individual member and the community as a whole. We turn to the previous example of competition for a position on a team. Done with ritual integrity, there can be a common understanding and agreement regarding the outcome that allows for the new relational dynamic (i.e. the teammate become captain) to work. This personal-communal dimension seems to point even more clearly to an ethical understanding of ritual, where justice is key, and compassion is evident, and where all feel valued and heard (even if that means the ritual is challenging to the members).

In the context of St. Rita High School, we have discussed how ritual malpractice has the potential to subvert the relationships within the school community. The effects of this malpractice are evident in the cliques, the heterosexism, the misogyny, and the racism that are evident. As well, there can be a certain self-serving, unreflective or cavalier attitude regarding the impact of one's words or actions upon another, especially if "We were just joking." This attitude seems to persist even when a student is on the receiving end of this abuse. This would tend to corroborate and give some credence to our interpretation of the survey in which about two thirds of the respondents stated that they live the core values most of the time within the school community and its activities. Yet, at the same time, the respondents perceive the same percentage of their fellow students not living out these values: evidence in incidents of cheating, fighting, bullying, name-calling, and disrespecting. In light of these practices, it seems reasonable to suggest that if these young men have experienced and participated in ritual malpractice at St. Rita

High School, they have experienced it and participated in it in the other relationships and communities in which they belong.

Despite what seems to be an emphasis on the ritual malpractice operative in St. Rita High School outlined in this previous section, the next section will explore, in the same way, the question *How is ritual transformative?*

HOW IS RITUAL TRANSFORMATIVE?

The question *How is ritual transformative?* reveals a particular presupposition on the part of the author. The question presumes that ritual can, and does, in fact, effect a profound change, ritual malpractice notwithstanding. Ancillary questions to this principal question are *Who or what is transformed via ritual?* and *What does this profound change look like?* We have already explored some of these changes in the previous section, especially as we noted the various effects of ritual. However, what may assist in this process is an understanding of what this author means by “transformation,” at least in this context. Transformation suggests a radical change at the core. But how can we discern that? We may be able to find assistance in the realm of electricity. In that field, to transform an electric current is to change its voltage, or literally, to change its energy.¹⁰

Considering the proposition in the previous section, that if power is energy, and that in this context, energy indicates value/desire, then the question at hand asks *How does ritual transform value?* This question does not speak to a mere recalibration; to change one’s energy is potentially to change one’s orientation, precisely because it has

¹⁰ Cf. “transform,” Oxford Online Dictionary. http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american_english/transform?q=transform (accessed February 19, 2014).

the potential to influence one's values and relationships. One can consider this transformation a ritual inscribing that has the potential to radically alter one's valuing

REFLECTIONS

We once again take our conversation partners and consider how they converge with each other, reflect each other, augment each other. First we turn to the survey results of the young men at St. Rita High School and the theory-complex. This author has suggested throughout this chapter that *relationship* is the value that the experience of the St. Rita High School students and the theory-complex hold in common. The author suggests that, considering the survey responses about the Kairos experience, the energy (value) around relationship has been affected at some level, transforming the students' understanding of each other, and affecting how they see themselves relating to each other differently. How does this change occur?

One dimension of Kairos, like most retreats, is to remove the students from normal daily routine, and there be given the opportunity to honestly consider what is being offered them. This author suggests that part of what is being offered is a chance to reconsider the values that they have been living. This is not done in a didactic or even pejorative way, but rather through various interpersonal experiences: connecting with peers that one probably would never choose to connect with in small group, sharing at a deeper level aspects of one's life, taking a look at oneself in light of one's history. The experiences are rooted in *confession*, that is, in the autobiographical tradition of Augustine, as a group of their peers and teachers/administrators share their stories for the benefit of those who are participating.

As mentioned, a meaningful number of responses spoke to the sense of renewed unity that the young men experienced after a Kairos retreat. In the conversations that this author had, a couple of the students admitted to understanding in a new way what their classmates may be going through. Kairos, at a certain level, was an experience of walking in another's shoes. The author suggests that this is a fundamental move toward transformation.

Previously in this chapter, we considered the ritual that was the Augustinian Experience. By wearing the uniform, by being invested with Augustinian articles, by being led in the call-and-response ritual of *Who are you? - I am a Rita Man! What are you? - I am Augustinian!* a certain ritual inscribing was occurring. The freshmen were being initiated into the life of St. Rita High School, introduced to its symbols and rituals, exposed to the core values explicitly in presentations focusing on these values, and through the ritual that is the Augustinian Experience.¹¹ This author suggests that Kairos could be considered a pivotal experience for many students in that, because of the context and ritual that it is, there is an opportunity to consider, internalize and integrate those values that they ritually put on and were inscribed with from the beginning of their time at St. Rita High School.

This transformation, fueled by the confessional nature of the retreat, affected the way in which they saw themselves, each other, and even other persons in their various relationships. Because of this transformed vision, they were able to reflect a bit more on how they do relate to each other. We cannot claim that Kairos is the only transformative experience for the students. However, as mentioned, it is pivotal for a meaningful number

¹¹ A question of what else was being inscribed and how else it was being inscribed would be fruitful in a more extensive study.

of them. It is also important to understand that this transformation may appear short-lived because of their return to their day-to-day relationships and contexts. But that does not mean that they have not been marked by it.

It is at this point that we turn to the theory-complex and its contribution to this conversation. Recalling the shared value of relationship, the praxis dimension of the theory-complex coupled with mimetic theory seems to provide the most natural point of connection. Praxis theory provides a context that allows for ritual to impact and possibly transform not only the larger context (i.e., community) but also individual persons, because the primary ritual locus is the daily interactions of life.

Mimetic theory poses a bit of a dilemma. With mimetic theory's contributions in the theory-complex including the scapegoating dynamic, one may think it would be incongruous to speak of transformation; that, however, would be an ethics-driven assessment. Transformation is not necessarily a positive moral outcome; in this study, transformation is a conversion of energy. For as violent as the outcome may be, it is appropriate to speak of transformation via the scapegoating dynamic because it does in fact radically alter the relationship between the one who desires and the one who is desired. Through scapegoating, the subject of desire becomes an object, and thus becomes not only undesirable, but also devalued, non-human, alienated, and because of that, the scapegoated party (person or community) is viewed as disposable, precisely because "it" represents the frustrated desires of the desiring party. The Nazi Holocaust is an example of this; however, this author suggests that the racism, heterosexism and misogyny that are expressed to a greater or lesser degree at St. Rita High School are also examples of scapegoating.

As presented in chapter 1, there is an ongoing conversation as to the possibility of desiring for the good (of the other), the opposite of scapegoating. In such a situation, one desires to imitate the other, in a sense, integrating the value of the other, to the point of sacrificing for the other. This imitation/integration converts the energy (desire) so that the mimetic desire is rerouted to a more beneficial end. This aspect, just like scapegoating transforms the framework itself into an ethics-laden framework. This position also recognizes a foundational understanding of the theory itself – the participants become the ritual. Therefore, the ritual becomes ethics-laden.

We now turn to the reflective relationship between the theory-complex and the tradition. This author suggests that an important point of convergence between these two conversation partners is context. As mentioned, the praxis dimension to the theory-complex takes into consideration those relationships that are every day and not just circumscribed within a particular ritualized, usually religious, context. Because of the drive toward relationship, the ritual of every day interaction becomes the medium of potential transformation. Such a proposition allows for the transformation within the conversation of two businesspeople haggling over a contract, a lunch with friends, a job interview, etc. For the students of St. Rita High School, the arena of potential transformative experiences include the classroom, the football field, hanging out with friends at home, a meeting with parents and school personnel regarding conduct, etc.

The tradition would agree with this, especially within the Augustinian context. We return again to Murphy's insight that transformation occurs through every day relationships precisely because it "occurs in highly interactive, interpersonal space

inhabited by creatures of flesh and blood in a communal setting.”¹² The tradition sees context (relationships) not only as the ritual medium, but also as a valuing “member” of the dialogue.

It can be said that the medium of daily interpersonal relationships for both the theory-complex and the tradition provide another dimension to the possibility of transformation. The relationship and interaction can be likened to another “member” of the relationship. This suggests that there are *at least* three points of potential transformation: in either of the two parties (individual or group) in the relationship or in the relationship itself. . The author suggests that this is at the root of such vastly differing events as the Nazi Holocaust (there were numbers who did oppose the trajectory of Hitler’s Germany and tried to fight it, even in the midst of apparent groupthink) and the desegregation movements in the 1950s and 1960s (there were numbers who did oppose desegregation and tried to fight it, even in the midst of rabid prejudice).

This now brings us to the congruent relationship between the tradition and the experience of the students at St. Rita High School. Taking our cue from the insight that transformation occurs in relationship, and in fact can be communal, we can couple that with a certain intentionality of desire. Rooted in the prayer of St. Augustine, “our heart is unquiet (restless) until it rests in you,” the tradition speaks to both the individual and communal nature of desire and transformation, and propels this desiring to a transcendent level, its intentionality.¹³

The individual level speaks to the participation of the person in the desire toward transcendence. This desire is expressed in Augustine’s prayer, “God, who is always the

¹² McCarthy, 335.

¹³ “Confessions” I, 1:1 = Rotelle I/1, 14.

same, may I know myself, may I know you.”¹⁴ In the desire is the fulfillment. This move toward transcendence does not move one to an isolated solipsism, but rather to a greater sense of deep union: “Yet all these things which you fill, you fill with the whole of yourself.”¹⁵ Therefore, one’s desire for deep relationship, which at core is toward God, necessarily moves one to the world of relationships, because it is in the community and larger world where we encounter the intention of our desire.

This then moves to the communal dimension of transformation. In the *Confessions*, Augustine speaks of *our heart* being restless. There is not a multiplicity of hearts that are restless. Augustine speaks to a common human reality. This insight is put into greater relief with the Rule, where it begins “The main purpose for your having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart.”¹⁶ Notice that the intent is to be upon God, as a community, with one mind and heart. This intention transforms the desire and can change the relationship dynamic within the community.

Finally, rooted in the Augustinian tradition, the desire for relationship seems to require the ritual to be in some way confessional. That is to say, the ritual is in some way self-revelatory for the sake of others. By sharing one’s story, and allowing another or others to experience it, the story itself is transformed in speaking and hearing, and in the subsequent reflection upon it, the community itself becomes the subject of the story.

As was seen in the exploration of the student surveys, a major transformative event was the Kairos retreat. This author suggests that it was such a transformative

¹⁴ “Soliloquies: Augustine’s Interior Dialogue” II, 1:1 = Rotelle: 55.

¹⁵ “Confessions” I, 3:3 = Rotelle I/1, 15.

¹⁶ “The Rule,” I: 3. *Rule and Constitutions*, 9.

because it, too, engaged the students' values and relationships from a personal and interpersonal level. It was transformative precisely because, as the young men often said, they "got to know the other guys." This knowing is part of the self-revelatory nature of the experience. Kairos is a ritual medium that provides for the possible transformation of the young men's self-understanding, as well as their understanding of others who share different (and sometimes competing) contextual relationships. It appears that this knowledge of self and others resulted in a new understanding and a sense of empathy and compassion for others. This compassion and empathy could be considered transcendence because it is a move away from self-preoccupation.

It bears mentioning that the Kairos group as a whole, in each retreat instance, in a sense creates its own personality. The retreat (the community and its dynamics) became an influential part of the young men's lives, became another "person," at least for those few days. The question about long lasting post-Kairos transformation is valid. However, this author suggests that, though outside signs of an experience may quickly be subsumed by the demanding pushes and pulls of other relationships and contexts, the "personality" of each group somehow impacts the larger school community by the very nature of the encounter. Each member of a particular Kairos and the Kairos group as a whole has been marked by this ritual. This ritual context is also in relationship (competitive and otherwise) with other ritual contexts (as in the Augustinian Experience, football games, classroom experiences, non-school activities and relationships). Each of these media has the potential to transform individuals and the community, individuals through the community, and even the community through individuals.

REFRACTIONS

We now move to a discussion of where each of the conversation partners diverges in light of the question *How is ritual transformative?* Keeping with the pattern, we consider the experiences of the young men and the ritual-complex. Once again, the shared value of relationship provides the fulcrum for discussion.

The author suggests that the purpose of education is by its nature an interpersonal, relational ritual context, oriented to transformation. Taking the meaning of the word *education* from its Latin root, *educere* (to lead out of), we can propose that one of the roles of education (and educators) is to lead the students out of themselves in order to discover new things as well as to discover (recover?) the knowledge that they already possess and exhibit, among which is their values (desires). Through the various arenas of education (classroom work and studies, sports, school and social activities, relational contexts, etc.) the students can be mentored and encouraged to discern and name their values, reflect upon them in light of other values (other people's knowledge) and change them, integrate them, or do nothing with them, based on their own internal orientation. As well, there is an understanding that this process will influence them to engage in the world as men who have the ability to be self-reflective and self-giving, this through the life-long dynamic of education (drawing out, discerning and reflecting, integrating, acting, done in relationship with others).

We now return to what appears to be a pivotal experience in the lives of many of these young men – Kairos. The author suggests that from an institutional perspective, the importance of this event lays in the relationship it has to the educational process. However, it appears that the dimension of acting upon new insights in the educational

dynamic may be an area of growth, not only for the young men, but also for the institution. As we refer back to the roughly two-thirds of the survey respondents who believe that they are living the core values, while at the same time believing the same percentage of their peers do not live them, along with their other response suggesting student-teacher relating the core values at fifty percent, we can discern that the students believe in personal and institutional ethical integrity (i.e. , justice) within the educational context, and are capable in spotting a deficiency in the integrity of the institution and others; however, this same insight does not seem to be as honed when it comes to self-reflection. The students seem to be aware of a conflict between what the institution espouses and what in, fact, members of the institution practice; this conflict has the potential to be transformative, on the personal and institutional level. The conflict is an educational opportunity, and to engage in the conflict provides an opportunity for integrity, the potential for transformation.

Once again engaging the praxis aspect of the model along with mimetic theory, we return to relationship; however, there is a fundamental divergence, even in the connection. At the heart of the divergence we find that the theory-complex is not necessarily about transformation in the sense of education – drawing forth (from another), and seeking the benefit of the other as well as the larger community for their own sake; it is basically about transformation through value-expression (desire fulfillment) for the one desiring, seeking one's own benefit. Any benefit to the community or to another would be in relation to the benefit of the one who desires. Conflict in this arena occurs when desires are not fulfilled; therefore conflict is not

necessarily a means toward self-reflection, but rather a potential signal to engage in the scapegoating dynamic.

The author suggests that the tradition and the theory-complex find agreement that a primary medium for ritual is the arena of the everyday relationships in life. However, in the theory-complex, the relationships are not viewed as beneficial in and of themselves, but rather as to their use in the fulfillment of desire. We must keep in mind that in this construct, the other parties of the relationship are also ritualizing their need for desire fulfillment through the same relationship. That being said, the other may knowingly or unknowingly assist in fulfillment of the other's desires. Primacy however belongs to the fulfillment of one's own desires, whether that "one" is an individual or a group. Because of that primacy, conflict may occur, and through the conflict, the scapegoating dynamic is engaged. Transformation, it seems, occurs in the relationship based on desire fulfillment, and is self-referential.

The tradition, on the other hand, offers the potential towards transcendence that expresses itself in ethical ways. This is a focus on the other not as a competitor or hindrance to the fulfillment of desires and values, but rather as a partner in that very fulfillment. This author suggests that although the theory-matrix appears to consider the other by engagement with the same, the internal drive is still toward value-fulfillment regardless of the impact on the other, hence the scapegoating dynamic. Within the Judeo-Christian tradition, there is a presupposition about the dignity of the other, and it is this value of the other as other that has the potential to influence each member's desire as well as the desire of the community as a whole. This sense of the value of the other, rooted as

it is in the Judeo-Christian ethic, finds transformation in the conversion (turning toward) others, recognizing that each person is created in the image and likeness of God.

This valuing of the person brings us full circle to the relationship between the tradition and the students of St. Rita High School. If as the Rule of St. Augustine states we are on the way to God as one mind and one heart, then there is a certain surrendering of the self for the sake of the larger community, for the sake of the commitment one has to the particular group for a particular mission, for a particular journey, in this case to God. Transformation is in the surrender, the conversion, not as a co-opting of one's will, but rather as freely allowing one's desires to be affected by another, by a community, and ultimately by God.

On the other hand, within the school community, the young men are growing and discovering who they are. This maturation can be a fearful prospect and experience. Adolescence is not easy, and it is helpful to be part of an environment that feels safe, and where one feels accepted in the midst of the travails of growing up. What is telling is that a clear majority do feel valued at St. Rita High School. The students feel safe enough, respected enough, and loved enough – valued – to explore who they are via their various relationships and ritual contexts. What is even more telling, however, as can be gleaned from the survey and from this project, that same love and care is not universally extended to others by them. If the tradition speaks to dignity, and this expressed through the core values, we need to ask why there is racism, heterosexism and misogyny. As well, we need to question the need to cheat, the draw to bully, the attraction to disrespect, especially in light of the context where they feel valued. It seems, that for them, the

transformation is not necessarily total surrender to a God that that they do not know, but a reaching out to those they would rather not know.

In the next section, we will attempt to summarize some of the insights gleaned from this conversation.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

As we conclude this conversation between the experience of the young men at St. Rita High School as revealed in the survey, the theory-complex of ritual theory as explored through performance/praxis theory coupled with mimetic theory, and the Augustinian and ecclesio-liturgical tradition, it may be helpful to reframe the title of this chapter. When speaking of values, we are speaking of things we hold dear, we are speaking of our heart and of our treasure. This author considers this an apt description in that the correlative conversation was an attempt to discover the treasure, the heart of each of the partners, by discovering the values that empowered them, what energized them. The ritual of the conversation was itself a treasure hunt and a value itself.

To be sure, another person would be able to look at the same information as this author, and suggest different values and offer different insights. That fact reinforces the basic premise of this work and that is why this summary analysis will be akin to each conversation partner taking one more look in the mirror. The author will offer a brief description, recognizing that what we do is like the image in the mirror – a fleeting reflection of reality.

THE EXPERIENCE OF ST. RITA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

In considering the experience of the young men at St. Rita High School, we find an interesting paradox. They value relationships that are just; yet, there seems to be a certain unreflective self-absorption about this value. It appears that when there is a shared bond, this value is readily extended; if not, it seems that should that lack of a bond be experienced or even interpreted as a threat of some sort, then a scapegoating dynamic engages, resulting in the various instances of racism, heterosexism and misogyny. One way to contextualize this apparent ethical lapse is through the lens of adolescence. They are at a liminal place, a place that they have never been before, and there are bound to be mistakes made. The question comes to whether they are able to reflect and learn, and become more responsible in their interactions with others.

This reflecting and learning is ostensibly assisted through the context of St. Rita of Cascia High School and the tradition (religious and educational) in which it is imbued – Augustinian as well as Christian-Catholic. In short, the tradition takes each person's story seriously, precisely because each is created in the image and likeness of God. This dignity, rooted in that understanding implies a deep union between all, presumes behavior that will reflect that union. The tradition also speaks to a meaning (value) that is rooted in each student, but moves each beyond himself to God, especially through others. This transcendence expressed in empathy and compassion can be a challenge to these young men, especially because of their age, social location, etc.

The author has suggested that there is a certain ritual confusion in the lives of these young men. This is the result of their own ritual inexperience (because of adolescence, social location, etc.); however, this author suggests this confusion is

exacerbated through the ritual malpractice they have been subjected to at the hands of those in whom they have placed their trust. This ritual malpractice is important to consider in light of the importance of relationship in all three conversation partners.

RITUAL THEORY: THE THEORY-COMPLEX

Ritual has the potential to be transformative; it strikes at the heart. Ritual has the capacity to inscribe, and therefore change, one's fundamental value orientation. There is power in ritual, and the exercise of ritual is an exercise in power. If this is the case, the participants are not only sharers in the ritual, they also share the power; not only are they the ritual, they also are the power. Because of this embodiment, there is also an ethical dimension to ritual. This is even more compelling when one considers the performance/praxis theory of the theory-complex: ritual is what we do and who we are in our daily relationships. As well, coupled with mimetic theory, we are able to see the varied consequences of ritual power.

The young men seem to have experienced the power of ritual in the Kairos experience. In their responses they spoke to a new understanding of and for each other. The experience appears to have given them the opportunity to reflect and make decisions. However, the lasting effects of this transformative experience are less apparent. Even though they have been inscribed by this ritual event as per their survey responses, the everyday rituals in which they participate may support, mitigate and even undermine this transformative experience. We refer not only to their ritual inexperience, but also to ritual malpractice within their various contexts.

The rituals of the *Augustinian Experience* that attempt to cultivate and inculcate a sense of belonging and purpose by ritual investing (and therefore, inscribing), may in fact

butt up against competing rituals not only at the school, but also outside of the school, and even in the students rituals themselves. Ritual malpractice (misuse/abuse of power), like a rock thrown in a pond, can have a ripple effect in the life of the students and in the larger community. As this author has suggested previously, the effects of ritual malpractice can be seen in the misogyny, heterosexism and racism in some of the everyday rituals of these young men.

AUGUSTINIAN AND CHRISTIAN-CATHOLIC TRADITION

The core values are ubiquitous at Augustinian schools. These values are an attempt to capture Christian and Augustinian life in three accessible words: truth, unity, love. If asked, most students can easily name them (even in Latin) and offer a reasonable explanation of what each one means. However, given some of the examples in this thesis-project, it could be asked if the values have somehow lost their power, have become white noise in the larger school context, at least at St. Rita High School. Have the students been inscribed by the values, or do they merely recognize them?

As well, the ecclesial dimension in this conversation partner values full, active and conscious participation. This committed and engaged participation is not just about the circumscribed area of the Mass, but also about what it means to be full, active and conscious in one's life in the world, as part of the Christian-Catholic tradition.

We turn once again to the answers to the survey. The young men at St. Rita High School value engagement. The various activities in which they participate, athletic and non-athletic, school-based or community-based, energize them and allow them to create and share in relationships. They speak to involvement even in regard to religious services, at least as a value, if not as a realized involvement.

The young men do speak of the values. But do they speak to the values? And do the values speak to them? It seems that with the many competing contexts in the world around them, even at school, Kairos could be considered too little too late since it is part of the later junior year or senior year. Nonetheless, it seems that the ritual that is the Kairos experience impacts a meaningful number, who at least for their last year, do consider their peers and their contexts in a new way.

When we consider the theory-complex, and its positing that ritual is tied up in the daily interactions of life, the ubiquity of the values seems to make sense; they are part of the daily ritual of each of the students at St. Rita High School by their constant presence. The students were initiated into this value context through the *Augustinian Experience*, and this seemed to set the stage for engagement with the values throughout the four years at St. Rita High School and beyond. In a sense, the rituals attempted to provide good mimetic energy. Ultimately, the values are about relationship and the impact of these relationships in daily life.

Although it is important to speak of the ritual practices that provide an inscribing that is ultimately beneficial to all (at least through the insights of the Augustinian and Christian-Catholic Tradition), ritual malpractice must be considered, especially when we understand its effects on a principal value of the tradition – the dignity of the person. It seems that the ritual practices, those that are intentional, and those that are part of daily life of St. Rita High School, need to be put into dialogue more often so that the occurrence of ritual malpractice becomes less, and when discovered, rectified. This is not only about the integrity of the ritual, but about the integrity of the students and the

relationships they share – because they are the ritual, they are the values expressed. Because of the ethical implications of ritual, it is not to be taken lightly.

WE SEE IN A MIRROR, DIMLY¹⁷

As we conclude this summary, it is important to remember that there were other partners who were part of the conversation, but were in a sense, silent partners. We alluded to faculty, coaches, administrators as well as other relationships in which the students are part. Their participation in this study was in how the young men reflected upon them. This does not discount the process or the insights. In fact, in keeping with the proposed process, it allows for a further ritualizing that is the thesis-project, allowing at some point for the silent partners to find their voices, their reflections, in the ongoing ritual of value expression and value critique. It is in this ongoing ritual conversation that we discover that finding our treasure, finding our heart, may only require an honest look in the mirror.

¹⁷ I Corinthians 13:12.

CONCLUSION

“ALWAYS KEEP ON WALKING”

In this concluding chapter, we move to articulate the pastoral response of the methodology in light of the summary from chapter 4. But we will do so by taking to heart what Augustine presents in Sermon 169:

Forge ahead, my brothers and sisters; always examine yourselves without self-deception, without flattery, without buttering yourselves up...Always be dissatisfied with what you are, if you want to arrive at what you are not yet. Because where you are satisfied with yourself, there you have stuck...Always add some more, always keep on walking, always forge ahead. Don't stop on the road, don't turn round and go back, don't wander off the road.¹

Although he is speaking of the Christian life, what he says is also apropos to the methodology that we are following. At this point in the thesis-project, we will not only attempt to offer possible pastoral responses, but also examine ourselves, this process, the insights we gained, and the proposed pastoral responses, “without self-deception, without flattery.” This is not to go back, but rather to look back, to see where we have come from, and to move forward.

¹ “Sermon 169,” 18 = Rotelle, III/5, 265.

In this process we take stock of what we have done and discern where we want to go in the future. As we began this thesis-project, this author presented a guiding image that is the Augustinian seal – the pierced flaming heart and a book. During the development of the thesis-project, complementing symbols seemed to present themselves in the course of the writing, themselves being values: incarnation, journey, and autobiography. However, a symbol that seemed to best integrate and reflect the process was that of the *mirror*. In a sense, this conclusion is just that, a mirror, assisting us in taking to heart what we reflect upon in this final written chapter. It is to the reflecting that we now turn.

THE METHODOLOGY USED TO TEST THE THESIS

As presented in the **Introduction**, we used the model and method of the Whitehead's because of its straightforward accessibility. However, to augment the process for the sake of the context we were studying, we introduced two new dimensions to the process. This author believes that the additions speak more explicitly to the experience of the young men at St. Rita as well as the tradition.

First, as part of the process, we integrated aspects of the method and insights of Thomas Groome: the concepts of story and vision. This author suggests that this addition takes seriously a principle understanding that is expressed in the tradition – autobiography. However, this sense of story is not a self-absorbed recounting, but a process to self-understanding which has the potential to lead to an understanding of others, because it is shared. This author believes that autobiography, because it is confessional in nature, allows one to open to others, thus providing a communal dimension to the pastoral response. The sought after change (transformation) is

intertwined with the stories shared, and so the shared stories then become the shared vision.

Second, we introduced a modification to the model of the Whitehead's. Rather than focus on *culture* as a conversation partner, we moved to consider *context* as a partner. Because we used performance/praxis theory as a theoretical ritual framework, context seemed to better reflect the dynamic and immediate (?) relationships that were the ritual contexts of the students. This did not diminish the role of culture, but rather re-contextualized it in light of the primary focus on relationships.

This author suggests that the modifications in the model and method allowed for a more relational approach. Because the model and methodology cannot be evaluated without the context of the process, we now reflect on the process of the thesis-project in light of the stated model and methodology.

THE PROCESS OF TESTING THE THESIS

In general, the process to gather information for this thesis-project was successful. However, there appears to be a fundamental flaw in the process as performed. This does not call into question the validity of the student responses; however, this author realized that a survey answered individually (presumably), on a computer, conflicts with a principal presupposition of the work: a community-based dialogue as a more fruitful way to consider values and ritual contexts. In this instance, with the particular focus of the thesis-project in mind, a survey *may* be helpful as a template. This author suggests that

the survey in a modified form (see *The Survey Instrument* below) could be used a tool for dialogue in the future.²

Although the number of students surveyed was sufficient for the scope of this project, this author believes that a class-wide experience would have added more breadth and depth to the survey answers. This would require greater pre-study work in securing the appropriate permissions from parents and/or guardians for those students who are minors. Connected with that, it may prove more helpful to engage the students in such a conversation in the midst of the school year, rather than a month before graduation. On the other hand, it could be part of the graduation process of interviews, etc. in the fourth quarter. Given that this was a pilot experience, the process, data and insights are still valuable.

We can intimate one fundamental change in the process based on the above: the method for gathering information could prove more beneficial by interviewing small groups of willing students, using a survey of sorts as a conversation guide. As well, it would be important that those who were involved were fully committed to the process. This author believes that involving all the students in some way would prove valuable. The logistics would need to be worked out in various areas of school administration so that this process would be seen as part of the education/formation of the students. Also, to integrate this more fully in the life of the students, the author suggests an implementation that begins with the freshmen class, seeing the Augustinian Experience as a prime place for beginning the conversation. With this type of ongoing conversation, engaging with

² The author was unable to personally administer the survey because of his need to fulfill formation requirements as a novice in the Augustinian Order.

the students throughout their four years, a more comprehensive insight to the understanding and living of the core values can be discerned.

Connected to the above paragraph, this study, rooted once again in a fundamental principle of an invitation to full engagement, requires at some level investment by other members of the high school community. It was evident that these “silent partners” had a great impact on this group of students, and engaging these members would prove beneficial in better understanding the various contexts and dynamics that are part of the school. As well, by engaging these partners, we could more readily surface some of the complementing and competing ritual contexts that are confronting the students and the other members of the conversation. This dimension will be dealt with more thoroughly in the section *Engaging the Community of Communities*.

THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

While the survey instrument proved useful, it was not without its limitations. Even after several drafts and consultations, some unforeseen interpretative ambiguities arose. As intimated in the previous section *The Process of Testing the Thesis*, this author considers the survey a work in progress. There are some questions that went unasked that the survey revealed should have been asked by virtue of the interpretive ambiguities.

A basic premise of this thesis-project is the dignity of those who are involved in any dimension of a ritual. The author has discovered that it takes more than a signed document of willingness to participate in a study to assure one’s dignity. The foundation of the thesis-project was an exploration of some of the deepest and most personal aspects of a person, and a young man. After sensing some ambiguity that did not have a perceptible root cause, it was ascertained that because of the topic of the question and the

age group being asked, some of the young men may not have been comfortable with questions that spoke especially (in this case), to faith and faith expressions.

Although the survey did ask about their beginnings at St. Rita High School, at least in regard to the impact of the *Tolle Lege Experience*, it never asked why they chose St. Rita High School. This author has found in the methodology that this could be a fruitful area of study because of the values and relationships involved.

Finally, and although helpful for the most part, the open-ended questions, especially those questions that sought a rationale for the reason why a student responded as he did, were lacking any real development. This could be open to a few interpretations, including but not limited to: lack of self-reflection, lack of desire to engage due to lack of interest or being uncomfortable with the reason itself, and not really knowing why. It is in this area especially that a focus group could have been beneficial. In fact, the author had intended for the individual interviews to be a way to expand on the student responses. Like the open-ended questions, the interviews proved valuable in what they didn't accomplish.

As Engebretson stated regarding her work, the young men were more willing to speak with "a male teacher whom they liked and respected."³ Such a fact cannot be undervalued. A weakness in the instrument and the process was the lack of an ongoing presence of this author. As well, this author perceives himself to be liked and respected by most students, based on their willing engagement in conversation, etc., and without any feedback from students or professional peers to the contrary. To restate, the lack of a meaningful presence does not call into question the validity of the answers. After all,

³ Engebretson, "Teenage boys," 272.

surveys and questionnaires are part of the life of most people. The point is that the process was at some level contradictory to the stated purpose. It makes this author wonder if the students were affected by that contradiction.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES

It is at this juncture that we consider more pointedly the “silent partners” in the conversation. As mentioned in chapter 4, the process revealed that relationships are important to these young men. Even more, the *people* involved in the relationships were important to these young men. That importance was revealed in the energy expended not only in those relationships with people that they like, respect, love, but also in the energy expended in separating and distancing themselves based on gender, sexuality and race.

As stated above in the section *The Process of Testing the Thesis*, this author suggests that for a pastoral and transformative personal and communal experience, the circle of dialogue and conversation needs to become more and more inclusive. This will require some logistical planning and work, but if we are to maintain integrity in the process (ritual) as well as the participants, we must continue to create diverse venues for honest and open dialogue. This will not be an easy task. With time demands pressing on all the parties engaged, this engagement may appear like one more thing to do, another exigency in lives already spread thin. This author intends to consider this below in the section *One Possible Pastoral Response*.

Besides the time constraints on the various members who are part of the many different relationships and ritual contexts, there may be some resistance to such a study for whatever reason (change can be seen as a threat) as well as divergent expectations as to what this process could accomplish. This author suggests that within the school

context, these divergences provide the fodder for mixed messages and ritual malpractice both in and out of the classroom. There is not always a sense of everyone around the same table. Also, the young men and their families come from a variety of neighborhoods and cultures, faith traditions, and socio-economic backgrounds. These must be taken into consideration in any pastoral response that the school would wish to consider. These conditions will also be raised and considered below in the section *One Possible Pastoral Response*.

DON'T WANDER OFF THE ROAD

At this juncture, we may want to consider what we have done in the past few sections. This was not just a review of the process. It was part of the process; in fact, this author suggests that the above review is part of the pastoral response itself. Although, like Augustine, we are called to move forward, we cannot do so in a committed and intentional way without an honest self-assessment. This author posits that any pastoral plan must, if not in the first place, somewhere in the planning itself, consider the strengths and weaknesses of the process.

The process is a ritual, and rituals are about values and relationships. In fact, we can check the integrity of our process by considering the points in footnote #4 of the

Introduction in regard to ritual malpractice:

Ritual malpractice speaks to ritual activity which - whether by ignorance, incompetence or intention - in anyway demeans, devalues or diminishes the dignity or worth of any individuals participating in the ritual. This author holds that ritual, because it mediates and interprets human relationships, *de facto* has an ethical aspect. Ritual malpractice is consequently an ethical breach.

It may seem odd to test against the negative; however, this author suggests that contrary to the title of chapter 1, we do not always know ritual because we don't always see it. We don't always see it because we are not often aware of its ubiquity in our daily lives.

Through this thesis-project we have considered one way to see ritual, reflect upon it, and to consider the very ethics of our rituals. Now that we have begun to do a bit of honest reflection on the process, we can forge ahead to a possible pastoral response to the matter at hand.

ONE POSSIBLE PASTORAL RESPONSE

One of the pitfalls in the process that is this thesis-project is the fact that, again, there exists a latent contradiction. This author is one person, necessarily focusing not only on a particular slice of a particular population, but at the time, outside of the daily life of that population. As well, this author has posited that this is a community process, and yet the community is one of the many "silent partners" in this work. This leads to the conundrum of how valid a possible pastoral response may be when considering the apparent contradictions between what is held and what is done in the study itself.

Referring back to the rationale on using the footnote on ritual malpractice in order to test rituals in practice, this author suggests in the same vein that the contradiction sheds light on the ideal practice.⁴ With that in mind, we consider one possible pastoral response in practice.

⁴ In this thesis-project, there is a safety-net of sorts, in that there is a committee that reads and reflects on this author's written work, offering questions and insights. As well, there have been numerous people who have assisted in conversations, challenges, etc. who are mentioned in the *Acknowledgements*. This author suggests that the official and unofficial conversations that occurred contribute to the validity of this process.

Sitting Around the Table: Gathering the Community/Communities and Sharing Stories

In gathering the community that is a representative slice of the larger community, we first have to recognize that the larger community is comprised of smaller and disparate communities/relationships, oftentimes competing for valuable and valued resources. However, this author suggests that, because of the context, a primary value is the education and formation of the young men at St. Rita of Cascia High School. They are the mission of the school.

Considering the structure of the school, one way to begin the gathering of various groups is to create a Mission Board. This board could consist of representatives from the already existing adult organizations in the school (e.g. leaders/members from the Mothers' Club, Fathers' Club, Band Boosters, Alumni Association) as well as Augustinians, School Administration, Athletics, Faculty Association, etc., whose existence and/or employment is linked to the mission of the school. Taking a step back, the representatives for the Mission Board could be nominated from initial presentations and conversations at the organization meetings that are already in existence. Conversations will be occurring with faculty, staff in their various departmental and staff meetings, as well as students in their classrooms and as classes. They too, part of a Student Mission Board, with (a) representative(s) on the Mission Board.

Starting the Conversation and Discerning the Board

After this thesis-project, this author believes that the best way to start the conversation in all the groups is to ask a question that wasn't asked, but seemed to be answered in numerous ways through the survey: *Why am I at St. Rita High School?* or

What do I hope to gain (benefit from) at St. Rita? These questions seem to allow for an open non-threatening conversation. They would most likely reveal what values and expectations all the stakeholders are bringing to the table. The follow-up questions are similar, but speak to the values expressed. One question could be *What concrete ways do you see St. Rita living up to your expectations for why you sent your son/ward here?* From the concrete positive expressions, we can then move to *How could St. Rita get even better in living up to your and your son's expectations?* The questions would be modified to reflect the particular group gathered.

The hope would be that from these various group-based conversations, areas of concern can be raised as well as possible members for the Mission Board. Potential board members would then be invited to a conversation with (a) selected member(s) of the school administration to see if they would be interested in being part of an ongoing conversation.⁵ This author suggests that in the area of the school, those faculty and staff members and students who have participated in the Augustinian Values Institute and the Student Augustinian Values Institute would be potential members, if not leaders, in these discussions, because of their experiences.⁶

Some Issues to Consider

This author accepts, with some reservation, the statement in the *Handbook* that “an Augustinian school constitutes a Christian faith community in which everyone – staff, faculty, parents, students, alumni – is nurtured by and encouraged to share in a

⁵ This presumes an Augustinian and Administrative acceptance and active support for the process.

⁶ At this point, it would be unhelpful to set a goal of what would be a meaningful number in the boards. In fact, the community conversations may present an alternative to the process.

common faith and grace-life in Christ.”⁷ The reservation comes not in the fact of being a community, since “community” is authentically rooted in the Augustinian tradition. Rather, the reservation comes in the differing interpretations and understanding of “community” even among Augustinians. It is evident to this author that a clarification would be an honest discussion as to how each member understands this particular institution as a community. This author’s bias is to first consider the tradition as the framework, since it is the tradition that is propelling the institution.

Administration and the Augustinians

The *Handbook* does offer a touchstone of sorts to consider what we are talking about when we consider the idea of *community* in light of an institution:

Individuals and groups within the school live out the values. There is another level (“institutional”) where the values can also be expressed. These expressions are on a more systemic, operational, institutional, and public level. They are often expressed in school policy and operational style and procedures.

Here there is an opportunity to show consistency of practice – the school itself stands under the judgment of the values. A failure to have the values at work in the school’s operation and corporate behavior misses an important opportunity and can lead to a cynicism that may undermine the values in other aspects of its mission.⁸

It is important to take note that “the school itself stands under the judgment of the values.” These words may appear harsh, but they express the conviction that the mission of the school is not solely about institutional advancement and security, but also, and more importantly, about providing the arena for formation in the values that the school expresses – its mission. The school is about transformation.

⁷ *Handbook*, 8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

If the word *community* is a challenge in the way it is understood, the word *school* compounds it. This nexus is where the hired administration and the *de facto* caregivers of the institution (the Augustinians) must maintain an ongoing, transparent and evident conversation so that those who are not participants in this area of authority have a sense of integrity and congruence between the values expressed and the daily life of the school – and this at an institutional level.⁹

Augustinian Educators: Faculty and Staff

We move next to those most responsible for the day-to-day relationships that impact the young men. St. Rita High School has taken to naming all hired members of the school “Augustinian Educators.” The *Handbook* has offered the following when it comes to what to look for in a person seeking a position to be an Augustinian Educator: “The School hires for mission – the right fit for the right job inspired by the values – hires those who not only accept the values, but have proven their investment and ability to promote them.”¹⁰ This author posits that when one is hired, one can also be fired. This adds a certain coloration to the concept of community in light of the conversation about values. How does one relate to an Augustinian Educator as an Augustinian Educator, especially on issues of discipline, work, etc.? As well, do all those hired understand that in this context, to speak of Augustinian is to speak of ministry? Are they just servants of

⁹ As mentioned in this thesis-project, the *Handbook* has suggested that the downturn in vocations to the Augustinian way of life has demanded a greater focus on formation of school personnel in the Augustinian tradition and values. This author suggests that formation based on crisis has the danger of prematurely abdicating some authoritative voice as a community, relegating that voice to one or a few friars. What is at stake is that an understanding of “Augustinian” through the lens of community has the potential of being viewed and, and possibly co-opted, through the lens that is one friar.

¹⁰ *Handbook*, 25.

the charism or also keepers and interpreters of the charism? These are questions to explore.

Parents/Guardians/Alumni

If the primary focus of the ministry of St. Rita High School is the students, this author suggests that a very close second is ministry to the parents/guardians. We have already considered how to engage those parents/guardians who are present at the various parent and activity functions. But what of those who are not actively involved? This author suggests a method that St. Rita High School already uses in its recruitment: house meetings.

In the house meetings, parents of a St. Rita High School student open their house to those parents and their sons who are interested in what St. Rita High School has to offer. This method could prove effective in that this outreach could serve as way to be more aware of the lives and situations of students. As a benefit to the parents, this offers the possibility for those who work various shifts, those who have other caregiving (children, parents, spouse) responsibilities, and those without adequate transportation to network, create community and engage with the values in their own contexts. The hope would be to develop ways for a mutual presence between neighborhood and school.

St. Rita High School has a very active alumni association. They organize fundraisers to assist in tuition as well as capital improvements on the campus. This author believes that involvement in the value-centered conversation will allow them to contextualize their fundraising in light of the mission, not only the institution.

Administration – Faculty – Student Relationship

This author raises this relationship as an issue only as a point of awareness. Realizing that we are focusing on a school that ministers to adolescent males, it can be easy to focus on containment and discipline. It seems that at times, for as important as adults are to the students, there is a sense of ambivalence and even a kind of adversarial relationship. And this is not always on the part of the students. There have been remarks by various students, and there is some evidence in the survey responses, that the students lack a sense of fairness in the relationships with the various adults in the school. This author would suggest the lack of justice through ritual malpractice is one example.

About two years ago, in an attempt to address issues regarding the behavior of a number of students in regard to the core values, the administration created a School Culture Committee. This seemed like a promising first step, but one of the concerns of this author is the lack of meaningful student presence and input, as well as a sense of trying to control a situation that seems out of control.

Personality-Driven vs. Mission-Driven

Almost paradoxically, the focus on the person that the thesis-project promotes can turn in on itself. For example, leadership is often seen to be the face of an institution. Names and faces are about relationship, so that can be a positive way to engage with members of the community and the community-at-large. Unfortunately, if left unchecked, a transformation occurs where the institution is the face of the leadership. This over identification can lead to over-personalization and even a sense of entitlement; as well, this skewed self-understanding can lead to institutional stagnation, coercive exercise of power, and in short ritual malpractice.

Summary

In this discussion, we have attempted to lay a solid yet flexible foundation for the rest of the conversation. To add to the texture of the conversation, the symbol and ritual of being at the table together offers another rich image of what this author believes this process can evoke. The significance to this first part is to guarantee that voices are heard, even if they are not present, even if they are not pleasant. As stated in footnote 6, through the insights and contributions of the various conversation partners, the process may create a different way to engage with the issues. The important thing is that it arises from the community and maintains ritual integrity.

This flexibility allows for a realistic assessment of and adaptation to the particular context. This author offered his impressions of what could get in the way of the conversation; they are presented because unless named, they could short-circuit any conversation. Others in the conversation may agree or disagree, as well as offer alternative concerns. That is what the process is supposed to do. An analogy to this process would be “thinking on your feet.”

Looking in the Mirror, Getting to the Heart of the Matter

It is at this point that we return to critical correlation. This author suggests returning to the set of questions that were part of the critical correlation: *Who am I? Where am I going? Who am I going with? Am I valued? and So what?* In this way the issues are framed within the context of value, relationship and ethics. This line of

questioning presumes a comfort with them personally, and a comfort sharing some of one's personal insights.¹¹

It may have seemed to the reader that the students were only mentioned briefly in the first part of the process. This author suggests that the process of gathering people and beginning the conversation already offers to the students an alternative ritual practice. In a sense, they were not mentioned because they were the ones animating the process. It was their insights into the reality with which they were engaged; it was their mention of the many relationships that were important to them that drove this process and the conversation. With that in mind, the "silent partners" will have an active voice in the conversation – along with the students.

One safe way for voices to be heard is through the survey process. This author knows that not everybody feels comfortable sharing their thoughts verbally. This offers a chance to do it in anonymously should they wish to be part of the conversation. As mentioned, to offer a ritual alternative, those deciding to offer contributions via the survey will be afforded the same dignity as those seeking a conversation. They will be asked if they wish to participate, as well, they will be asked if they are comfortable engaging in a particular line of questioning (i.e. faith and faith expression). Results from these surveys could be used in the personal discussions at the hoped-for boards.

We can see that the conversation pivots around the model and methodology presented in this thesis-project. The author hopes that the ritual that is this process, because it consciously attempts to be ritual practice with integrity, will incribe not only the students, but also those who are charged with their care. This will be no mean feat.

¹¹ This author believes this line of questioning would be beneficial to consider at a faculty/staff meeting, departmental meetings, and even Augustinian house chapters.

There is much in the general administration of the school (attitudes, rituals, policies) that militates against positive transformation. At the core, this is a systemic issue. Most of the policies and programs speak with short-term, institutional-securing focus. But with the tradition as a counter-point, this author does believe that the process can at least begin, if not take hold, even with a handful of engaged students, faculty, parents, etc.

Continuing on the Journey

We come to the final part of the process which is what we are doing now, reflecting and seeking a way to ritually transform St. Rita High School through a pastoral response. Also, we take the time to reflect again on the process, change what needs to be changed, and continue to ritually incribe the St. Rita High School Community. As can be seen, this dynamic is ongoing, and the author suggests that such a dynamic be somehow integrated into the life of the St. Rita High School community.

CLOSING THOUGHTS, OPENING REMARKS

When confronted by a behavioral situation in the context of a high school, it may be more expedient to focus on containment and discipline. This author understands the importance of good order in an educational environment; even Augustine sought out schools in Rome at which to teach because the students he taught at Carthage were “almost like madmen [where they would] burst in recklessly and disrupt the discipline each master has established to ensure that his pupils make progress.”¹² The example of Augustine notwithstanding, this author suggests that issues of discipline are part of the larger ritual behavior of the students. Those ritual behaviors are also impacted by the

¹² *Confessions* V, 8:14 = Rotelle, 85.

relationships and rituals out of which they are a part, not only with family and friends, but also with teachers and coaches.

The daily relationships and the rituals that express those relationships in the various contexts of the students' lives are as important as the ritual of the Mass that is done in the school chapel. This does not denigrate the importance of the Mass; however, it does bring to the daily rituals a dignity that up to this point seemed lacking. Also, this dignity is not necessarily in the rituals *per se*, but rather is rooted in those who are participants in the ritual. Thus, with ritual comes ethical responsibility. The ethics of ritual have the ability to inscribe those who participate in them. This is not only about being affected, but also about being effected (transformed).

This author is not absolving responsibility from the young men in their actions; however, taking into consideration their ages, it is contingent to educate and form them regarding their rituals (behaviors). Because of the ethics involved, and the potential formation that can occur, those in authority must be aware that the onus falls upon them to practice the method more intentionally so that ritual inscription can occur, primarily through the relationships that they have with the students. This is not about containment and control; this at core, is about the value of each person, this is about the value of the journey, this ultimately is about being one in mind and heart on the way to God.

APPENDIX A*Religious Affiliation as Listed on Registration Form for St. Rita High School*

African Methodist -1

Apostolic -1

Baptist – 16

Catholic – 597

Eastern Orthodox – 1

Greek Orthodox – 2

Jewish – 1

Lutheran – 2

Methodist – 2

None – 19

Other Christian – 39

Pentecostal – 2

Presbyterian – 2

Protestant – 2

Sanctified – 1

Serbian Orthodox – 1

No Answer - 17

APPENDIX B

I _____ a Rita Man of the class of _____,

Solemnly Pledge:

- To be the best Rita Man I can be by using the gifts and talents God has given me
- To be a Rita Man who is true to the Augustinian core values of Veritas, Unitas, Caritas – truth, unity and love – that St. Rita of Cascia High School is built upon
- To be a Rita Man and a Christian gentleman and follow the example of our patroness, St. Rita, in being a true peacemaker in my family, school and community
- To be a Rita man who loves God and maintains a personal relationship with God and will never be afraid to show and live this out in my life
- To be a Rita Man who respects myself, my parents and family, my fellow Rita brothers, the faculty, staff and all people whom I meet
- To be a Rita Man of integrity by always being honest, truthful and faithful
- To be a Rita Man who exhibits pride for my school and all associated with St. Rita
- To be a Rita Man who will know and follow the rules of our St. Rita Family that are set forth in the St. Rita Student/Parent Handbook
- To be a Rita Man who will take pride in myself by being in full dress code, free of facial hair and with a proper haircut
- To be Rita Man who will respect my peers and never resort to bullying or hazing or allow any of my peers to stoop to this behavior
- To be a Rita Man who will never possess any alcohol or illegal drugs anywhere on or near campus or at any school sponsored events, and understands that if I do so, I am telling St. Rita to expel me
- To be a Rita Man who understands that I am an ambassador for St. Rita High School in out of school and shall not harm or embarrass the more than 100 year-old reputation of St. Rita High School by my actions or words in school, at athletic events or in the community
- I am a Rita Man of integrity and I promise to be faithful to what I have pledged in this *Tolle Lege Encounter*. I am a Rita Man of integrity and I promise to communicate with my parents and school about any problems or concerns that I may be experiencing. I am a Rita Man of integrity and I ask God's blessing upon me and my school and I pray for the powerful intercession of my patroness, St. Rita of Cascia.
- I am a Rita Man of integrity and by my signature, I promise to live by what is written here, and to abide by the St. Rita Student Handbook, for the duration of my time as a student at St. Rita of Cascia High School and I request and expect my parents and school to hold me accountable to this pledge.

Rita Man _____ Date: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____

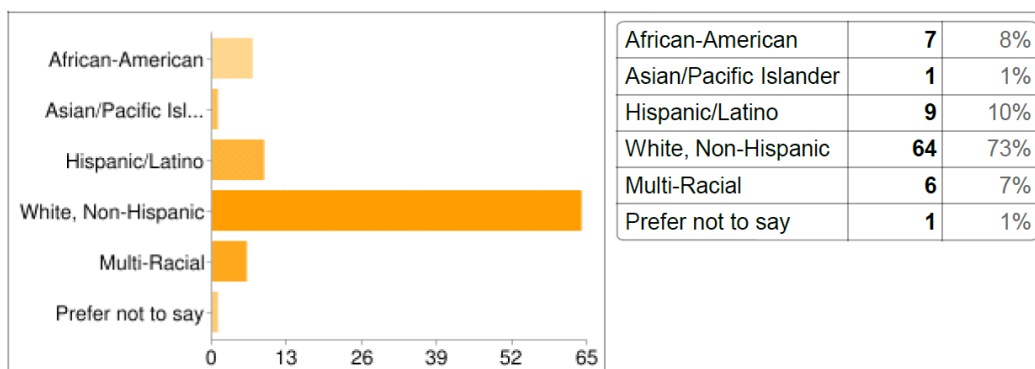
St. Rita of Cascia High School Representative _____

APPENDIX C

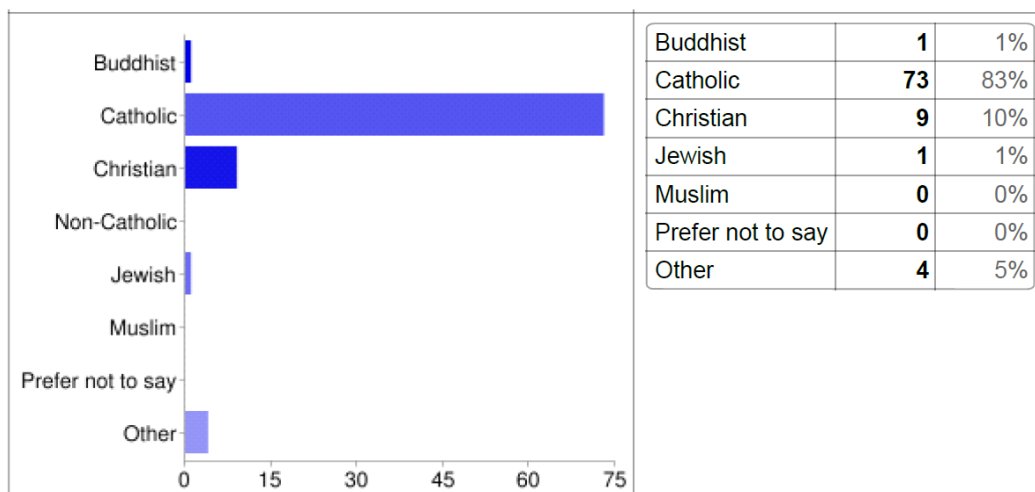
STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS¹

STUDENT IDENTITY

1. My ethnic/racial background is:



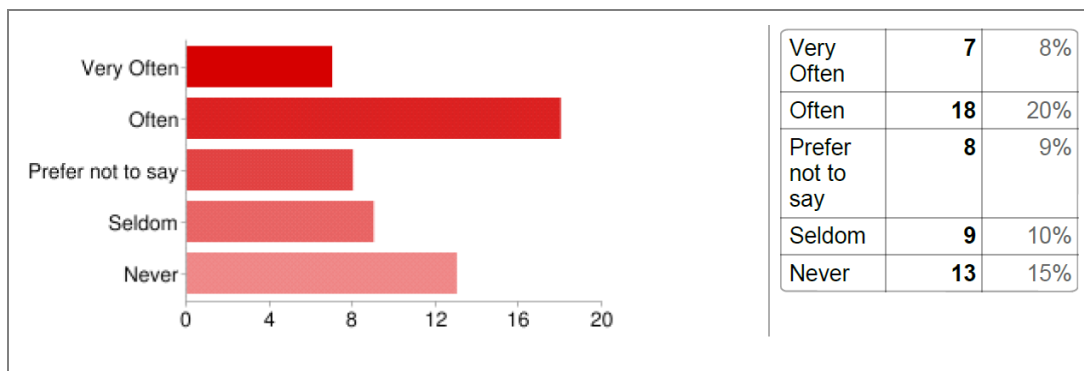
2. My religious background is:



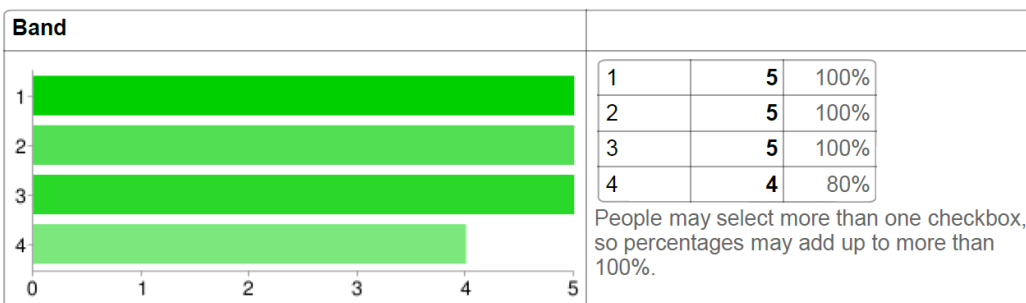
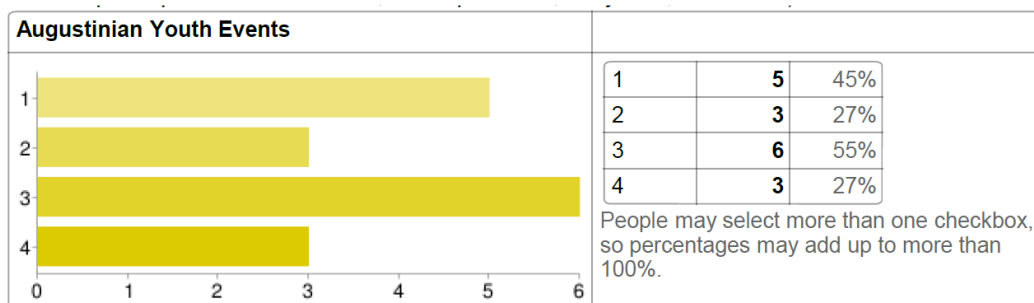
¹ Where there are asterisks (*), it is an indication of a name of a person known in the community. This is done to protect privacy. Also, the statement “[Expletive deleted.]” has been used to replace vulgar or offensive language.

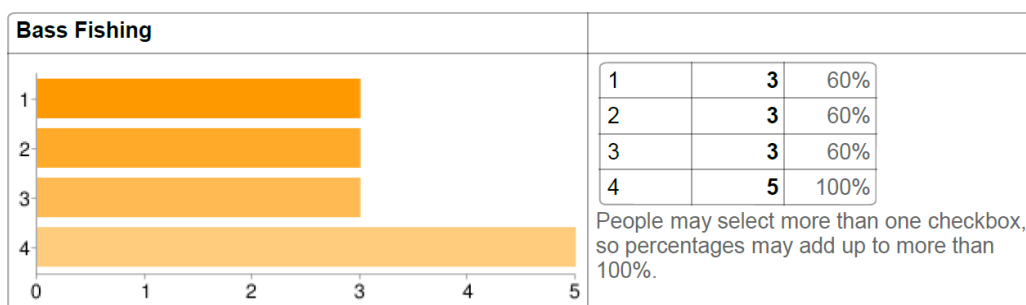
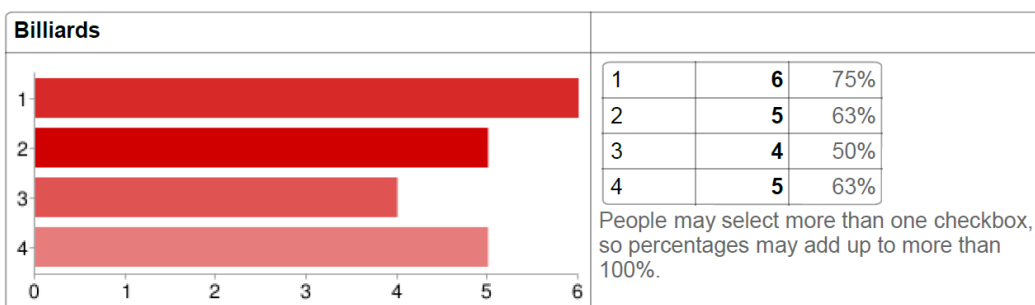
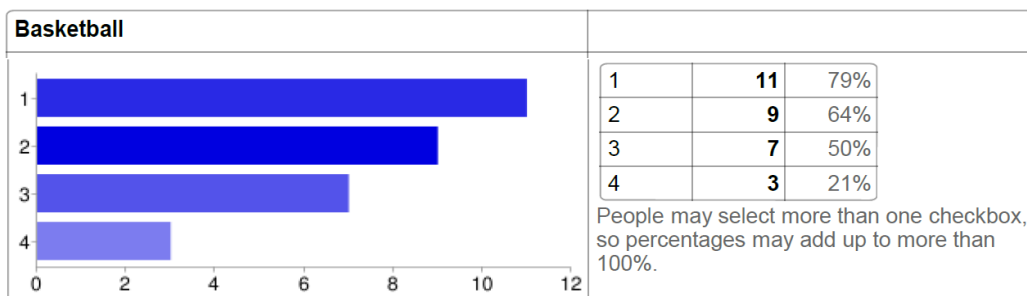
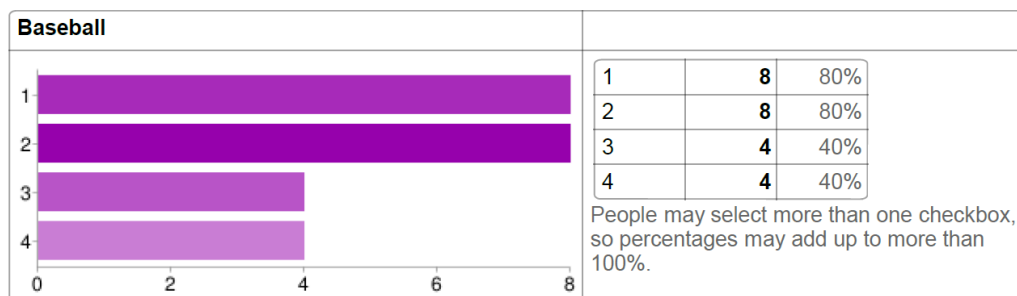
EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION

3. Respond to this statement if you have NEVER been involved in an activity. This statement is about activities that normally occur outside of the scheduled school day: I have NEVER been an active member in any activities at St. Rita, but I have gone to events as a fan or observer.

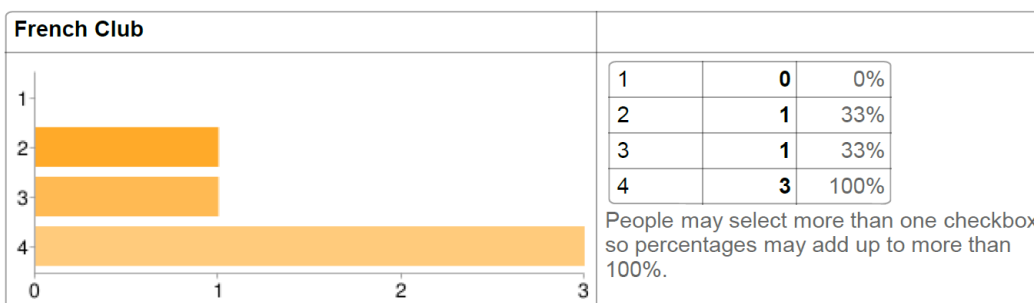
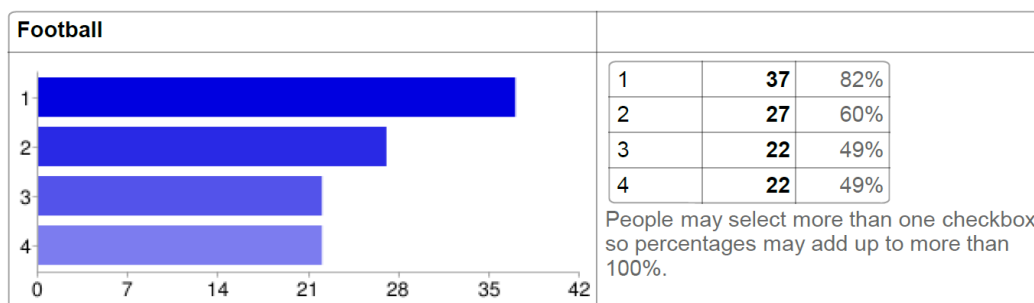
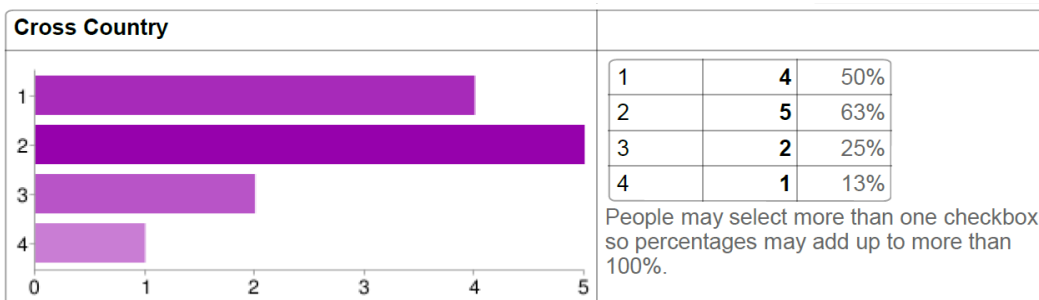
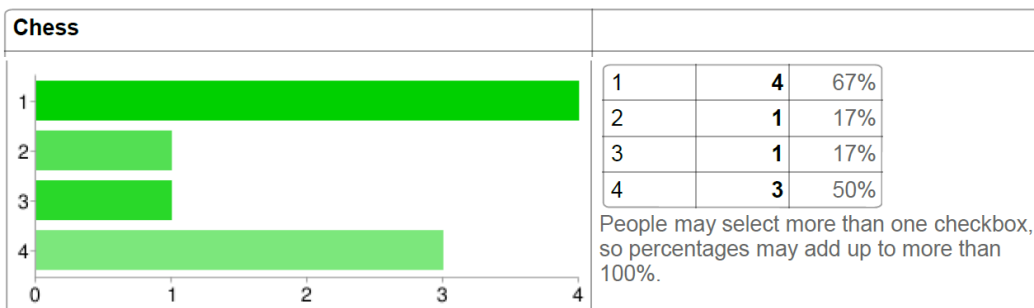
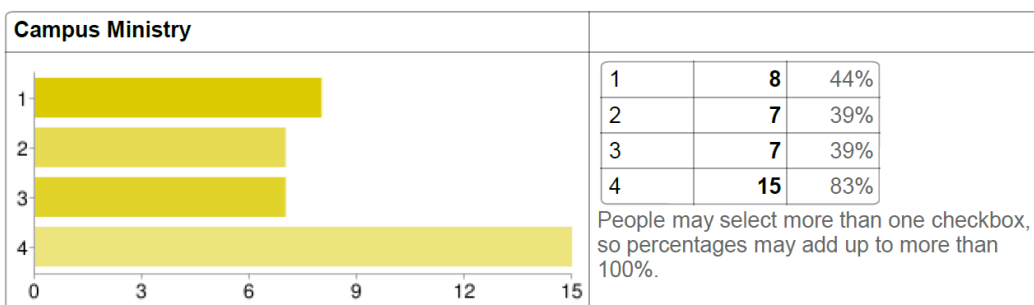


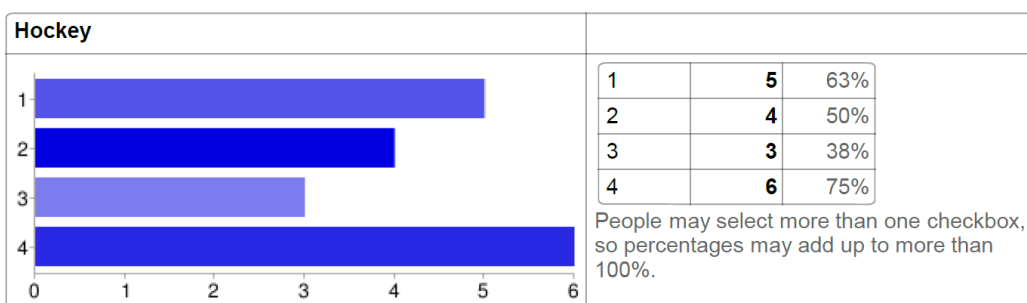
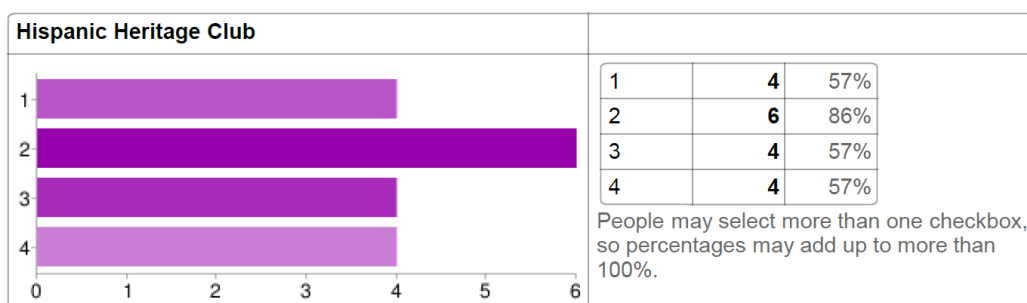
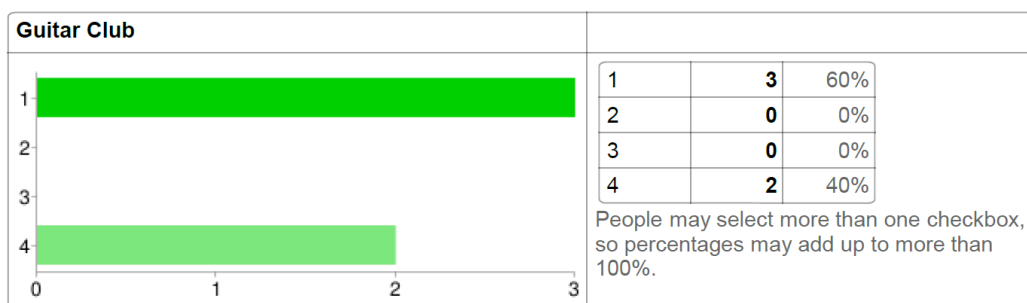
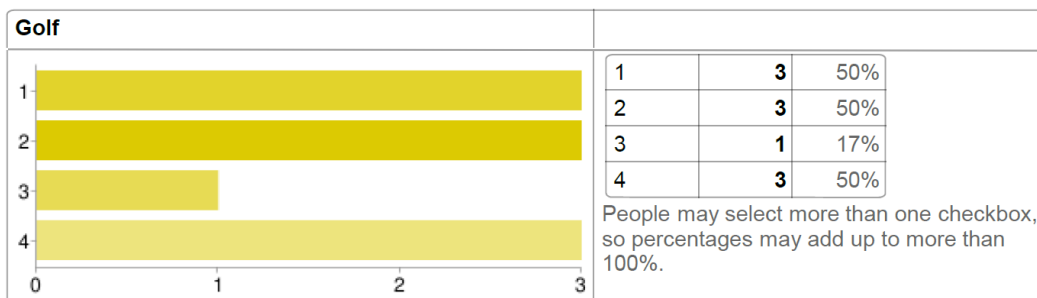
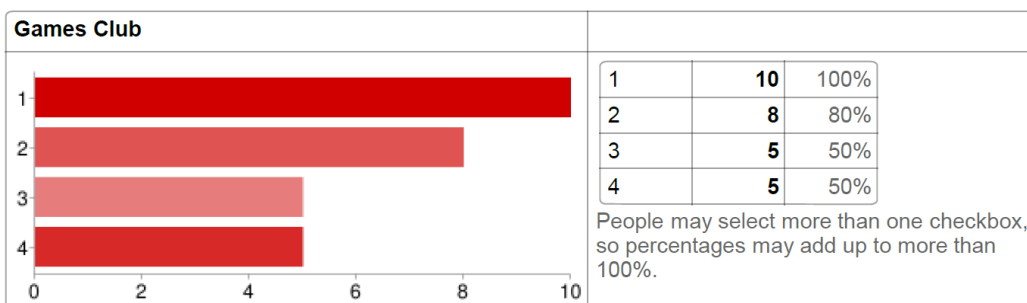
4. Mark those activities in which you were an active member in each extracurricular activity at St. Rita (even if you did not play regularly). Mark each of the years that you were an active member.
(1 =Freshman Year, 2=Sophomore Year, 3=Junior Year, 4=Senior Year)

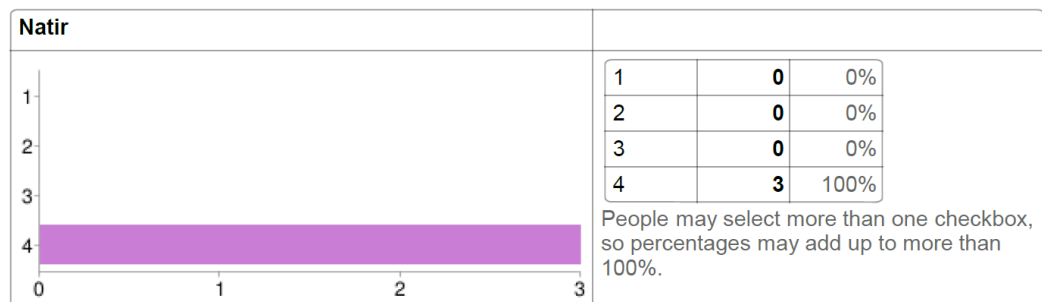
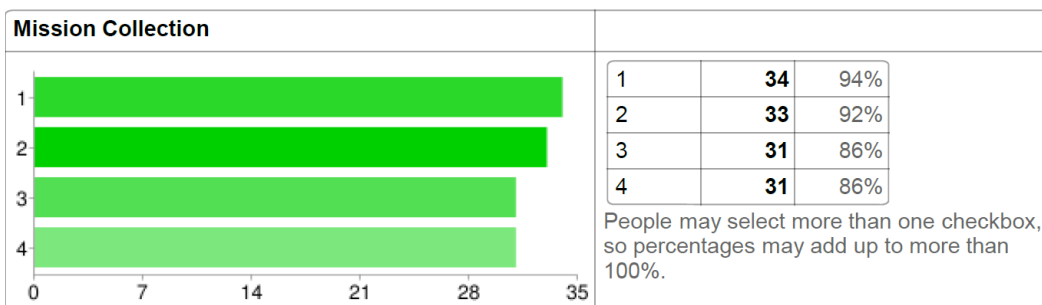
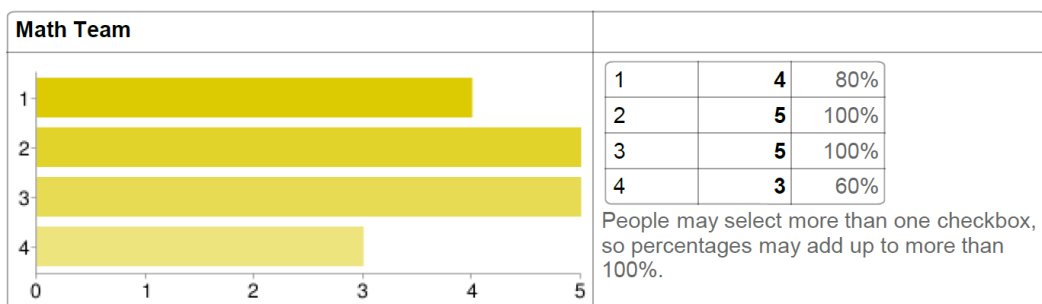
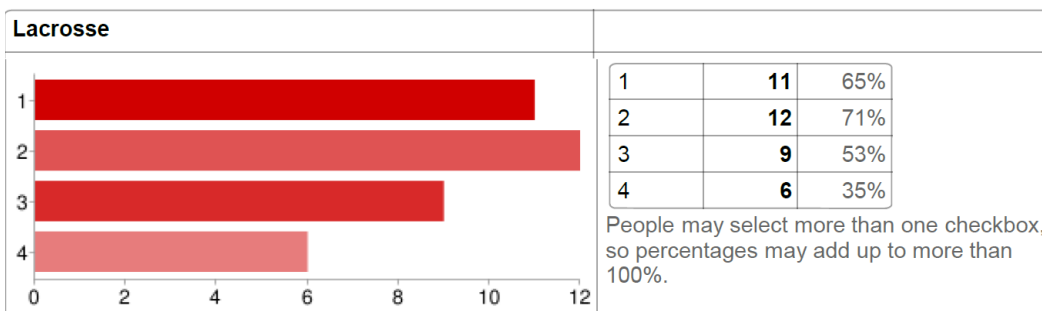
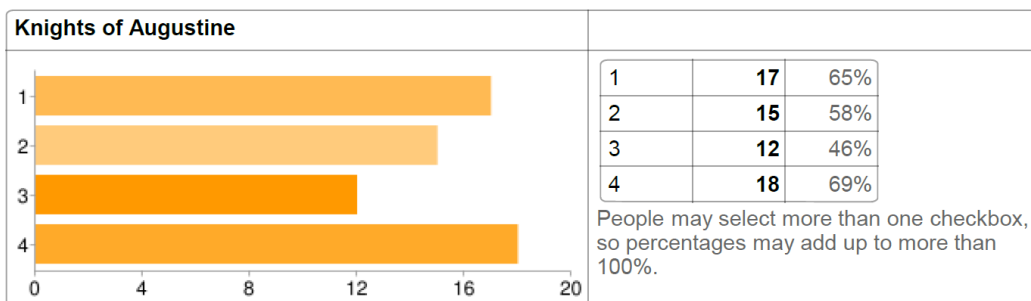


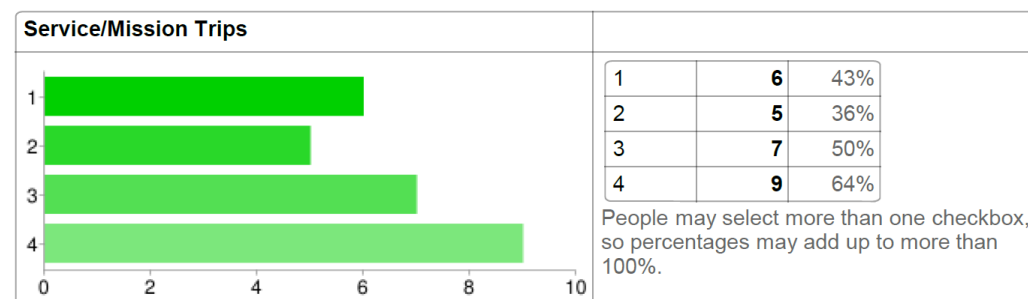
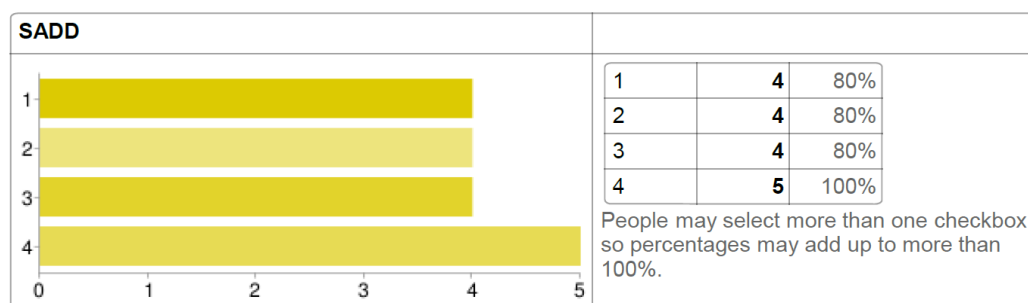
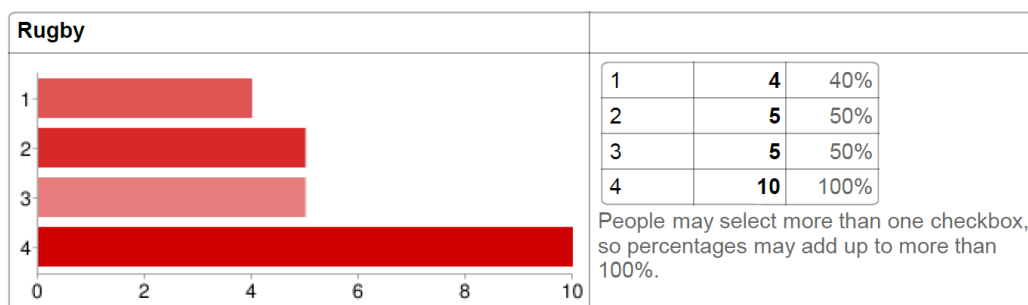
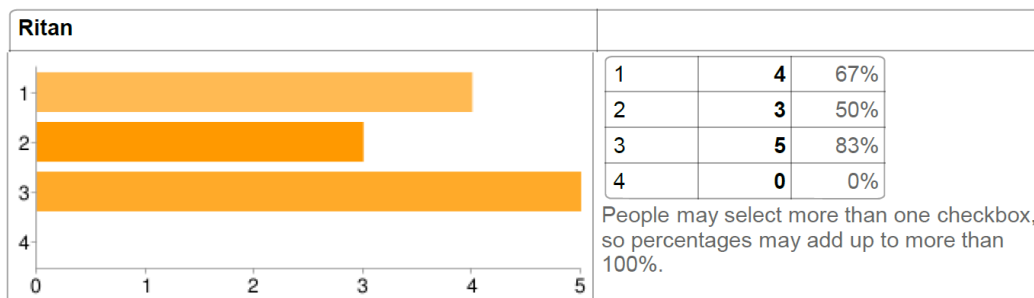
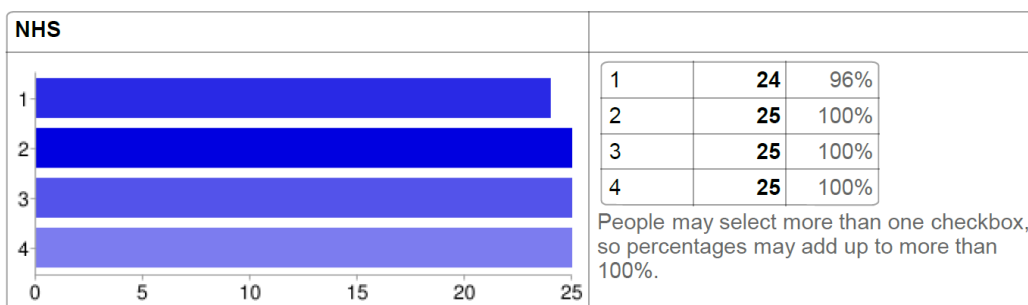


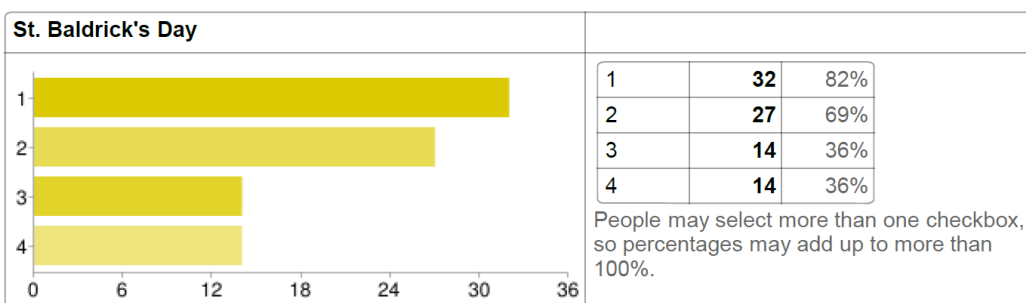
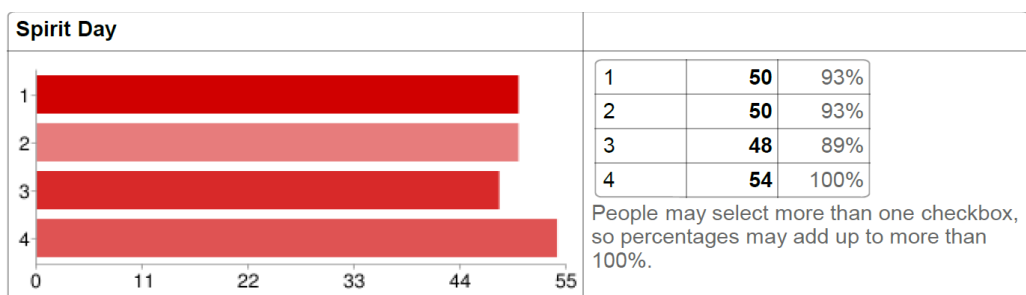
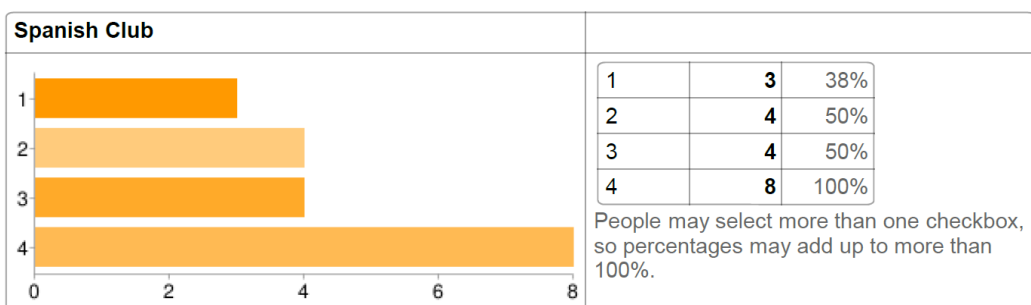
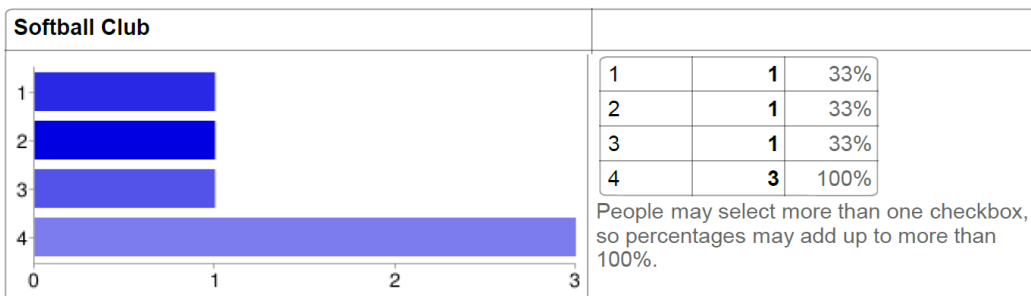
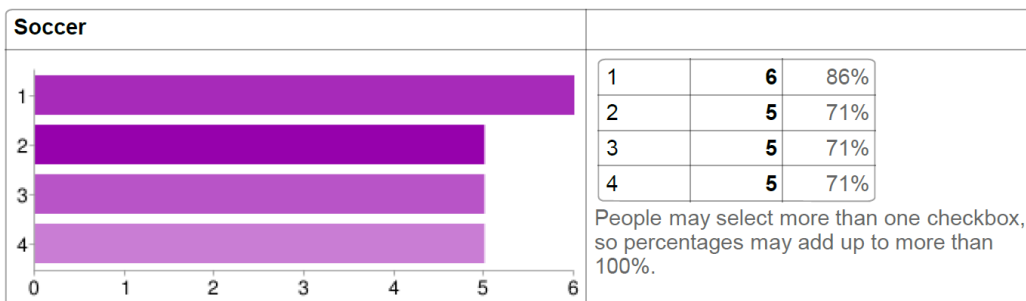
Bowling
No responses yet for this question.

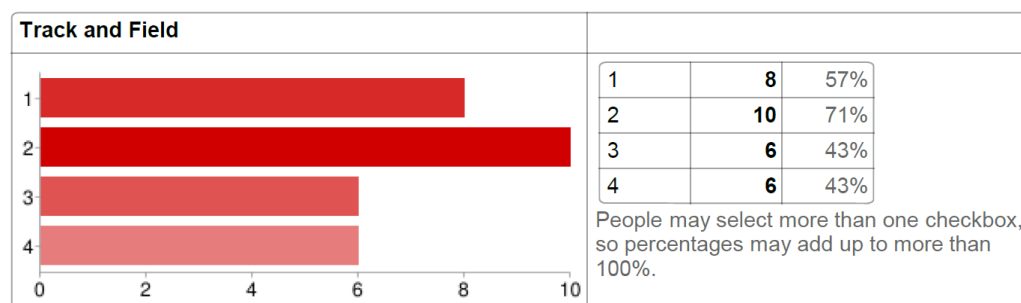
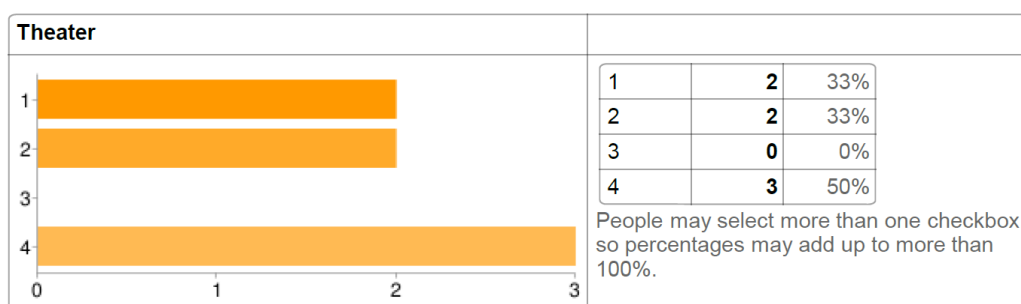
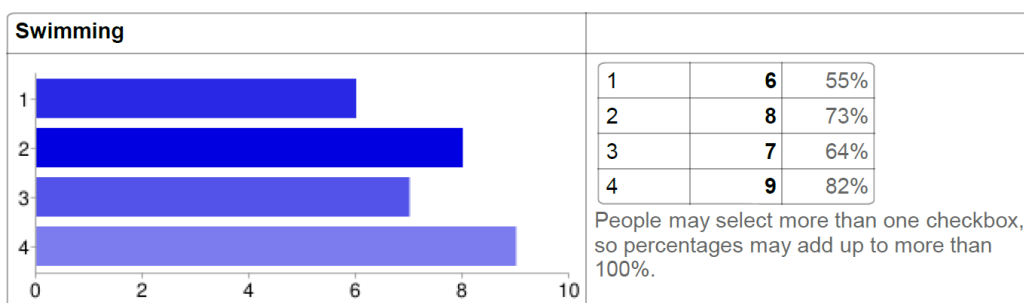
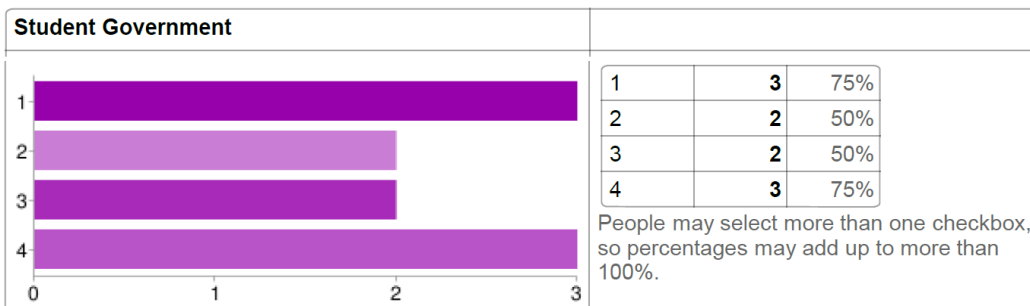
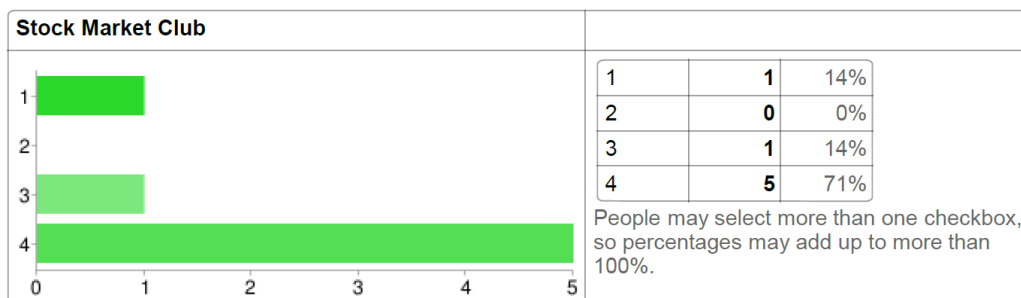


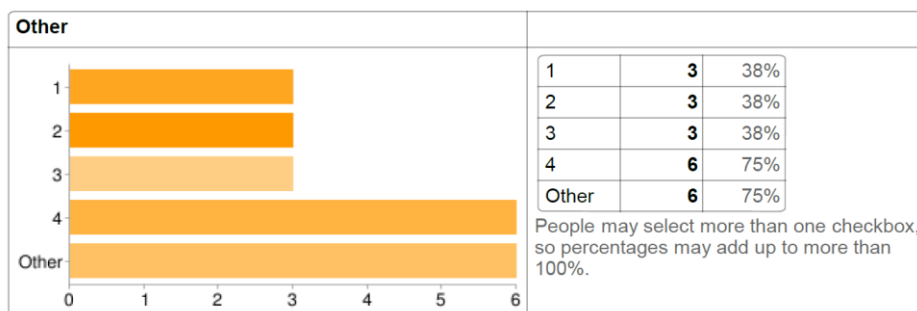
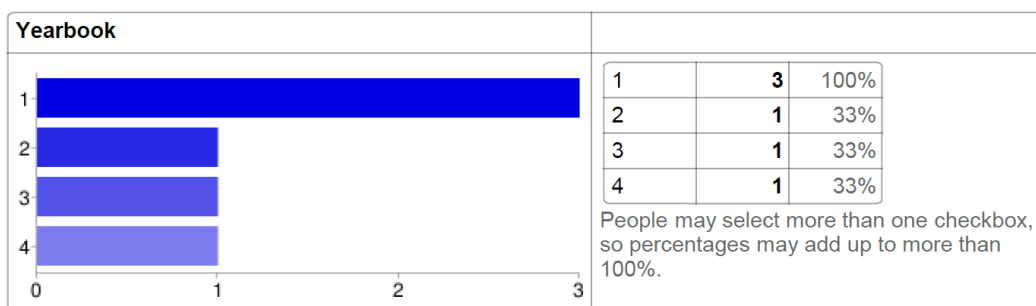
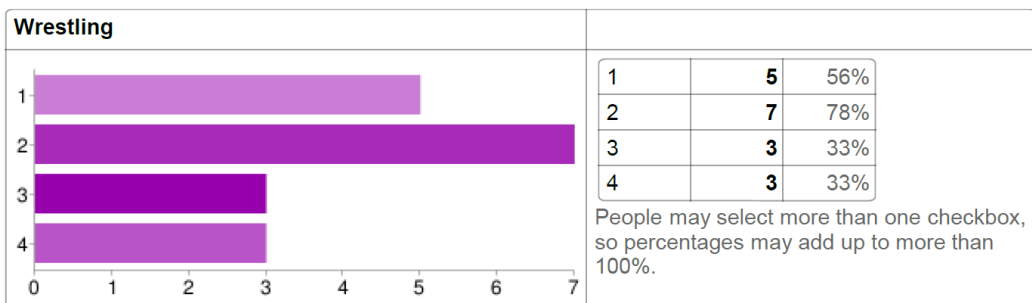
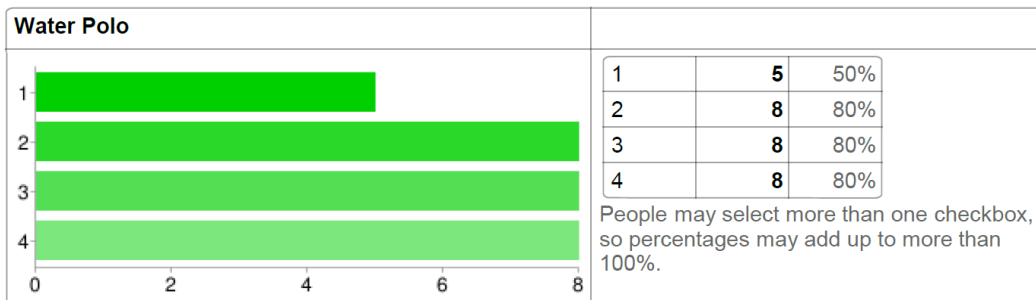
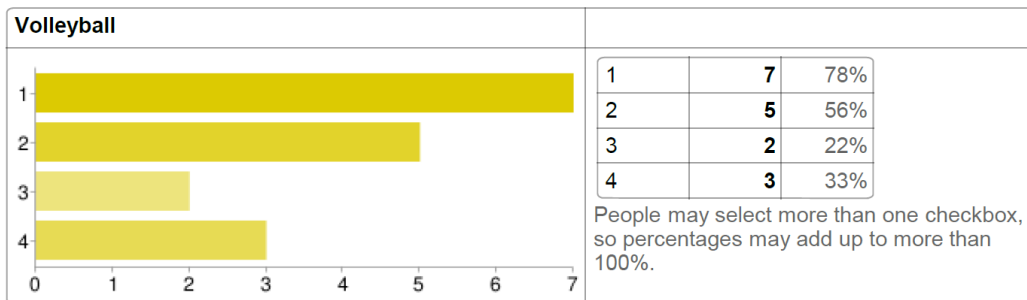












CORE VALUES

This section is about the core values and how you understand them. Values are important in guiding the way we live. The core values at St. Rita High School are **Truth** (Veritas), **Unity** (Unitas) and **Love** (Caritas). Please write a word, phrase or sentence for each of the following:

5. To me, the core value of TRUTH means:

- Always honest
- Be honest (3)
- Be honest in all endeavors and in all the things we say
- Be honest with others
- Being able to be yourself around everyone and anyone associated with St. Rita and its surrounding community.
- Being an honest person
- Being honest and responsible
- Being honest with yourself and god
- Being honest with yourself and others (2)
- Being loyal to the school
- Being true
- Being true to yourself
- Being true to yourself and others
- Being truthful in daily activities
- Being truthful with yourself and others
- Being your real self in front of people all the time
- Being yourself and to everyone around you including god
- Dad
- Discovering God inside the people of our community.
- Do what's right (2)
- Don't trust anyone
- Faith
- Honesty (22)
- Honesty
- Honesty and general integrity
- Honesty, being trustworthy
- I don't know
- Integrity
- Joke
- Looking to discover yourself and others.
- Love
- Nice
- No clue
- No such thing
- Not lying
- Reliable
- So Southside
- St. Rita
- Strong moral fiber
- Telling the truth (5)
- To be an honest and genuine person
- To be honest
- To be honest with yourself
- To be true to everybody and not lie
- To be true to yourself and only do what you feel is right
- To be truthful
- To not lie
- Trust
- Trust in god
- Truth (5)
- Truthfulness with my fellow Rita brothers (2)
- Veritas (2)
- Where you live your life in honestly in all aspects.

6. To me, the core value of UNITY means:

- Acting together as a school
- All one
- All together as one
- Always help someone

- Be a part of your community
- Be close like a family
- Be friends with others
- Be friends with anyone and everyone
- Be there for each other
- Be there for others in their time of need
- Being a family
- Being faithful with your family and your community.
- Being in a community that helps each other achieve their goals
- Being one with others
- Being one with the people you love.
- Being together
- Being united
- Being united with one another and supporting one another.
- Brotherhood (7)
- Camaraderie between Ritamen
- Coming together
- Cool
- Experiencing God through your peers
- Family (4)
- Family atmosphere
- Football
- Friend
- Friendship (2)
- Gathering as a community and looking out for each other.
- I don't know
- Joke
- Loyalty and togetherness
- Mom
- No such thing
- One body, mind, and soul in everything you do
- Respect
- Setting aside differences
- So Southside
- St. Rita
- Staying together
- Stick to yourself
- Sticking together when others need help
- That the whole community comes together to support each other in whatever we do.
- The be united with your friends and family
- The school be one as a whole
- To be one, everyone together
- To me, the core value of UNITY means:
- To stay close and open with your friends, family, teammates and church members
- To treat your class mates as brothers
- To work together
- Together (5)
- Togetherness (4)
- Treating my Rita brothers like the family they are too me (2)
- Treating the people around you like brothers
- Treating your peers as family
- Trust one another
- Unitas (2)
- Unity (5)
- Unity With God
- We are all one
- Where you and your family and friends and classmates work together, be together and be united through a bond.
- Working together (2)
- Working with each other to achieve a greater good and your own individual goals

7. To me, the core value of LOVE means:

- Acting out care
- Always being nice to people and accepting everyone
- Always be true to friends
- Always helping others
- Being nice (2)
- Being open to everyone
- Better man
- Brotherhood (2)
- Care
- Caring (3)
- Caring about one another
- Caring and kindness
- Caring for one another (2)
- Caring for others first
- Caritas (2)
- Change
- Everything
- Family (4)
- Give money to charity
- Grandma
- Helping others
- Honor
- I don't know
- Joke
- Keeping the love for the school
- Kissing other dudes
- Love (5)
- Love each other as God loves us
- Love everyone
- Love everyone equally
- Love everything
- Love God
- Love my Rita brothers and god like family (2)
- Love one another like God showed us
- Love only hurts you
- Love people
- Loving everyone
- Loving everyone equally
- Loving everyone no matter what their flaws
- Loving one another
- Loving others in light of their flaws
- Loving your neighbor as you love yourself. Doing everything to show your love and gratefulness to God in your interactions with others.
- Loving yourself, others, and God
- Loyalty
- My family
- No clue
- No Hate
- No such thing
- Purity
- Respect for all life
- Respecting and caring for all those around us.
- Show appreciation and love for everyone and everything
- Showing compassion.
- So Southside
- St. Rita
- Striving to show the same kind of love Jesus showed.
- To care and/or respect all others
- To go out of your way to help someone
- To love one another
- To love yourself and everyone else
- To put others before yourself and show the most respect for others, caring for others.
- To show compassion and care in everything you do and everyone around you including God
- To show people compassion and appreciation
- To take care and cherish one another
- To take care of
- To treat others like you wanted to be treated
- Truth

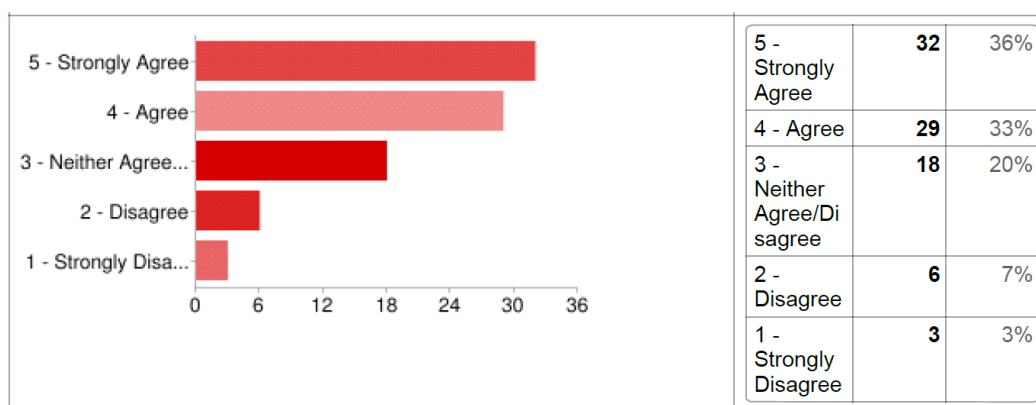
- Try to respect everyone as best as you can
- Welcomed
- When one of our own is struggling we help them out and we never put others down for what they like to do or what they have done.
- You love others

CORE VALUES AND HOW YOU EXPERIENCE THEM

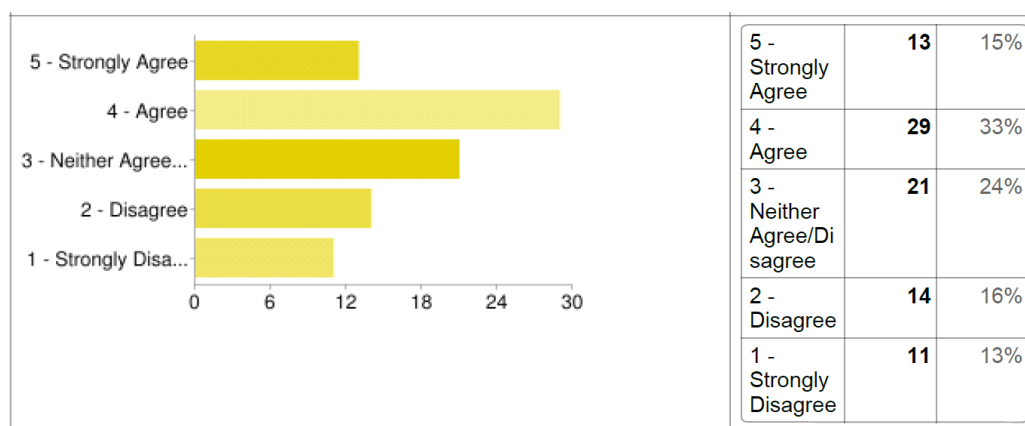
Using the five-point scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”, please indicate your beliefs about the following statements.

5-Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3 -Neither Agree/Disagree 2- Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

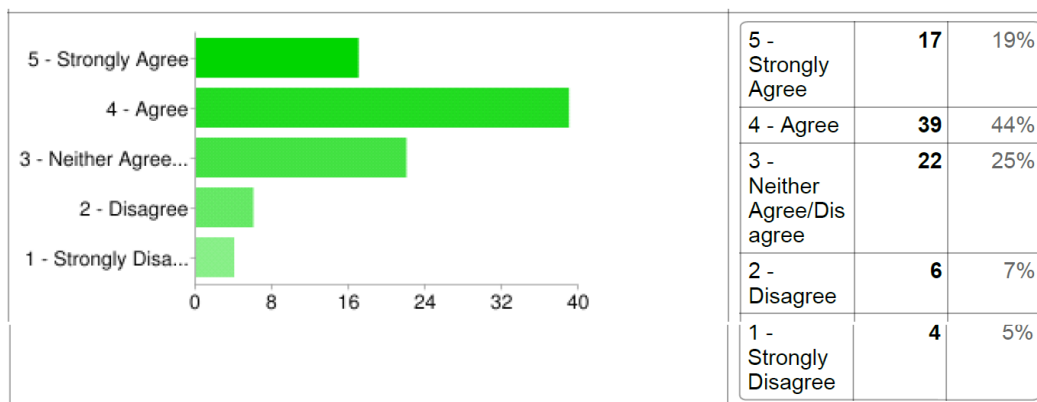
8. I would feel comfortable telling someone what the core values of St. Rita are and what they mean to me.



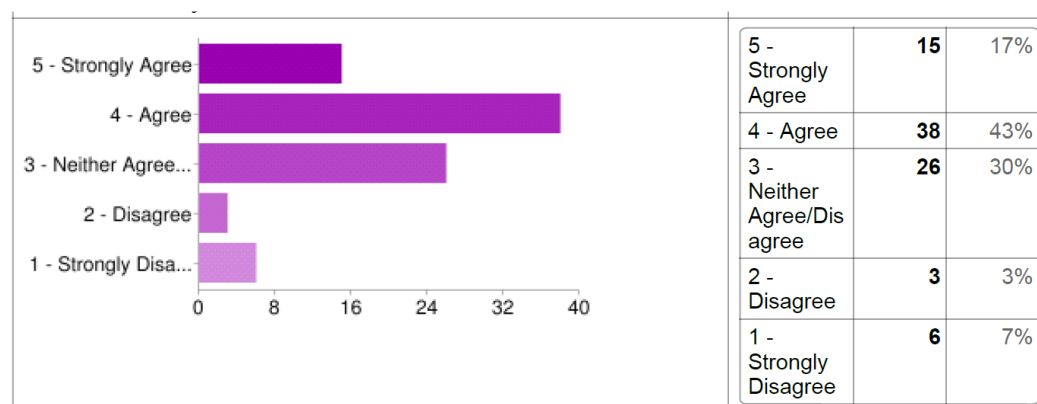
9. The Tolle Lege Experience and the Tolle Lege Pledge that I signed when I first became a Rita Man helped me understand the meaning of the core values.



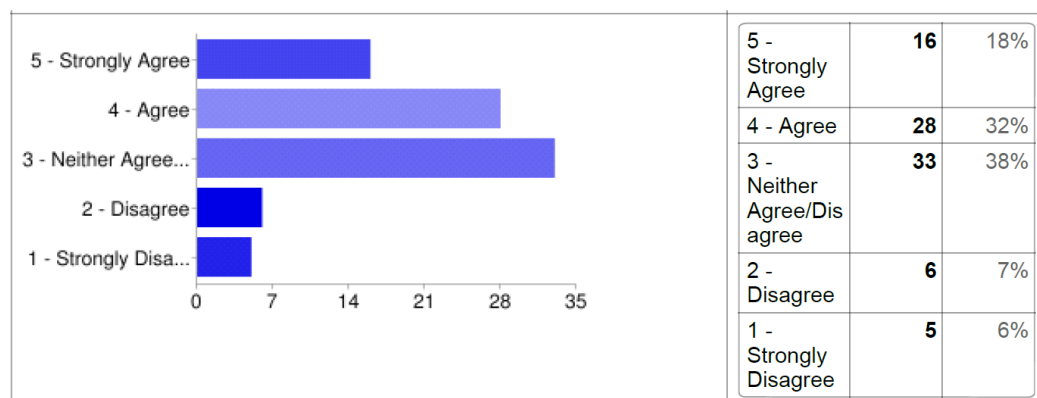
10. I try to live the core values at school.



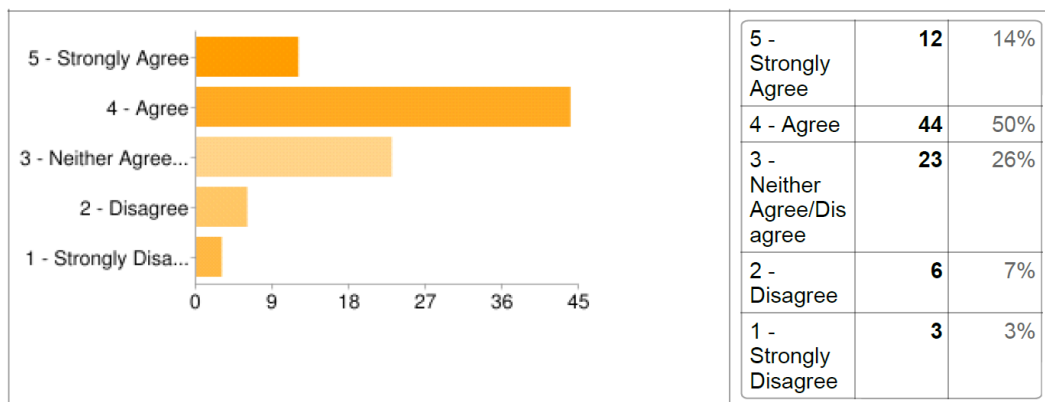
11. I try to live the core values at home.



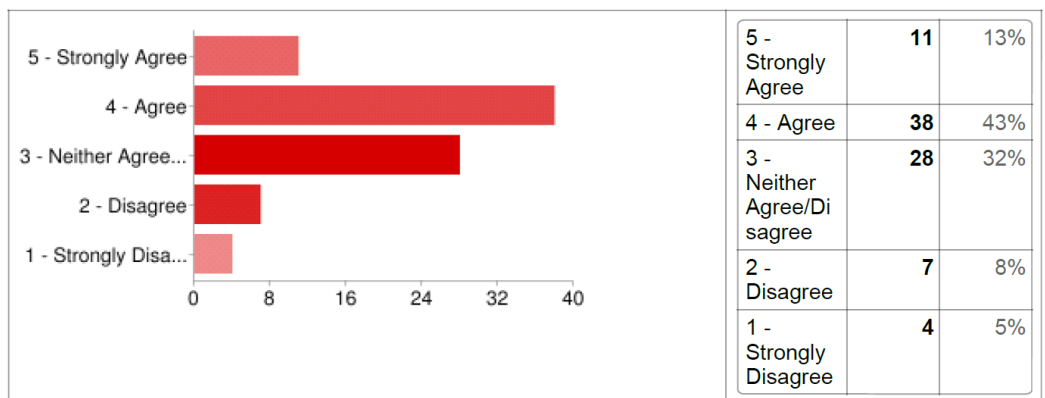
12. I try to live the core values when I am with my friends.



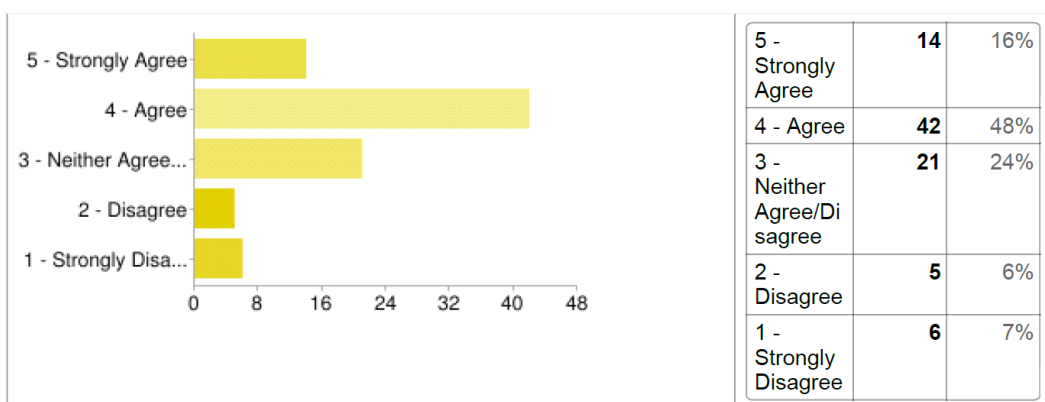
13. I try to live the core values in my classes.



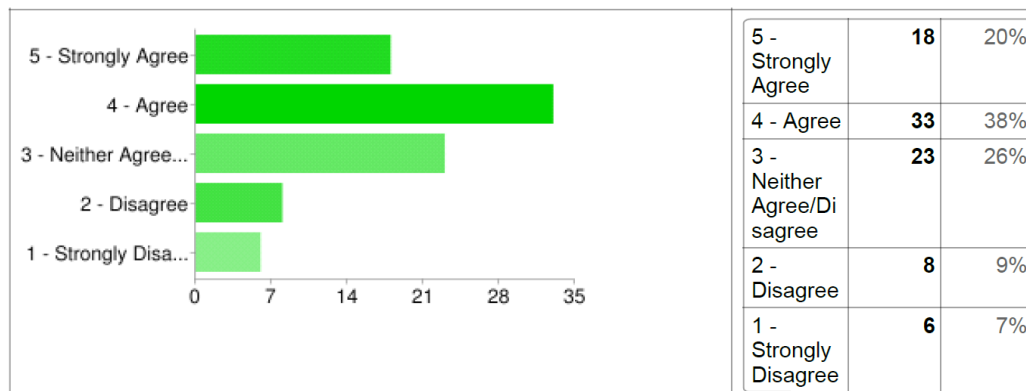
14. I try to relate with my teachers in ways that reflect the core values.



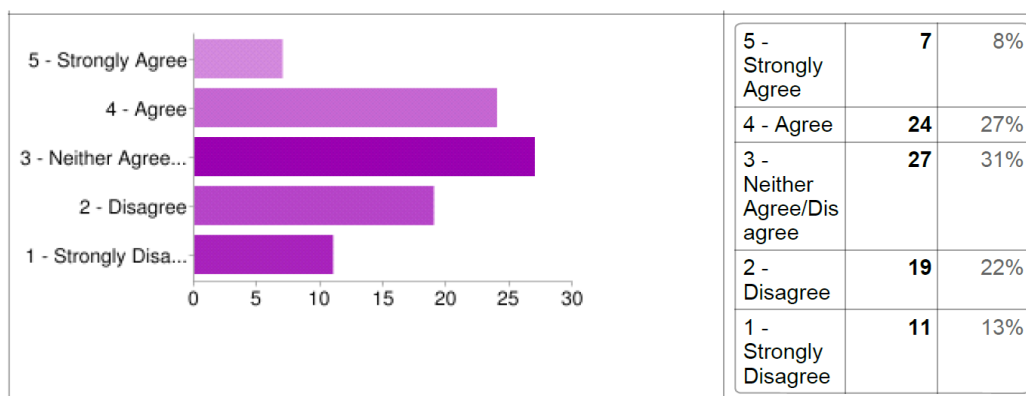
15. I try to live the core values in the way that I treat other students in the hallways, lunchroom and locker rooms.



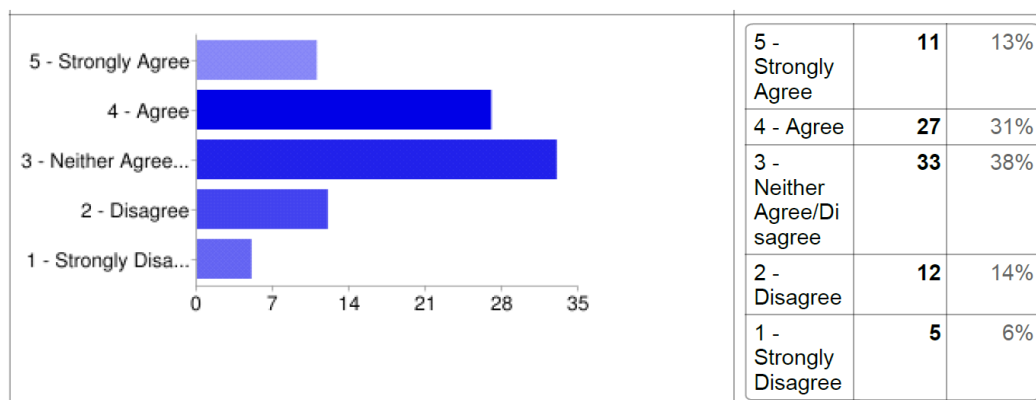
16. I try to live the core values in the activities and sports that I am involved in as a participant and that I attend as a spectator.



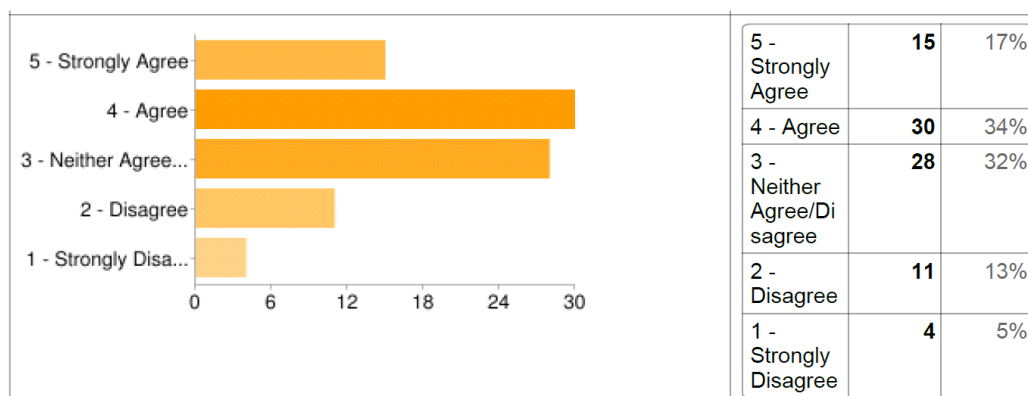
17. Most students try to live the core values in their classes.



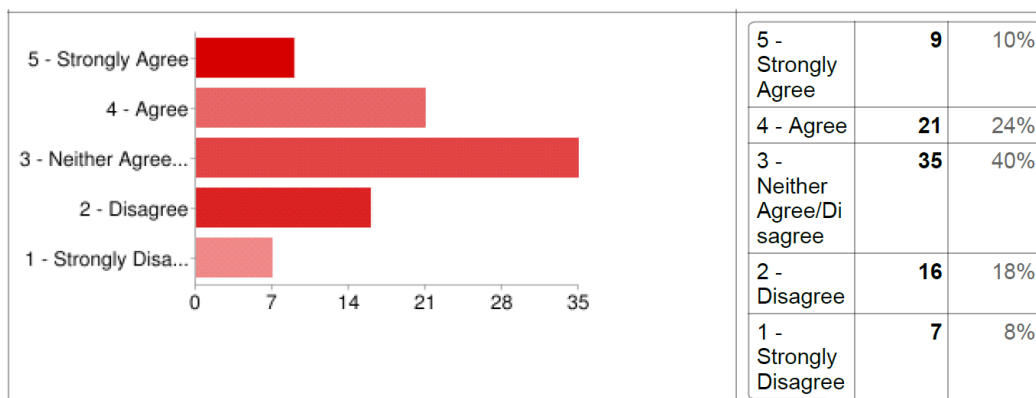
18. Most students and teachers try to live the core values in their relationships with each other.



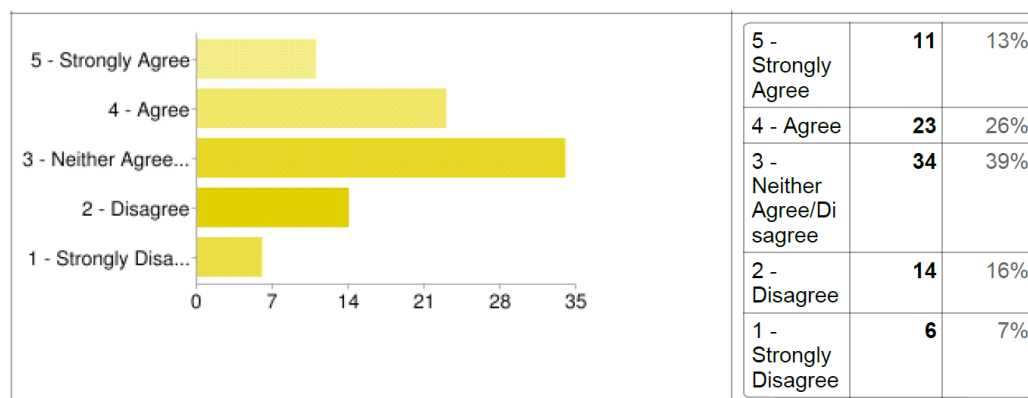
19. My teachers' actions towards me give the impression that they understand and embrace the core values.



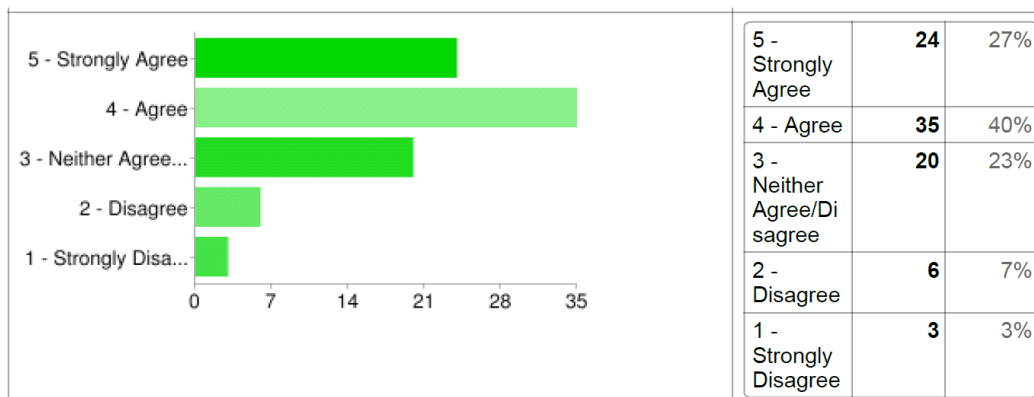
20. Most students try to live the core values in the way they treat each other in the hallways, lunchroom and locker rooms.



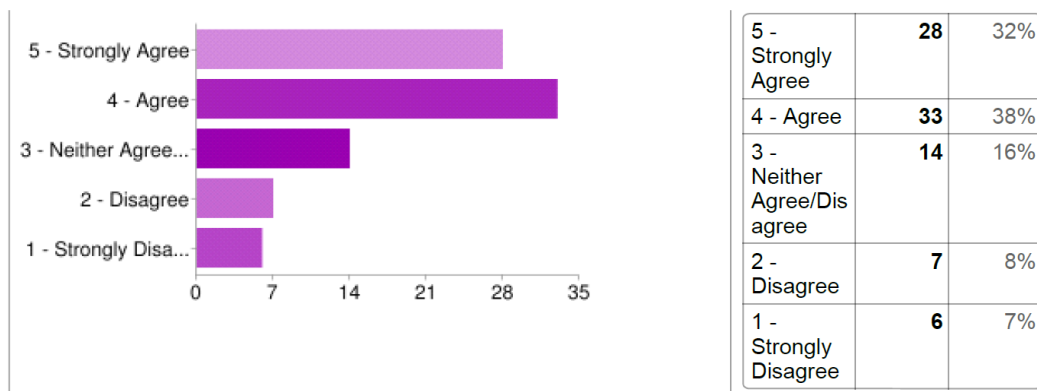
21. Most students try to live the core values in the activities and sports as both spectators and participants.



22. I believe that the core values will influence my life in a positive way after my time at St. Rita.



23. I feel like a valued member of St. Rita High School.

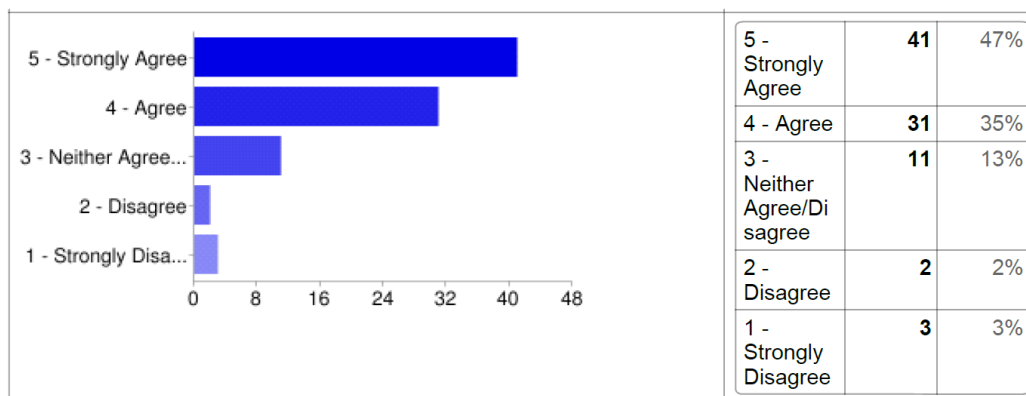


WHO INFLUENCES YOU

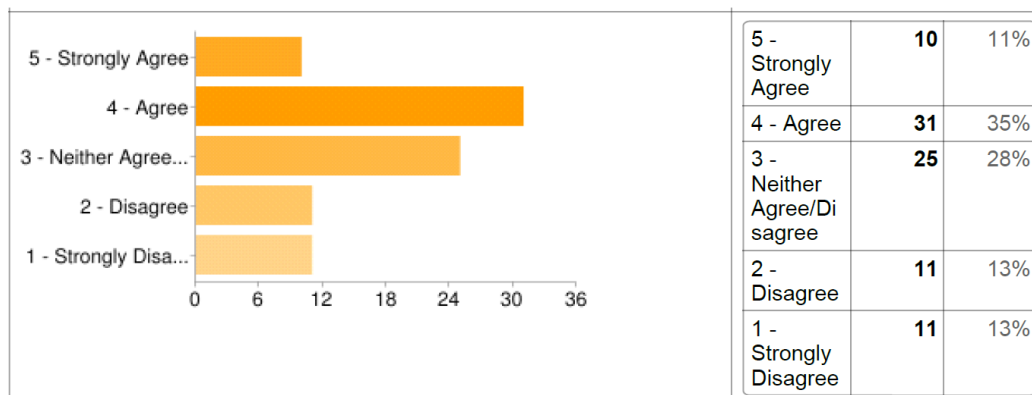
Using the five-point scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”, please indicate your beliefs about the following statements.

5-Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3 -Neither Agree/Disagree 2- Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

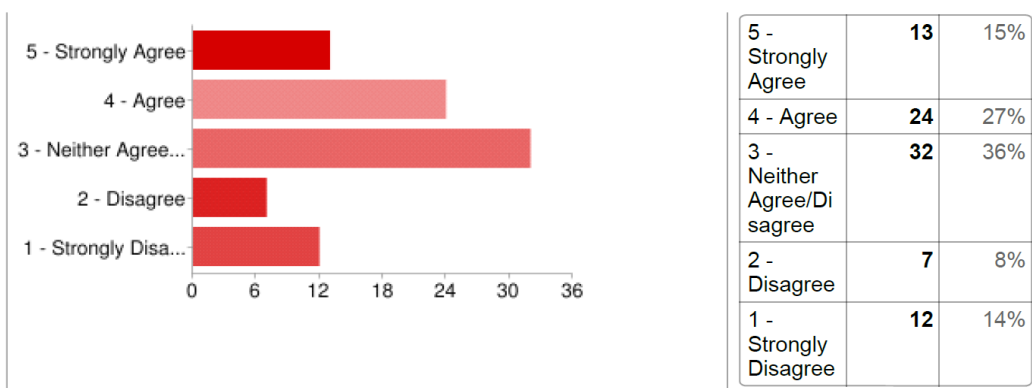
24. My family has a strong influence on the way I act in my daily life.



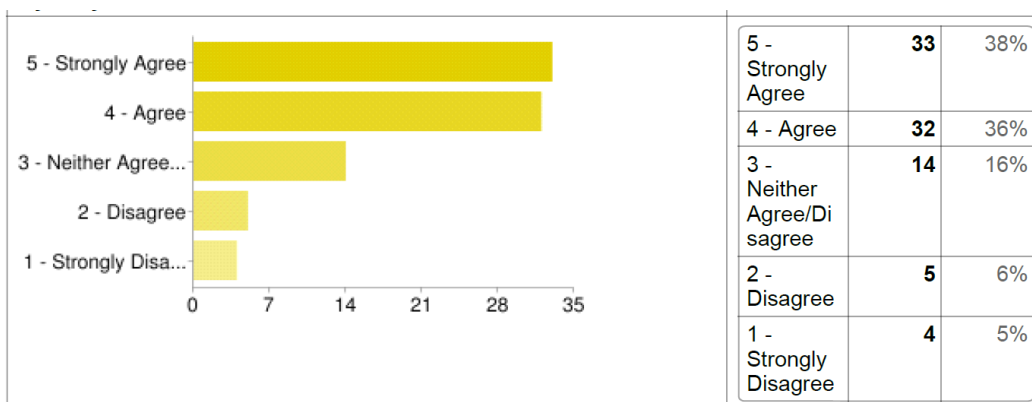
25. My teachers and the Augustinians have a strong influence on the way I act in my daily life.



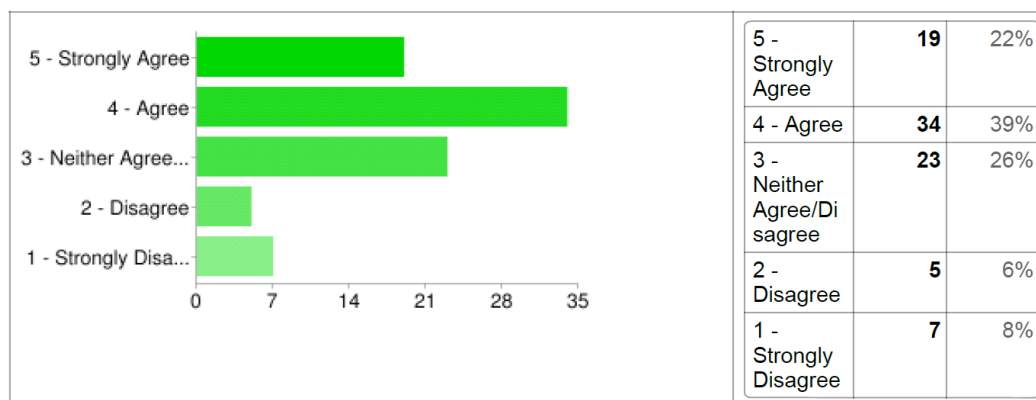
26. My Parish/faith community and its leaders have a strong influence on the way I act in my daily life.



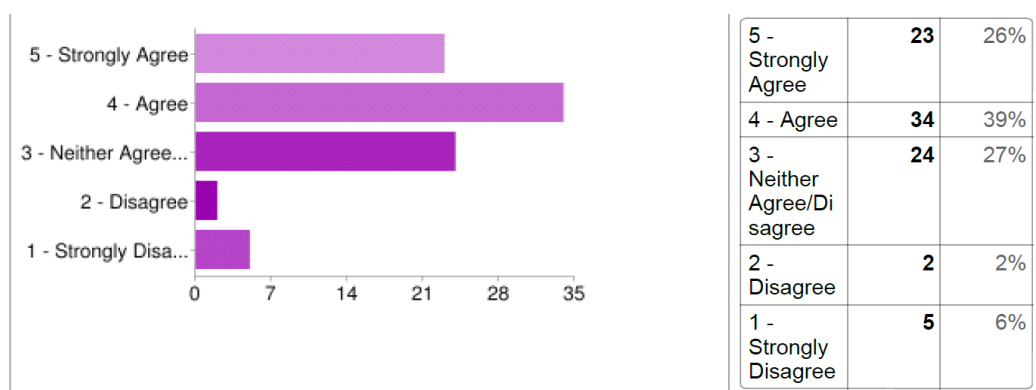
27. My friends have a strong influence on the way I act in my daily life.



28. My religious upbringing has a strong influence on the way I act in my daily life.



29. My personal relationship has a strong influence on the way I act in my daily life.



30. Who do you most admire and why?

- 50 cent because he got shot 9 times
- Alexander Ovechkin. He's a great hockey player.
- Anyone who has reached their goals, because it shows me that no matter what's the problem you can solve it and make it
- At St Rita ***** has been a great influence on me because with cross country swimming and water polo we shared some really fun times
- Cousin he did so much for everyone
- Derek Jeter because he is a biracial angel sent to teach us unity, love, and understanding.
- Family & friends. cuz they're great.
- Family and friends because they are always there for me
- Family there awesome
- *** ** because he acts as a true Priest and Ritaman
- *** ** because he's helped me through so much these four years.
- God, because no matter what we do god forgive us for everything.
- I admire any individual who works hard and enjoys what they do. They have a good relationship with others and are a good example for the people around them.

- I admire ***** the most in life. This would be because he understands the way of Rita life and he is a great coach.
- I admire cool kids.
- I admire God the most because God is good.
- I admire Josh Hamilton, a major league baseball player who is a great role model and good example to everyone who comes into contact with him.
- I admire *** ***** the most. This is because he is a devote catholic who puts all others in front of himself. Along with being a St. Rita alumni, he has dedicated his time and money to making sure my brother and I receive the same prestigious education he did. This to me shows that he truly lives out his core values which were bestowed upon him during his time at St. Rita.
- I admire my brother and aunt because they are genuinely good people.
- I admire my brother because he is an honest and genuine person
- I admire my dad because he taught me how to be a man.
- I admire my Dad because he's a very hardworking man. I really wanna follow in his footsteps.
- I admire my dad because he's a good guy. He is the perfect example of a good man and dad.
- I admire my dad the most because he is a very influential figure in my life.
- I admire my entire family. I admire all my friends.
- I admire my father the most because of what he's done for me and how he's raised me
- I admire my older brother most. He is an example of a good person.
- I admire my parents because they provide for me a Catholic Education. I admire how well they are at being a parent.
- I admire my parents for all that they have done for me.
- I admire no one because if am confident in who if am.
- I admire no one because if am confident in who if am.
- I admire the guy in the mirror
- I most admire Jesus Christ because he defied the norms of society and went out of his way to embrace those shunned by others. His life serves as an example of what humanity can strive to accomplish.
- I most admire Michael Jordan because he has heart.
- I most admire my brother. I strive to have success in the same ways he has.
- I most admire my dad because of what he goes thru every day to send me to school. I admire how he does it because he has a bad back and still fights thru the pain.
- I most admire my dad. He is a nice caring person for his friends and family and he's a hard worker.
- I most admire my family. They get me through the most.
- I most admire my father because he has probably the most influence on my daily life in sports and other activities.

- I most admire my father because he lives a life worthy of praise by anyone. He lives his life to make other people's lives better.
- I most admire my mother and father for keeping our family a strong central unit for me and my other siblings. They bend over back for us and sacrifice all that they have for our love.
- I most admire my mother, she is the largest inspiration I have in my life right now. She has pretty much raised me single handedly and I very much appreciate that.
- I most admire my parents for teaching me how to live.
- I mostly admire my best friend. Because he always knows what to do in difficult situations and always knows what to talk about.
- I mostly admire my brother. Because he has paved the way for me in the first 18 years of my life. I look up to him so he makes sure I don't slip up the same way he did.
- Jesus, he was a cool guy.
- ***** because of everything that he does for people that he barely knows.
- Many of the teachers here for putting up with these spoiled students that go here.
- Martin Brodeur because he is an excellent human
- Mike Diana he's super cool!
- *** because he is a gracious man.
- ***** because he is a true CATHOLIC!!!!!!!!!!!!
- My dad – b/c he's sick
- My dad (5)
- My dad and grandparents because they are strong people.
- My dad because he has taught me everything if know.
- My dad because he is a strong person and works extremely hard.
- My dad because he raised me well
- My dad because of all his hard work
- My dad he taught me everything if have to know about the family business
- My Dad, because of his legacy and life skills.
- My dad. He has shown me how to be a man and how if should take care of my family in the future.
- My family because if spend most of my time with them, and my friends
- My family because they work very hard for what they have.
- My father because he does everything for my family, and also my brother because of his work ethic in football
- My father because he has been the hardest working man I have ever met. He has continued to go to church every Sunday despite others around him distancing themselves from the church. He has great morals, always trying to do the right thing.
- My father because he is the hardest worker if know

- My father because if want to be just like him
- My father because of what he does to keep my family going. He also was able to leave home at a very young age and establish a life here in the US.
- My father. My father ensures my safety and security. He also embraces the faith completely with a pure love of heart.
- My mom and dad. They provide for me and send me to Rita.
- My Mom because she has been thru a lot and still does everything for our family.
- My mother because she has been there for me my entire life.
- My Mother, she has sacrificed so much for me to put me through St. Rita.
- My parents because they are good role models.
- My parents because they have made me who if am
- Myself, because I'm still alive and kickin. I've lasted 18 years, that's more than some can say.
- No one (2)
- The most person if admire Jake Newton because he is the man.
- The people whom if most admire are my parents. They work hard every day to provide the best for my family and they would do anything for me and my brother and sister.
- The person if admire most is my dad. If admire him the most because he's a hard worker and never complains about it.
- The person if most admire is my father. He has led me through some tough times and is strong figure in my life.
- The person if most admire is my older brother Joe. He is a junior in college and if have looked up to him my whole life.

31. Who would you most like to be like and why?

- All the adult male relatives in my family.
- Anyone with a wonderful successful life.
- Both my parents because they show true morals
- *****
- Dale Earnhardt jr so i could drive fast cars and win races
- *** ***. He is the typical South Side Irish priest who is able to talk with people. His relationships make him a man of great wisdom and love of community.
- God he is awesome
- I have no clue
- I just wanna be myself don't really have anyone to look up to at all in my life.
- I most want to be like ***, because that would mean that I would become Tyler's dad, which would be pretty cool.
- I only want to be myself and nobody else.
- I try my hardest to be like my dad. He is a good person.
- I wana be life foster n just get huge like him
- I wana be like my dad
- I want to be a person who lives with values and morals.
- I want to be like Jesus. Because He did all the things God wanted him to do and daily I try to do the same things.
- I would like to be like Bill Gate because he is the man.
- I would like to be like Charlie Sheen. He does whatever he wants, when he wants, and doesn't get in any trouble. He has gorgeous women around him and a lot of money, and somehow he's not dead. God must love him.
- I would like to be like my brother. He is awesome.
- I would like to be like my dad because he is very successful
- I would like to be like my dad because his way of living really inspires me.
- I would like to be like my dad.
- I would like to be like my grandfather because he is a great influence and takes care of everyone before himself.
- I would like to be like my parents cause they are good people.
- I would like to be like my uncle because he is a very successful lawyer and took advantage of his time in college.
- I would like to be like myself, I don't want to follow in the footsteps of anyone else, and I want to be the absolute best that I can be.
- I would like to be like NUB
- I would like to be like some of my teachers who have faith and values.
- I would like to be like ***** he is awesome.
- I would like to be more like my brother because his life is great.

- I would like to be *** *****. Because he is a great history teacher who is hilarious and knows how to use sarcasm to benefit the class.
- I would most like to be father t** because he puts others before himself and cares for everyone. He is a true Christian.
- I would most like to be like a cool kid
- I would most like to be like my dad in that i can provide for my family and work hard to make an honest living.
- I would most like to be like my dad to be able to provide for a family.
- I would most like to be like my dad. He works so hard and doesn't complain at all.
- I would most like to be like my father. He is a strong man mentally and spiritually.
- I would most like to be like my grandfather. He was a hardworking individual who raised a good family and is an excellent role model.
- I would most like to be like Peyton Manning because not only is he at the top of the professional sports world, but he is also very big into charities and business. He actively participates in numerous charities including breast cancer research and the march of dimes and along with that he donates autographed materials top auctions to help the homeless along with building for habitat for humanity.
- I would most like to be like Stan lee one day because he is successful in almost every story he writes for comics.
- I would most like to be like Stan lee one day because he is successful in almost every story he writes for comics.
- I would most like to be Martin Luther King, Jr. Because he stood up for those persecuted and unwaveringly believed that change could be brought about. He died protecting those that society refused to protect and acknowledge.
- I would most like to be Mr. P***** because he's the best teacher at St. Rita. He keeps the class fun and interesting and he has a good relationship with the students.
- I would most like to be my mother. She has devoted her life to her children and is completely giving of herself.
- I would most likely be like grandfather who lived a life sacrificing for his nine children and leaving a legacy of great people because of the way he raised them through love and care.
- I would most likely want to be like my father. The life he has lived is the one i want to live.
- I would want to be like my brother. I want to be a good person like him.
- I'd like to be Mac Miller, because he's following his dreams successfully and makin bank.
- I'd most like to be like my oldest brother because he is intelligent, he has a good job, a kind girlfriend and he still has time to play sports.
- Jesus

- Jesus, he was a cool guy
- Joe because he is a true Rita man
- Josh Hamilton, he had a tough life with drugs and stupid influences in his life. But he got a hold of his life and now is a very successful man/athlete.
- Justin
- *****
- *** because he is a gracious man.
- *** because he's a great person, teacher, and influence and he's great looking.
- *** he is a boss
- My brother because he is the person I can relate to the most
- My dad – b/c he's sick
- My dad (3)
- My Dad because he gets along with everybody. He works very hard to support our family and he's a great guy.
- My dad because he is a hard worker and always there for my family
- my dad because he is a man i have a lot of respect for
- My dad because he likes what I like.
- My Dad He's a hard and diligent worker
- My dad, because he is a really good dad
- My father
- My father because he has been the hardest working man I have ever met. He has continued to go to church every Sunday despite others around him distancing themselves from the church. He has great morals, always trying to do the right thing.
- My father because of the way he sacrifices himself for the better of my family.
- My Father, because he was everything I imagined a man should be growing up
- My grandpa. He's the man.
- My mom because she is a hard worker.
- Myself
- Myself because I like who I am.
- Myself, because i think that i have one of the greatest potential ever.
- Myself, I don't want to be like anyone else.
- No one
- Rich because he has a steady job at hobo and a good income to support his family
- Roberto Garza because he has good morals
- Same as above.
- Steve Colbert. He has an interesting show.
- The iras their killing for freedom, like me.
- The pope. He's a good guy

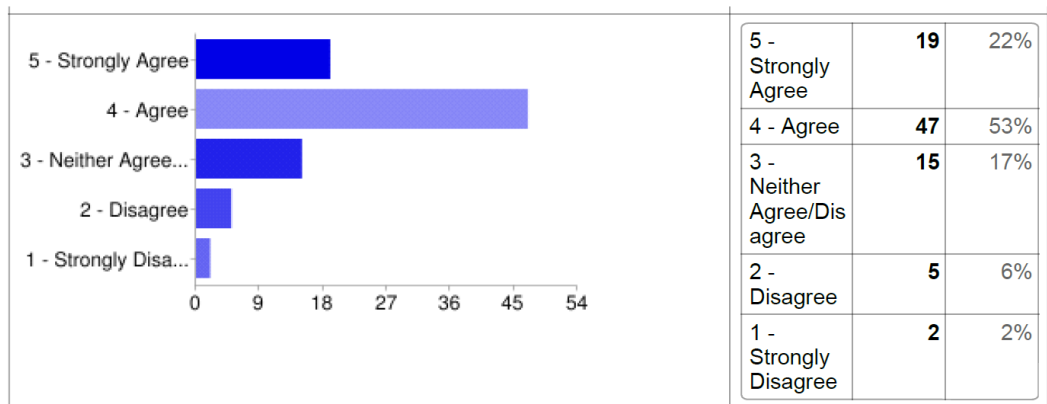
- Tupac he’s a thug

HOW YOU UNDERSTAND AND EXPRESS YOUR FAITH

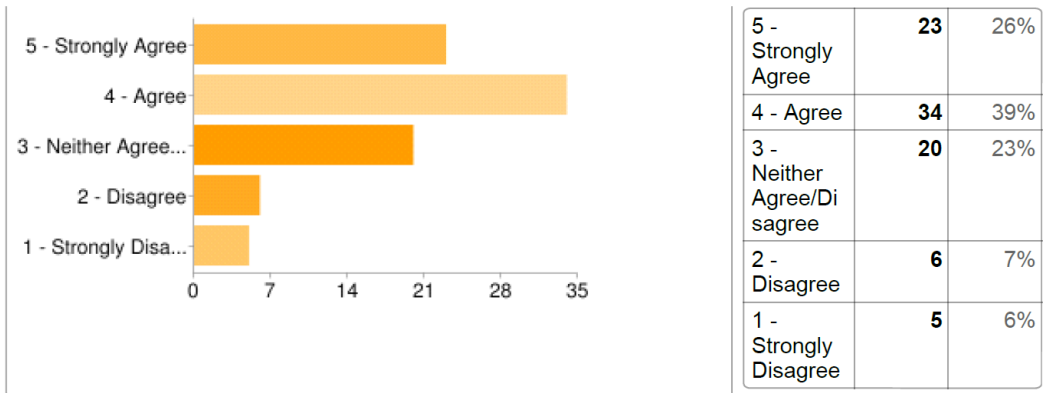
Using the five-point scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”, please indicate your beliefs about the following statements.

5-Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3 -Neither Agree/Disagree 2- Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

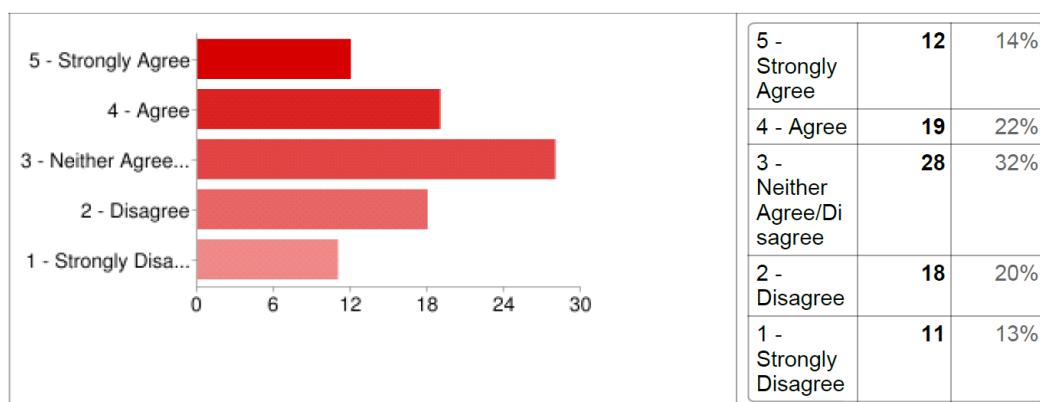
32. I am knowledgeable about the basics of my faith tradition.



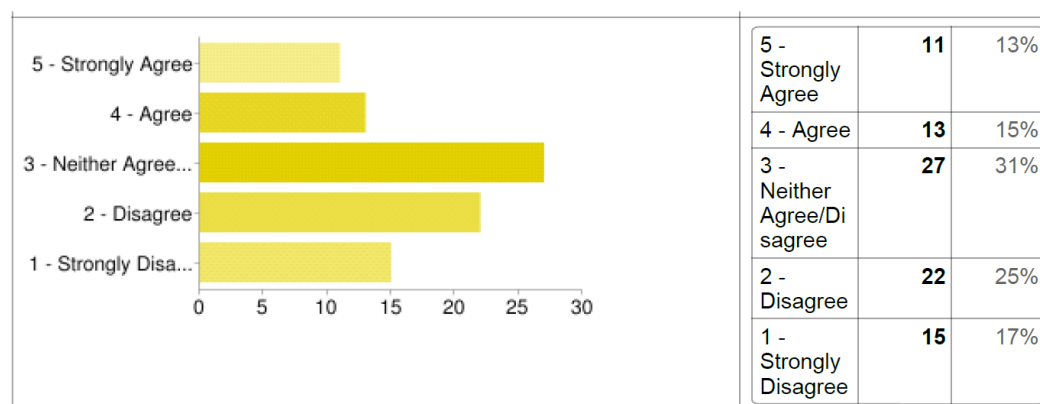
33. I celebrate many cultural and religious traditions with my family.



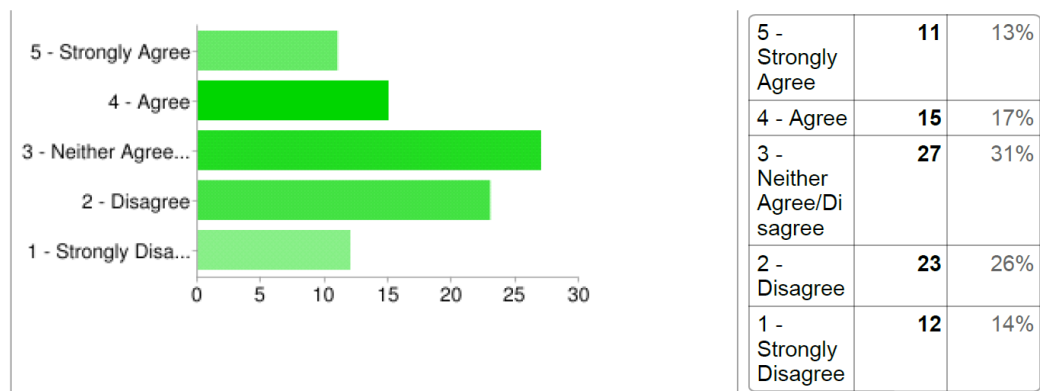
34. I attend Mass or worship regularly (almost weekly) at my parish/faith community.



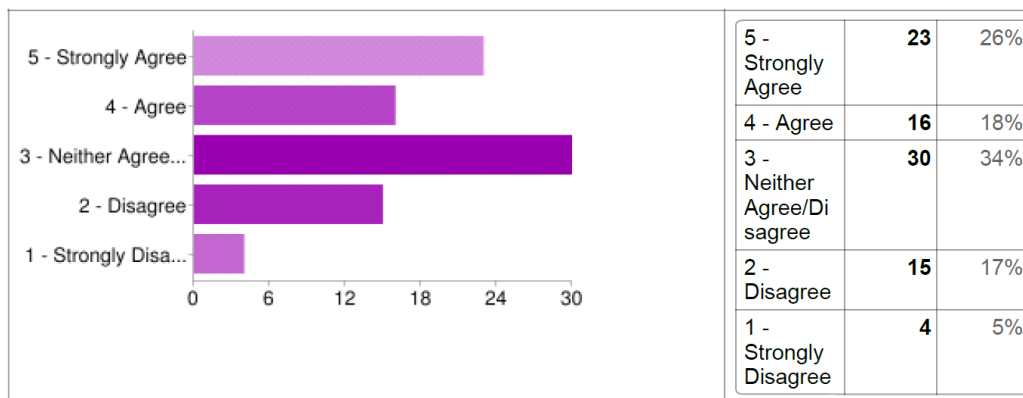
35. I am involved at Mass or worship service at my parish/faith community through forms of ministry at the celebration.



36. I assist my parish or faith community at various events outside of Mass or worship services (service projects, youth events, etc.)



37. Not counting the prayers at St. Rita, I pray regularly (almost every day).



38. If/when you do pray outside of the times at St. Rita, please briefly describe how, when, and where you usually pray.

- Almost every day at my house.
- At home or during hardships and when I'm happy
- At home or during hardships and when I'm happy
- At home, after all my school activities are done, and in my room
- At night before I go to bed
- At night, before I go to sleep.
- Bathroom
- Before bed (6)
- Before I go to bed I pray for people I know that need prayers
- Don't do it
- Every night before bed in my house
- Every single night. In my room.
- Free time and also a lot when I am alone in my car driving
- Home, dining out, awkward situations.
- I do not pray outside.
- I do not pray outside of St. Rita prayer usually.
- I don't pray
- I pray alone in my room, just before bedtime. Prayer consists of thanking God for His blessings and asking for the forgiveness of all my wrongdoings, guidance and support, and protection for all of humanity.
- I pray at random times in random ways. Whatever comes up.
- I pray before bed or if I'm driving alone I just talk to God.
- I pray before dinner most days and before bed every day.
- I pray before each water polo games and sometimes on my down time.
- I pray before I go out and before I go to bed because I like to.
- I pray before I go to bed usually.

- I pray before I go to sleep, and it is usually for help, my family friends and to thank God for waking up that day.
- I pray before I go to sleep, in my bed and I talk to god.
- I pray before important events in my life because it helps through tough times.
- I pray every night before bed in my bed just talking to God.
- I pray every night before I go to bed.
- I pray in my bed when I'm sick or hurt mostly when I need God the most.
- I pray in the spirit, sometimes alone, with my family, and together as a church. I pray at home, in the car, and at church.
- I pray randomly throughout the day.
- I pray to God asking for help usually at night or times of help.
- I pray when I'm at home and when I am mostly alone
- I pray when I'm taking a poop
- I pray with my water polo team prior to games. Also sometimes at home before I go to bed
- I sometimes pray at night when I am about to go to bed. That is about it.
- I sometimes pray before bed.
- I usually just talk to god through my mind.
- I usually pray at night in my bed talking to God
- I usually pray when I'm in need of something
- I usually talk to God and pray in my room at night.
- I usually pray over dinner at the dinner table.
- If I do pray outside of St. Rita, it is little prayers to myself simply asking for strength or something or thanking God for something.
- If I pray outside of St. Rita it would be during an occasion when I feel that I really need help.
- In my bed before I go to sleep. Freestyle.
- In my bed I do three prayers right before I go to bed
- In my room or wherever I need to
- My bed at night rarely
- Never
- Not often
- Other times I pray are when I am mass.
- Praying's for girls
- Rarely
- Right before I go to sleep I pray for god to guide me and watch over my family friends
- Silently, in a private manner.
- The only time I pray is at church, and during class when we have too
- The only time outside Rita that I pray would be while I'm in bed, and not very often then.

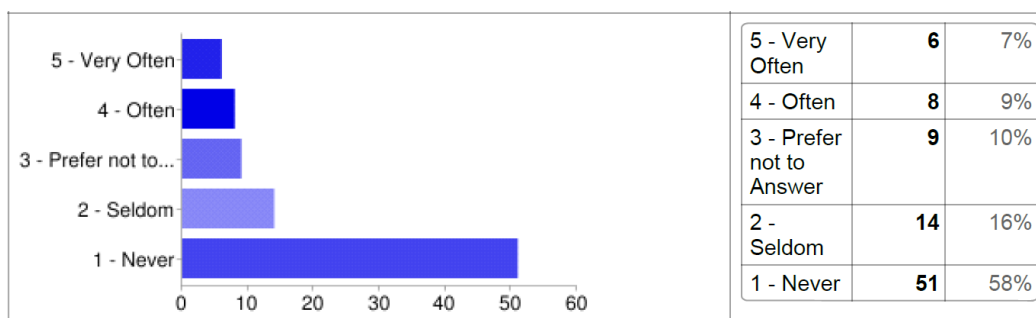
- Usually I pray before I go to bed or when I wake up in the morning.
- When I do pray out of school it's usually at night when I'm laying in my bed.
- When I need help.
- When I need something or want to thank god for something
- When I pray I usually pray when I am in great need. This can be anywhere at any time.
- When I pray outside of school it is either at church or at home, and how I pray at home is I basically just sit in silence and talk to god.
- When I'm in need. Pretty much most of the time before I go to bed

FAITH AND COMMUNITY LIFE AT ST. RITA

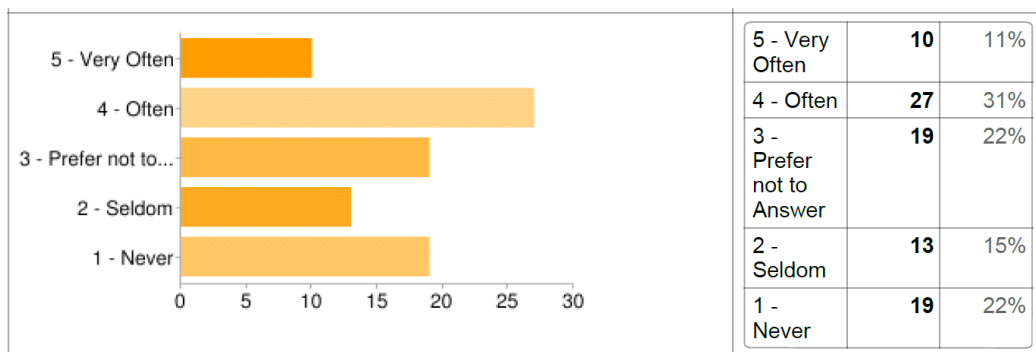
Using the five-point scale from “very often” to “never”, please indicate your experience and beliefs regarding the following statements.

5-Very Often 4- Sometimes 3-Prefer not to Answer 2- Seldom 1-Never

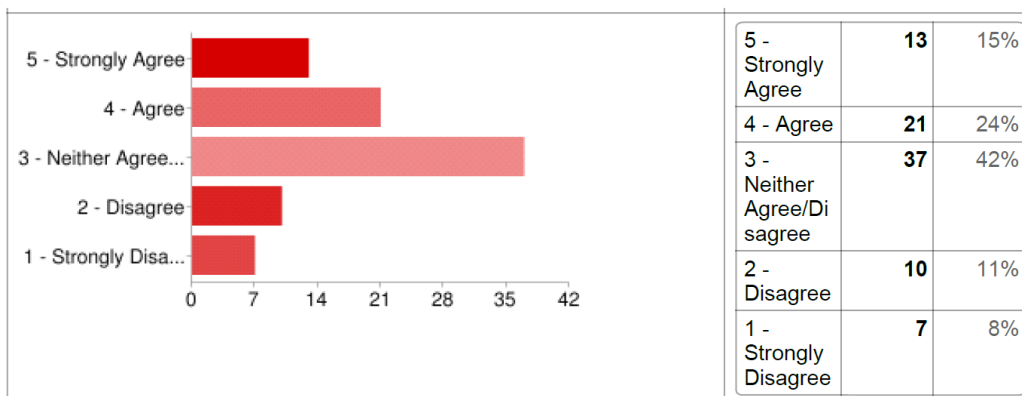
39. I attend the weekly novena at St. Rita.



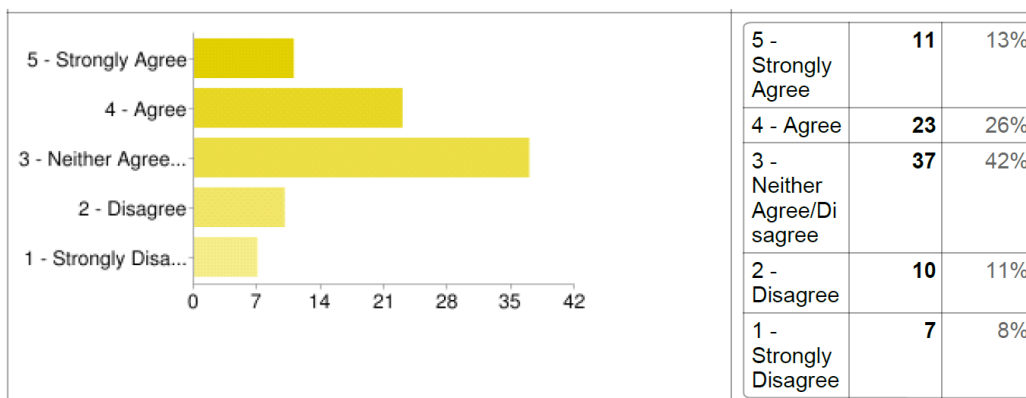
40. I am involved in the prayers and prayer services at St. Rita (before class, reconciliation services, etc.) by praying along, singing, etc.



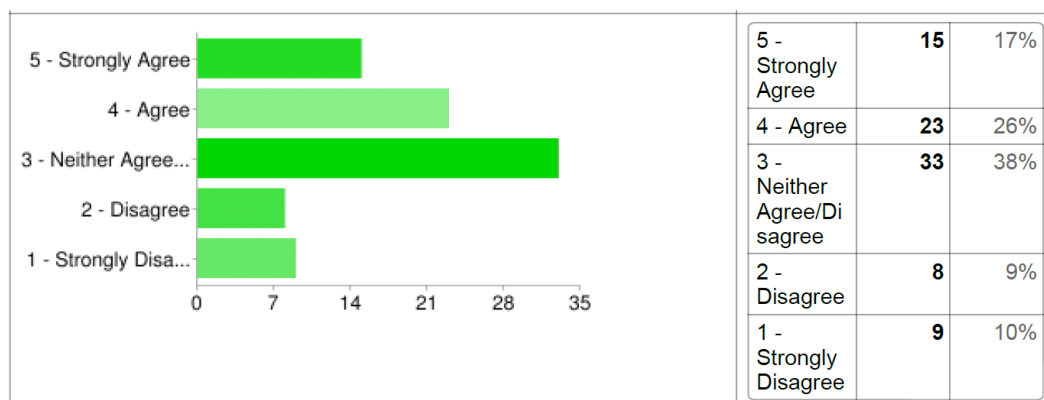
- After Mass at St. Rita, I feel strengthened in my faith, connected to others, and encouraged to make a difference.



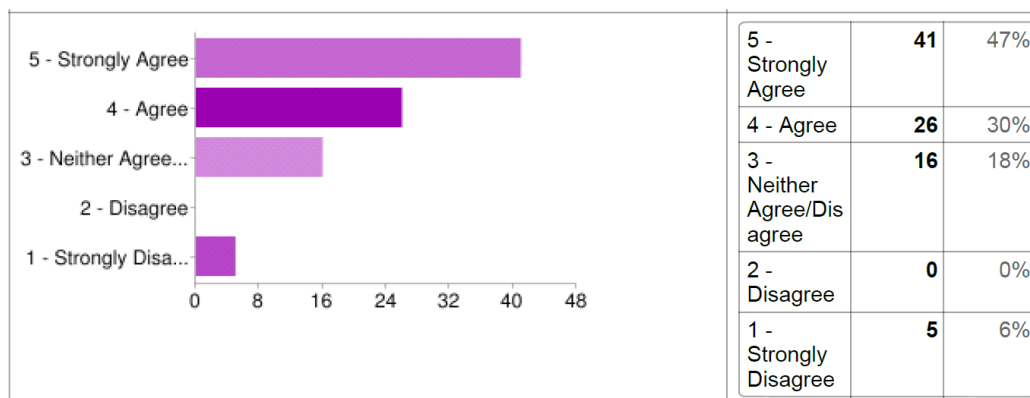
- The homilies (sermons/reflections) at Mass and at other religious events at St. Rita speak to what is going on in my life.



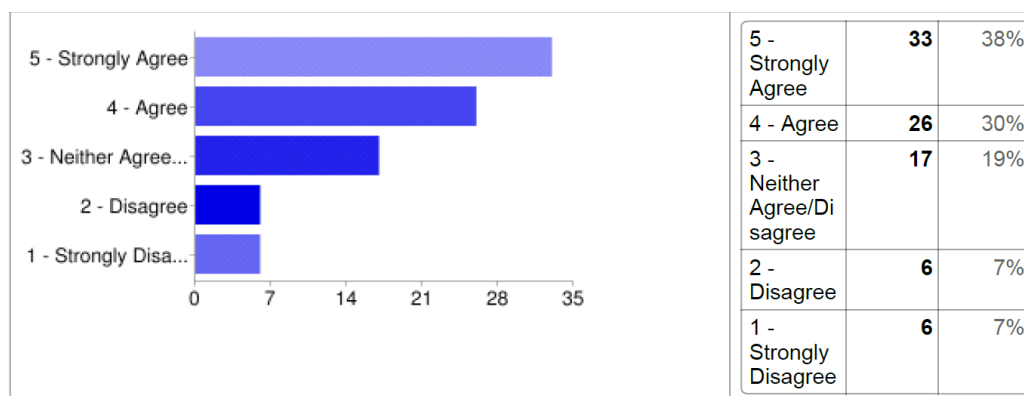
- I have appreciated celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) here at St. Rita.



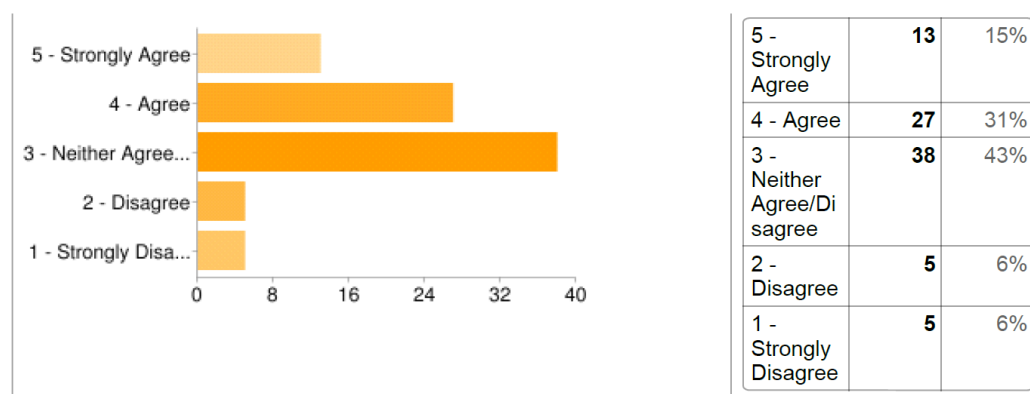
- I know the Hymn to St. Rita by heart, and I sing it.



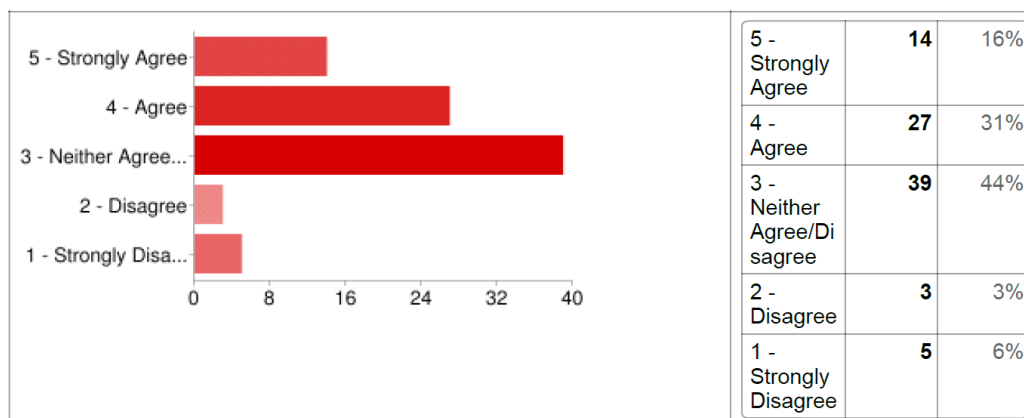
- I have used or worn the scapulars, medals and other religious items given to me at St. Rita as a way to express my faith.



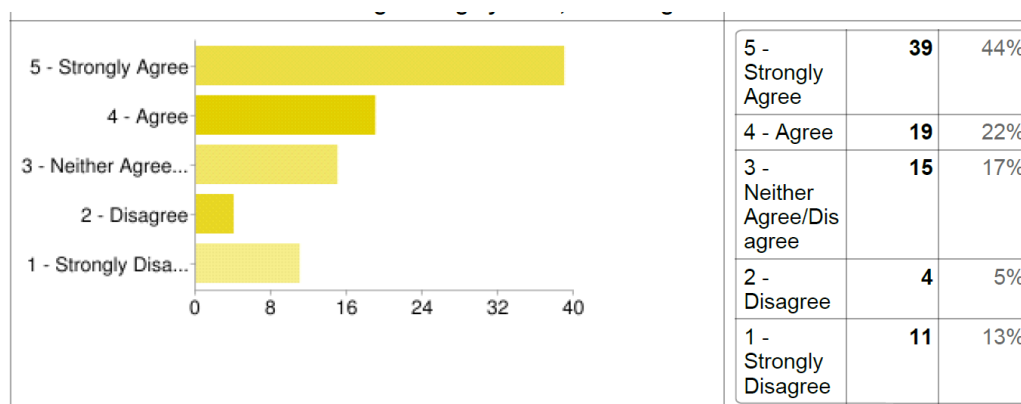
- I think it is important for student to be involved in preparing the prayers and liturgies (Masses) at St. Rita.



- I think it is important for the students to be involved in the prayers and liturgies at St. Rita by singing, responding and having other active roles.



- I know the St. Rita Fight Song by heart, and I sing it.



- What one thing do you like about St. Rita and why?
 - Academics because they are great
 - Accessibility because it's affordable and close to my home.
 - Activities
 - A lot of guys
 - Band.
 - Brotherhood
 - Classes
 - Community
 - Day care
 - Easy
 - Environment
 - Everything
 - Family (3)
 - Family atmosphere helps me feel like I belong.
 - Feels like home
 - Football
 - Football
 - Football, because of the unity
 - Friends (5)
 - Friends i made here
 - Good people
 - Graduating (3)
 - Help, makes me more giveful to others
 - History cause ***** teaches it
 - How it's like a family
 - I hate Rita

- I like almost all of them
- I like the faculty because they are always looking out for their students.
- I like the people
- I like the sports, because we're good.
- I like the students and faculty it's a fun place to go to school. I like the sporting events too.
- I like the unity the school has because everyone is close.
- It's a Family
- It's awesome
- It's fun
- It's great.
- It's like daycare
- Its unity
- Kairos because it is an awesome experience (3)
- Kairos because it strengthens your relationship with your peers and God
- Kids
- My friends are here. Brotherhood.
- My friends go here (2)
- My mom
- No Homework, i don't do anything
- Nothing (2)
- Nothing i hate this place
- Pride and Tradition
- Respect. Everyone respects each other.
- Sense of family
- Sports
- Sports because we are good
- Sports, very active
- The athletics
- The athletics because they are good.
- The atmosphere
- The brotherhood
- The curriculum
- The extracurricular activities
- The family (2)
- The family atmosphere, where everyone knows everyone.
- The friends because i love them
- The friends I've made because they've made a lasting impression on me
- The people (2)
- The people are all cool
- The people because it feels like home.
- The people, they are great people and are always willing to talk with you about anything
- The people. They make me able to get through the day
- The school in general
- The school spirituality
- The schools a joke
- The sense of family
- The small school feeling because I know feel like I know everyone.
- The South Side Irish community
- The students because they have given me an unforgettable four years.
- The unity amongst the students
- Unity because i like it

- What was your best experience at St. Rita and why?
 - At lunch yesterday when we put up a "No Loitering" sign to stop a kid from standing around our table.
 - Baseball State Championship the last 2 years
 - Basketball trips
 - Beating Carmel Mundelein this past season
 - Being with friends
 - Coming here
 - Creating new relationships
 - Dancing
 - Every day is a new best experience.
 - Everything (2)
 - Football (2)
 - Football games because it draws the entire community together
 - Football season
 - Football season, I had fun
 - Football, because of all the good friends I've made
 - Going to Italy with the band because we were able to connect with ourselves spiritually and have a fun time.
 - Golfing with *** ***** freshmen year
 - Graduating I cannot wait till get out of here
 - Graduation (2)
 - Hanging with k money cause he's the man
 - I don't remember any
 - Intermural basketball championship game in front of the school and I came up huge
 - Just being here
 - Kairos (6)
 - Kairos and Football
 - Kairos because it gave me a chance to find myself and gave me an opportunity to get to know others.
 - Kairos because it was awesome.
 - Kairos brotherhood
 - Kairos it brings people closer
 - Kairos because it was awesome (2)
 - Lacrosse
 - Lacrosse freshman year
 - Leaving
 - Making friends (2)
 - Making new friends.
 - Meeting new people
 - Memories from football, it was a fun time I enjoyed my times with the players and coaches
 - My best experience at St. Rita was meeting friends who I can count on outside of class.
 - My best experience was winning the Prep Bowl
 - None (3)
 - Nothing this place blows
 - People I have met
 - Playing football (3)
 - Playing on the varsity volleyball team as a sophomore and getting along better with the older team
 - Playing rugby
 - Playing with the St. Rita band, many memories
 - Prep bowl championship
 - SAVI it was life changing
 - Senior year because it's fun
 - Spirit day
 - Sports (2)

- Sports bc sharing the time with friends
- St. Rita Rugby
- State championship in 2010
- The Augustinian Youth Encounter 2010. It taught me about the real life of St. Augustine.
- The band Italy trip. It was amazing.
- The best experience at St. Rita was when I made all my best friends because my friends are amazing.
- The help
- The trips that I took with the basketball team
- Trip to Italy
- Watching a kid get punched
- When I joined rugby
- When I lead the Junior Kairos.
- When I was welcomed back after leaving for a year
- When I went on Kairos, it was a life changing event
- When I'm leaving
- Winning a State championship
- Winning state and 3 Kennedy cups
- Winning state for hockey
- Winning the catholic league against De la salle in soccer my sophomore year
- Winning The Kennedy Cup 4 times and State once.
- What is the one thing that we need to work on at St. Rita and why?
 - A better academic schedule
 - Activities
 - Attitude adjustment because some students and teachers act in a most rude and offensive manner.
 - Better lunches because they are not so good.
 - Better prices
 - Bullying
 - Classes
 - Classes are a joke
 - Connecting to students
 - Control
 - Controlling students
 - Controlling the behavior of others who get away with murder just because they play a certain sport.
 - Discipline, some students have no work ethic or discipline
 - Enforcing handbook guidelines. I believe that the discipline office lacks in some judgment areas.
 - Everything (2)
 - Everything this school is going downhill
 - Faculty members mistreating students, unfair treatment
 - Faculty/student relationships
 - Food and prices
 - Food. Too little food for too much.
 - Free lunch
 - Friendliness
 - Getting girls
 - Getting more people involved by supporting our teams and events. I wish we could have had more people at our football games and I know other athletes agree.
 - Getting people involved, we need more people involved in activities
 - Graduating
 - Having the students work the core values into everyday life
 - I don't know
 - Improving the Kairos experience

- Lunches because the food is not legit and I don't like the rules.
- Make more of a teacher and student connection
- Making sure every sport has equal opportunities as opposed to our big two sports getting everything.
- More drugs
- More events
- More leeway
- My academics
- My grades because they could be better
- New senior English teacher
- No finals
- None
- Not being b**t o**s cause this school sucks
- Not being over reactive and making a big deal about certain things
- Not being strict about the stupid things and more strict about the important things
- Not turning into Br. Rice
- Not work so hard
- Nothing (7)
- One thing we need to work on is more review for finals.
- Pointless rules like the time starting at 755 and not being able to go the other way out of lunch
- Prices on merchandise.
- Racism, because some of the kids are racist as hell.
- Respect in students
- Rules involving students acting out in class
- Schedule with tdt, it conflicts with students in band
- School needs to chill out and stop overreacting about stupid things the seniors should be treated more like adults
- School spirit at events
- School work. N/a
- Since I can only say one. I would say prejudice
- St. Rita needs to pay attention more towards academics rather than athletics and hire more young teacher who are energetic and love what they do.
- Teacher
- Teacher student relations
- Teachers
- Temperature
- The drug problem
- The focus on students
- The lunches because they are weak sauce
- The new reconciliation feels like a drive thru it sucks
- The psychoness
- The regular (non honors) classes should be more challenging
- The rules (2)
- The rules they are really strict
- The school
- They need to pick better teachers for some subjects because they are adversely affecting the learning process.
- To strict
- Understanding others
- Unity
- We need new people to run the lunchroom.
- Work

- What is the one thing that really bothers you about St. Rita and why?
 - A few bad kids give the rest a bad reputation
 - Academics are emphasized too much
 - **** *
 - **** * because he gets away with anything he wants and its very irritating
 - Anal
 - Bad people
 - Bullying
 - Cell phone rule because it is really annoying
 - Clothes
 - Colored people
 - English
 - Everything
 - Favoritism in sports teams.
 - Finals because they are hard
 - Homework because its tedious
 - How its changed over the last 4 years there is no tradition anymore
 - How it's known to everyone as a day-care center
 - How the school is in general
 - How they are trying to change the true meaning of the school, especially this year. It seems as if there has been many changes and it has not been for the better.
 - Ignorance, racism and stereotypes
 - It bothers me that this focuses so much on sports because it takes away from the students who don't play sports.
 - It is becoming more and more strict each year
 - It is known as an athletic school with poor academics
 - Its old
 - Less day of
 - Lunch food sucks and is overpriced
 - **** *
 - [Deleted Expletive]
 - Nothing (9)
 - Nothing really bothers me about St Rita
 - Overreactions because the faculty and staff often treat one small incident as a major catastrophe.
 - People picking on each other
 - Principal *****
 - Racism
 - Rules
 - Same thing that I said for the work on question.
 - Scumbag kids
 - Smoking in the parking lot. It litters the back student lot with cigarette butts and spitters.
 - Some bullying
 - Some kids
 - Some people don't take it seriously
 - Some programs receive more attention than others.
 - Sports
 - Teachers
 - Teachers are not close with their students
 - Teachers getting involved in our [Deleted Expletive] outside of school cause it shouldn't matter to them
 - Teachers texting during class.
 - That Kairos only last only for 4 days
 - That there are no girls here

- That they take the dress code policy so seriously
- The cell phones
- The cocaine
- The dining experience.
- The doping and smoking!
- The facilities are always cold.
- The freshmen
- The immaturity of many students
- The kids
- The kids that don't take it seriously
- The lack of maturity and seriousness, it's hard to get things accomplished
- The lack of restraint teachers tolerate from students
- The lack of spirit at sports games because no one really cares.
- The new reconciliation
- The petty discipline
- The politics in sports
- The rules
- The teachers (3)
- The teachers are [Deleted Expletive]
- The insufficient facilities
- The way certain athletes get away with everything while the rest of us get punished.
- They need to stop making Rita something it's not
- Too many scumbags
- Too strict
- Too conservative
- Turning into Br. Rice
- Walking in the halls, very clustered
- When people talk their way out of trouble if you did something wrong take responsibility
- What was your worst experience at St. Rita and why?
 - A fight
 - All
 - All of freshmen, sophomore, and junior year because I was relentlessly harassed by upperclassmen.
 - Being treated unfairly by faculty
 - Blue slips
 - Chemistry
 - Class
 - Coming here in the first place
 - Dealing with underclassmen
 - Do not have one (6)
 - Early classes
 - Freshman orientation because it was awkward and seemed pointless.
 - Freshman year was tough I didn't know any1
 - Freshman year. N/a
 - Freshmen year. I had thoughts about transferring to another catholic high school.
 - Getting kicked out (2)
 - Getting a blue slip for punching someone in the face outside of school. Mind your own business
 - Getting a class blue slip because I didn't do anything wrong
 - Getting bullied
 - Going to summer school for the first time in my life
 - Going to various funerals
 - Having to be lectured about some other student's mistakes.

- I did not have a worst experience at Rita
 - I didn't have one defining thing that I could point out as the worst.
 - I don't have one (6)
 - I was violated
 - Idk
 - Junior year physics because the teacher was terrible
 - Kids making fun of other kids
 - Losing football games in general
 - Losing to lake Zurich
 - Losing to Loyola
 - Missing my senior opening game
 - **** ***** class
 - **** *****'s class
 - My first Saturday jug
 - My pointless religion classes
 - My worst experience was having an out of control class where I feel my time was wasted.
 - N/a
 - Never had one (2)
 - [Deleted Expletive]
 - None (17)
 - Not making the baseball team
 - Not sure
 - Nothing that bad
 - Peer pressure
 - Principal *****
 - ***** **** playing water polo
 - Seeing someone being spat on because he was black and seeing the guy walk across the stage a month later
 - Sophomore year
 - Sophomore year because some seniors were not good people
 - Summer school
 - Suspended
 - Taking all AP my senior year.
 - The lunch food because the quality of the food does not match the price students must pay
 - The rules
 - The whole thing
 - Waking up in the morning
 - When I have homework
 - When *** ***** was asked to leave. At the next school mass *** *** criticized the student body for not being truthful even though he wouldn't tell us why he told *** ***** to leave.
- What is the one thing you like about Mass at St. Rita and why?

No responses given

- If there were one thing you would change about Mass at St. Rita, what would it be and why?
 - All of it
 - Be more hands on, and excited
 - Better songs
 - Chapel shirts
 - Choose if you want to go or not
 - Ditch the announcements after mass. It would bring more meaning
 - Don't have it
 - Don't make them an assembly
 - Everything
 - Get the guitar man back
 - Get the students more involved to make it more interesting.
 - How long it is (2)
 - I do not know

- I don't know what to write.
- I like it the way it is
- I think the masses at St Rita are really good the way they are
- I would change nothing. (2)
- I would change the length of the mass
- I would make it shorter
- I would shorten it a bit, it gets lengthy on some occasions
- Idk (3)
- If it was not so drawn out at the end.
- It should be shorter
- It would be done quicker
- It's so long
- Length (2)
- Less singing
- Less time
- Make it a little bit shorter
- Make it longer, to sleep more
- Make it shorter because during masses people sleep because of the length
- Make it shorter, and alumni speakers need to always be fun
- Maybe if it wasn't 4 hours long
- N/a
- None of them or every mass day be a half day
- Not as boring
- Not as long
- Nothing (18)
- People sleeping/talking
- Put fans in the church
- Shorten it (5)
- That the school prays in the name of Jesus
- The activities portion; mustang of the month awards, etc. The mass should be centered around the Eucharist. The announcements takes away from that.
- The chapel shirts
- The facilities because we deserve better
- The instrumentals because ours are boring
- The length (3)
- The length is ridiculous
- The longevity. Takes forever
- The music it is out of date
- The schedule
- The songs.
- The length. Many people can't stay still and focus for that amount of time.
- Too long (2)
- Too long gets boring
- Tyhe langth
- We would cut out mustang of the month and the alumni speaker. Most kids just sleep through that stuff.
- What was or is your best religious experience at St. Rita and why?
 - All of it
 - Becoming catholic
 - Boston mission trip because I had the chance to serve while bonding with my Rita brothers
 - Confession
 - Didn't have one
 - Everything
 - I don't know
 - I enjoyed the masses before our football games.
 - Kairos (45)

- Kairos 101
 - Kairos 101 and 102
 - Kairos 101/102 leader
 - Kairos because I found myself and god
 - Kairos because it really gave me a chance to see god.
 - Kairos because it strengthened my faith
 - Kairos because you really get to understand your other Rita brothers through it.
 - Kairos got to miss three days of school
 - Kairos is without a doubt the best religious experience at St. Rita
 - Kairos it help me find god again
 - Kairos it was fun
 - Kairos leader
 - Kairos retreat. It centers around the individual rather than the community.
 - Kairos was awesome
 - Kairos, I became closer to many of my classmates.
- Kairos, it changed the way I thought about god and other people
 - Kairos. It was an eye-opening activity.
 - Kairos. It was awesome to know much more about my Rita brothers.
 - Mass
 - Mass days
 - My best religious experience was Kairos where I found god in each and every person on the retreat.
 - My best religious experience was Kairos.
 - N/a
 - Never had one
 - Not sure
 - Nothing (6)
 - Pads shelter
 - Savi
 - Seeking forgiveness.
 - Sophomore retreat
- What do you think another value at St. Rita is and why?
 - Another value at St Rita is friendship
 - Awesomeness
 - Brotherhood (5)
 - Brotherhood (Unitas i guess) because we all have each other's backs
 - Brotherhood because you tend to form them with friends from your class
 - Caring
 - Change. St. Rita changes many things and experiments with many areas both academically and extra-curricular.
 - Charity. We donate money every day Thursday to the missions.
 - Courage
 - Dad
 - Dedication, if you want to succeed in anything here you have to put in a daily effort
 - Don't know
 - Everything (2)
 - Faith (4)
 - Faith because being here strengthens it

- Faith, because we are full of faith
- Faith. It plays an important role in everything we do.
- Family (2)
- Family because that's what everyone here feels like to me
- Family. It's great.
- Fellowship because of the bonds friends share here
- Forgiveness because such an emphasis is placed on seeking forgiveness from others.
- Fraternity
- Freedom
- Friendship (5)
- Friendship because everyone gets along
- Friendship because i meet so many nice people
- Friendship because i met so many new people
- Friendship- I'm very close with my friends, teammates and class mates. We all look out for each other
- Generosity because we are always giving to others.
- Happiness
- Hardass-itas. Everyone here is a hardass and people fear us
- I don't care
- I don't know (4)
- I don't understand the question
- I think it would take about from the main values
- Idk (3)
- Kairos!!!!
- Kindness
- Leadership
- Liberty, we are free to be who we are
- Love (3)
- N/a (2)
- None (3)
- Not sure (2)
- Nothing (5)
- Peace because peace it is everything
- People
- Pride and tradition
- Racism
- Respect
- Strength (2)
- Strength because we can endure anything
- The athletics draw students in thins school and the academics keep them here.
- The friends
- Trust because the entire family trusts each other.
- Understanding

HOW YOU SPEND YOUR TIME AND OTHER RESOURCES

- If I could, I would spend most of my time doing:
 - Activities (2)
 - At my cottage
 - Basketball
 - Beers
 - Chillin' (2)
 - Dancing
 - Doing something involved with football
 - Drinking
 - Drinking smoking kicking kids in the face and partying
 - Driving

- Drugs
- Fishing
- Flying

- Friends
- Hanging out with friends (12)
- Hanging out with people
- Hanging with family and friends
- Hanging with friends/girlfriend
- Hanging with the gf
- Having fun
- Helping
- Helping others
- Homework
- I would go golfing all the time.
- I would more often than not go out and play beach volleyball with friends
- Lax
- Making money
- Making music
- Managing football
- Masturbating
- Mixed martial arts
- Not school
- Nothing
- Outdoor activities
- Party
- Playing
- Playing a sport
- Playing baseball
- Playing football

- Playing hockey
- Playing music
- Playing soccer
- Playing sports (2)
- Playing sports and writing
- Playing water polo and having fun
- Playing water polo!!!!
- Praying
- Preparing for my sport
- Reading (2)
- Sitting around with the people that care about me most
- Skating
- Sleeping (4)
- Sleeping, eating, and drawing
- Smoking pot
- Spending time in 6th period gym class
- Spending time with friends.
- Sports (2)
- Staying active
- Stuff with my friends
- Talking to god or coaching basketball
- Things I've never did
- Watching movies.
- What i do now
- What i love
- With my girlfriend
- With the people i love most
- Working out (2)

59. I spend most of my money on:

- Alcohol
- Anything
- Apparel.
- Beer (5)
- Beer and smokes

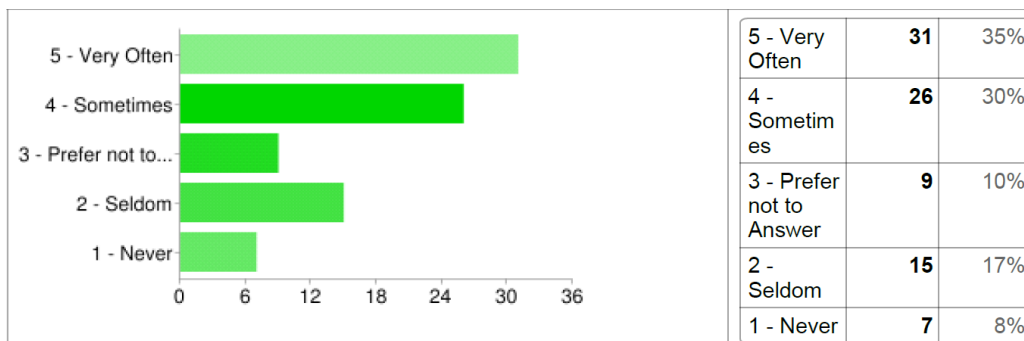
- Beer and tobacco
- Beverages
- Books
- Books, drum set equipment, and concert tickets

- Car, school, girlfriend and dip
- Cigarettes and weed
- Cigs
- Clothes (3)
- Comic books and food (2)
- Condoms
- Dip
- Dip, clothes, food
- Don't have money
- Drugs
- Drugs/alcohol
- Family
- Family and friends (2)
- Food (25)
- Food and clothes and beverages
- Food and weekend activities
- Food at tournaments or when I'm out
-
- Food or entertainment
- Food or music
- Food, chewing tobacco
- Foooooooood!
- Games, alcohol, etc.
- Girls
- Going out with friends
- I need or helping
- Lunch (2)
- Me
- Music and going to shows
- My girlfriend
- My truck
- Myself
- Myself and others
- Necessities
- Nothing specific
- [Deleted Expletive], money, weed
- Random stuff (2)
- Shoes
- Smokes
- Supplements
- Tobacco (2)
- Tobacco products
- Various things
- Weed

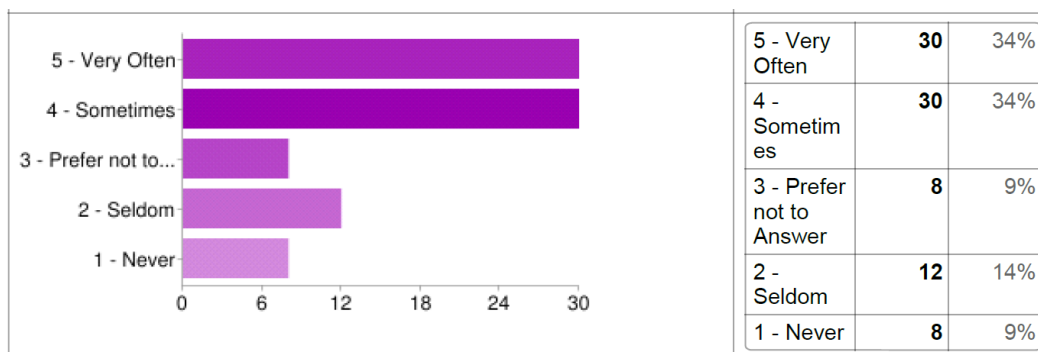
Using the five-point scale from “very often” to “never”, please indicate your experience or beliefs about the following statements.

5-Very Often 4- Sometimes 3-Prefer not to Answer 2- Seldom 1- Never

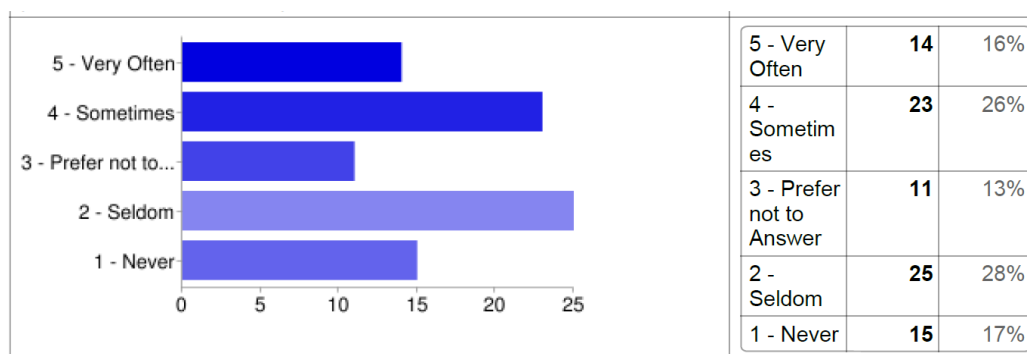
60. I spend at least two hours a day on the internet (Facebook, gaming, etc.)



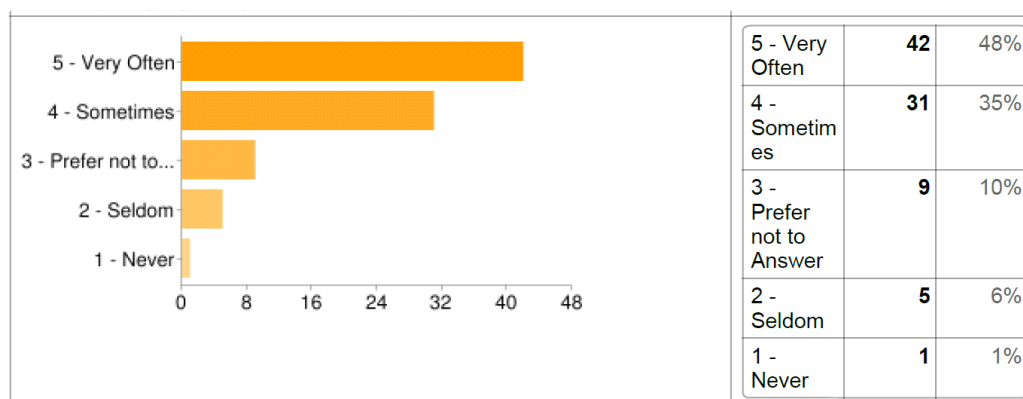
61. I spend at least two hours a day watching TV.



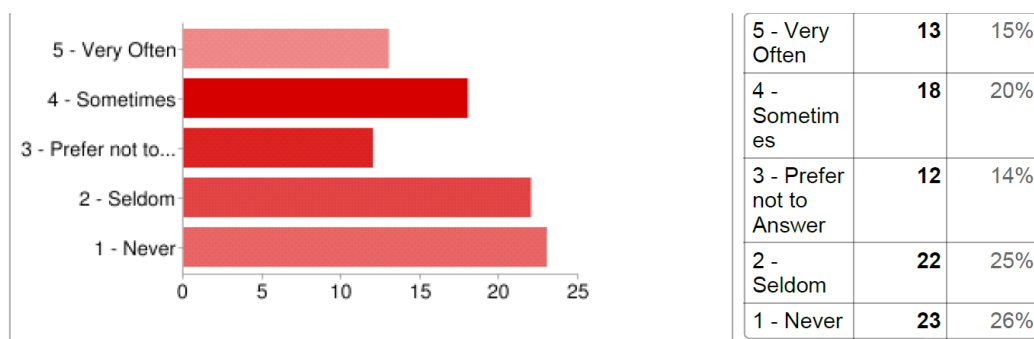
62. I spend at least two hours a day playing video games (Nintendo, Xbox, Wii, etc.)



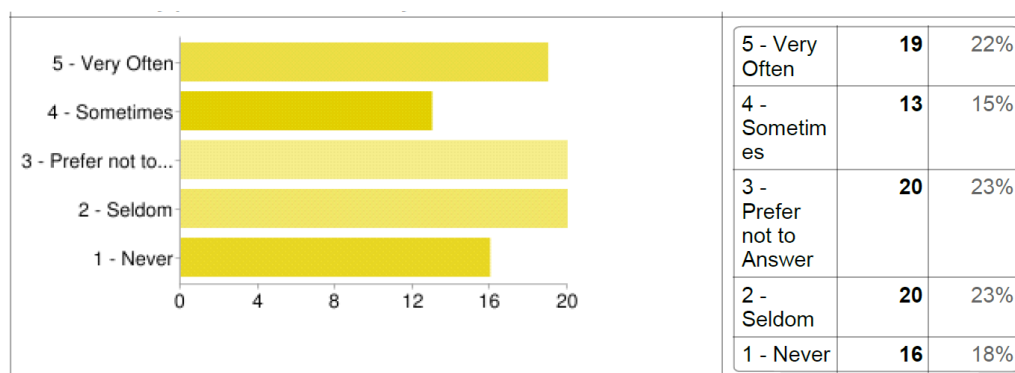
63. Not counting time at school, at school activities, or on the Internet, I spend at least two hours a day in contact with my friends (hanging out, phone, text, etc.)



64. I spend at least two hours a day on homework.



65. I volunteer my time outside of any connection to St. Rita and/or my parish/faith community.



66. Is there something in your experience at St. Rita that was not mentioned, or do you want to explain a bit more about an answer you gave? Please feel free to write it:

- Everything at Rita was good except my Soph year that was a bad year and i was immature and should have taken it way more serious
- I came to St Rita not knowing anybody now i can honestly say that i know the entire senior class.
- I like the food
- I loved the savi retreat!!!!!!!!!! Other than that everything else was mentioned.
- I wish we had smoking breaks
- Kairos is awesome
- Na (2)
- [Deleted Expletive] suck mass it too long and i hate you
- No (8)
- No student should be left behind despite of his physical, mental, or spiritual challenges.
- Nope I'm good
- Saint Rita is the worst school i wouldn't recommend anyone to come here

- Some faculty members are not cool and favor others
- St. Rita is a great school that i can look back on with pride. My future looks bright because St. Rita taught me how to be more outgoing. I now shake hands with people rather than just greet them.
- St. Rita is just simply a great school all around.
- This school is god awful and is still declining trying to make it into a smart school i hope it gets shut down

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Quincy College, Quincy, IL	1985
• B.A. , History, <i>cum laude</i>	
MINISTERIAL CERTIFICATIONS	
Ordained Roman Catholic Presbyter	13 June 1995
Virtus training (Protecting God's Children/Chicago)	12 January 2005
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Mandated Reporter Training	25 September 2007
Virtus training (Protecting God's Children/Milwaukee)	23 August 2010
Invested in Augustinians	6 August 2011
Praesidium training (Updating for Ethical Ministry and the Protection of Young People/Augustinians)	2 May 2012
EMPLOYMENT	
St. Rita of Cascia High School, Chicago, IL	2009-2010, 2011-2013
• <i>Teacher</i>	2009-2010, 2011-2013
• <i>Director of Campus Ministry</i>	2011-2013
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DePaul University, Chicago, IL	2001-2009
• <i>Mission Services Coordinator</i>	
Office of Mission and Values	2001-2009
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Religious Studies Department/Catholic Studies Department	2002-2009
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