Becoming Borderland Communities: Ritual Practice and Solidarity in Shared Parishes

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BECOMING BORDERLAND COMMUNITIES: RITUAL PRACTICE AND SOLIDARITY IN SHARED PARISHES

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Roughly one-third of U.S. Catholic parishes serve parishioners of multiple cultural, ethnic, and/or linguistic groups. In these "shared parishes," the possibility and meaning of community across boundaries is an urgent question. This dissertation examines the role of ritual in the formation of community in diverse parishes. Critiquing prevailing ecclesiological models of unity in diversity that inadequately address structural sins of racism and xenophobia, I argue for an understanding of communion as a task of the local Church, embodied ritually in solidaristic practice. Then, establishing a conversation among ritual studies and U.S. Latino/a discourses of border identity, I propose an understanding of the shared parish as a kind of borderland – as a place where a subjunctive communal identity can be negotiated ritually through embodied engagement. Methodologically, the dissertation is grounded in an ethnographic study conducted over five years at St. Mary of the Angels, a small, diverse parish in Boston, MA. Weaving together historical and archival data from parish, neighborhood, and archdiocese; participant-observation of bilingual Holy Week liturgies; and Spanish- and English-language interviews, the case study foregrounds the dissertation's theoretical work by analyzing how parishioners constructed rituals that facilitated the crossing of cultural, racial, and linguistic boundaries.

For Nora and Lucy, two wonderful girls.

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Acknowledgements

In the summer of 2011, I responded to an ad seeking a graduate student willing to live in the rectory of a small, urban parish in Boston. As is now the norm in Boston, the parish shared a pastor with two other nearby communities, leaving its own rectory empty. Parishioners were seeking someone to serve as a minister of presence—someone to keep the lights on and the doors open, letting the neighbors know that the parish was still with them. I was living in Brownsville, Texas, two miles north of the U.S-Mexico border, working as a middle school teacher in a small Catholic school. The prospect of living at the parish seemed providential: though I was anticipating my upcoming move to Boston to begin graduate studies in theology, I had no way of affording rent in the city and nowhere to live. I earnestly agreed to teach religious education, help clean the church, and compile the weekly bulletin in exchange for my room in the rectory. I could not have known at the time that the community whose parish house I had eagerly agreed to occupy would shape the course of my theological work and my understanding of the lay vocation. For seven years, the people of St. Mary of the Angels/*Santa María de los Ángeles* have been my primary teachers. This dissertation is indebted to their friendship.

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Introduction

Catholic parishes are communities of difference. The cultural complexity that characterizes emerging models of parish life today calls forth new ecclesiological language that allows us to approach difference not as a pastoral problem to be solved but rather as the seedbed of new life for the Church. Today, more than one in three parishes in the United States serve two or more cultural, ethnic, and/or linguistic sub-communities. These so-called "shared parishes" minister to parishioners who speak different languages and practice their faith in distinct ways, who often worship at separate language-specific Masses and are involved in separate ministries. They have different pastoral needs, generational makeups, communal histories, immigration statuses, economic and educational experiences, ideologies and worldviews, and operative theologies. They come with diverse conceptions of church and ministry, approaches to family dynamics and gender roles, and relationships to ecclesial authority. When these differences intersect with larger social systems of racial and ethnic privilege and discrimination, stark asymmetries of power, leadership, and access to resources also emerge.

In Canon Law (515), parishes are defined as stable communities of the faithful. Yet the shared parish is, in a real sense, a kind of borderland: a dynamic, often contested place formed by the convergence of multiple intersecting and overlapping identities. In these borderland spaces, vital questions emerge about the nature of the parish and the future of ministry. How do we speak theologically about this kind of local hybridity, and how can such language shape the way in which we envision pastoral ministry in these contexts? Can parishes like these be meaningfully understood as communities? How, then, is it possible to cultivate community across borderlines within shared parishes? This dissertation offers a response to these questions by examining how ritual contributes to the formation of community across difference in diverse

parish contexts. Critiquing prevailing ecclesiological models of unity in diversity that inadequately address structural sins of racism and xenophobia, I argue for an understanding of communion as a task of the local Church, embodied ritually in solidaristic practice. Then, establishing a conversation among ritual studies and U.S. Latinx discourses of border identity, I propose an understanding of the shared parish as a kind of borderland, as a place where a subjunctive communal identity emerges through embodied engagement.

In post-Vatican II ecclesiological discourse, the question of community in difference is frequently approached through the language of communion. Recent studies of diversity and parish life have proposed communion as a way of describing unity among diverse believers.[1] In publications on best practices for ministry in shared parishes, the U.S. Bishops similarly define diverse parish community as communion in mission.[2] Yet while communion ecclesiology offers a compelling vision of ecclesial unity grounded in dialogue and a spirit of mutuality, critical analysis of communion literature reveals ambivalence with respect to difference, particularly racial difference. Within the communion paradigm, difference tends to be either spiritualized and idealized or subordinated to the sacramental unity of all baptized in Christ. Indeed, within the literature the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist are often cited as foretastes of perfect

[1] See Brett Hoover, *The Shared Parish: Latinos, Anglos, and the Future of U.S. Catholicism* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); Vincent J. Miller, "Body of Christ of Religious Boutique? The Struggles of Being a Parish in a Consumer Culture," *Church* (Summer 2007): 15-19; and Miller, "Where is the Church? Globalization and Catholicity," *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 412-432.

[2] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Best Practices for Shared Parishes: So That They May All Be One* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014), 16-17.

communion, portrayed as unity unburdened by human distinctions.[3] Such imprecision points to larger philosophical and theological difficulties with the notion of difference. It also reflects national data on the attitudes of parishioners in shared parishes, which suggest that Euro-Americans tend to affirm diversity in the abstract but meet it with hesitation and suspicion in the concrete contexts of their parishes. Communion ecclesiology becomes problematic when it presents a vision of unity in diversity in which differences of race, ethnicity, and culture are dissolved in favor of a seemingly post-racial or colorblind form of Christian belonging, thus offering nominal celebration of diversity without concomitantly addressing deeper social questions of privilege, segregation, and racism within the life of the community. Drawing on the work of M. Shawn Copeland and Elizabeth Johnson, I argue that if communion describes the eschatological *telos* of the Church, a more adequate descriptor of the task of the local church in history is solidarity, understood as the concrete practice of communion across difference. Concomitantly, I suggest that the question of community in diverse contexts is best approached through the lens of ritual practice. In other words, to ask what community is, is to ask what community does.

Scholars of diverse congregations have pointed to the role of ritual practice in cultivating community in such contexts. Practical wisdom also affirms this connection between ritual and community. In shared parishes, bilingual liturgies often represent best attempts at building bridges between members of different linguistic communities. Bilingual masses can be onerous and often awkward, but the significance of such efforts should not be overlooked. Indeed, these attempts at fostering community through linguistically inclusive liturgical participation evince an

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[3] See, for example, Jean-Marie R. Tillard, *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ: At the Source of the Ecclesiology of Communion* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 68; and John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), 151.

instinct similar to those elaborated by scholars: we sense that we become community by doing community.

I examine this claim by analyzing the ritual life of a highly racially and ethnically diverse parish in Boston, St. Mary of the Angels/*Santa María de los Ángeles* (SMA). Like many parishes in the U.S., SMA is a shared parish. Currently, SMA serves African American, Afro-Caribbean, Latinx (primarily Dominican and Puerto Rican), and Euro-American parishioners. The small, urban parish offers two Sunday masses, one in English and the other in Spanish. Yet unlike most parishes, SMA boasts a striking level of intercultural and interracial friendship and collaboration. The parish takes a mission-oriented approach to fostering multicultural and multilingual community through joyful worship and a strong commitment to social justice. Throughout the parishes' century-long history, the blocks encompassed by its relatively small parish boundaries have encompassed the boundary lines between religious, cultural, and racial communities in Roxbury. During the early decades of the twentieth century, the parish's main cross street bisected the parish boundaries between Catholic and Jewish blocks. Beginning in the 1960s, the blocks surrounding the parish became the site of the first African American settlement in the area. At various points throughout the past five decades, SMA has become home to significant numbers of Euro-American (mostly Irish), African American, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Jamaican, Cape Verdean, Haitian, Southeast Asian, and Nigerian parishioners, among many others.

SMA serves as a case study of the challenges and possibilities inherent in the border condition of many contemporary U.S. parishes. At SMA, both neighborhood and parish have been demographically transformed again and again by waves of change: public-transportation-driven urbanization, neighborhood coalescence around religious congregations, African

American northward migration, Latinx immigration, white flight, gentrification. I examine how parishioners have creatively constructed shared liturgical and devotional practices within an ecclesial context characterized by profound racial, cultural, linguistic, economic, and generational difference. I focus my analysis on the parish's bilingual Holy Week liturgies, which involve high levels of lay leadership and intercultural collaboration in planning and implementation. The liturgical and aesthetic high point of the week is the public Good Friday Way of the Cross walk, in which the fourteen stations of the cross are marked by places in the community that have become sites of suffering, death, and everyday resurrection throughout the year prior. The Neighborhood Way of the Cross ritual emerged as a public practice of lament during a particularly violent period in the early 1980s and has continued ever since as an expression of what one organizer called the "passion of the neighborhood."

I analyze SMA's Holy Week practices by engaging the ritual theory of Adam Seligman and Robert Weller. They conceive of ritual as subjunctive action, the embodied, imaginative construction of a shared "as if." Ritual is about "doing something" before it is about "saying something;" it is the "doing itself" that gives ritual meaning and through which power is negotiated.[4] This also means that, far from consolidating group identity and values in a unified way, ritual should instead be understood as encompassing and mediating difference without seeking to resolve it. Shared participation in ritual does not require that participants all hold an identical set of meanings, values, or identities in order to participate. In contexts of profound diversity—which is to say, in the absence of commonly agreed upon meanings, language, or symbols—ritual proves efficacious precisely because, through embodied participation,

[4] Adam B. Seligman, Robert Weller, Michael J. Puett, and Bennett Simon, *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4. See also Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

participants are inaugurated holistically and non-discursively into a shared subjunctive reality. Seligman and Weller argue that ritual, when understood as a kind of shared experience, "teaches us how to live within and between different boundaries rather than seeking to absolutize them."[5] Ritual, in this sense, can be compared to play, the creative, social, often joyful imagining of the kind of world that could be. Compelling in its beauty and aesthetic power, shared practice allows members of diverse communities to overcome fear and suspicion of the other, the immigrant, the newcomer by offering them a template for being together meaningfully in ways that ultimately expand and transform our often limited relational imaginations.

Ritual is space-creating action. In contexts of cultural pluralism, ritual creates a shared space between and among the borderlines within a community.[6] Engaging the work of Gloria Ánzaldua and Roberto Goizueta, I suggest that in the context of shared parishes, the space that ritual creates can be understood as a kind of borderland. Understanding the shared parish as a kind of borderland transforms the way in which we approach the meaning of community in such contexts For Anzaldúa, borderlands are spaces of new life formed at the convergence of painful histories. Borders and boundaries between different communities are conceived not as end points but as contact zones; in the well-known words of Martin Heidegger, "the boundary becomes the place from which *something begins its presencing*." Community is not a noun but a verb. Shared parishes, places characterized by profound and sometimes seemingly incommensurable difference, can be understood as communities to the extent that their members commit themselves to the vulnerable, uncomfortable, and hopeful work of practicing life together, becoming community by doing community. In a U.S. congregational landscape characterized by

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[5] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 7.

[6] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 26.

profound racial segregation, community requires solidarity, the intentional decision to subvert the inertia of division by joining with others in their difference in joyful anticipation of the Reign of God. Indeed, understood ritually, community does not require that members relinquish their particular cultures and identities or that they coexist in perfect harmony. As Virgil Elizondo writes, through ritual participation and celebration, people begin to experience a new kind of "we," a new kind of belonging. It is an experience of community that emerges in practice before it is emerges in theory; it is lived before it is understood.[7] Methodologically and practically, recovering the theological significance of difference requires that we center theological reflection precisely at the site of difference, in the interstices between the borderlines of race, culture, class, and gender. It requires, in other words, a theological option for the borderlands, for the spaces of difference where again and again God reveals Godself to dwell.

Contribution

This dissertation advances urgent conversations in practical theology and ecclesiology in three primary ways. First, it offers a practical ecclesiological foundation for forming pastoral leaders for the work of intercultural negotiation in parishes. This complex work requires, among other things, the ability to recognize and minister to the complex feelings of grief and fear that are often bound up with parish change. In the Church today, there is an urgent need empower pastoral leaders from within communities to be what in Hispanic ministry are called *gente puente*, bridge builders able to locate themselves on those borderlines within their own communities and help to facilitate the cultivation of relationships that create community. The framework developed here is applicable beyond the shared parish context. Even in parishes not

[7] Virgilio Elizondo, *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983), 124.

characterized by cultural or linguistic difference, other types of borders amongst people always exist and beg to be negotiated.

Second, the research challenges insufficiently critical ecclesiological discourse on the relationship between unity and diversity in the local church by identifying the need for a more rigorous approach to cultural and racial difference and a more expansive and embodied notion of ecclesial practice. Critically bringing together communion ecclesiology with U.S. Latinx and postcolonial theory helps to frame communion as a task of the local Church, embodied in ritual solidarity. Understanding the shared parish as a borderland emphasizes the hybrid, porous character of diverse parishes and concomitantly casts difference not as a problem to be solved in pursuit of theological purity or cultural uniformity but rather as a vital source of new life.

Third, the work helps to foreground a new trajectory in the study of American congregations by focusing on a highly diverse, contemporary Catholic parish taking a mission-oriented approach to intercultural collaboration. As I discuss in Chapter 1, this is a space in the literature occupied almost exclusively by Protestant congregations. Parishes present a different set of constraints and challenges than congregations do, making the lack of qualitative studies in "successfully diverse" parishes a consequential deficit both ecclesiologically and pastorally. This stands to make an important contribution to the way in which both scholars and practitioners approach community life in diverse parishes.

Caveats

The focus that this dissertation maintains on ritual practice as a facilitator of solidarity across difference should not falsely suggest that ritual is the only, or even the most important, factor in addressing cultural and racial divisions within parishes. Ritual is not a panacea; intercultural or bilingual liturgy does not magically create community. Rather, this project

recognizes that people participate in and connect with their parishes primarily through participation in liturgy, worship, and other spiritual practices. Indeed, while sociological literature on diverse and/or immigrant religious congregations sometimes subordinates the religious functions of churches to their social and civic ones, ritual remains the most central dimension of congregational life.[8] Thus, the way in which shared parishes approach ritual is vitally important.

Additionally, because the case study utilized in this project is located in the Northeastern United States, the historical analysis in this chapter will privilege (though not exclusively) the parish context in that region. U.S. Catholic historiography evinces an unfortunate bias toward the experiences of European immigrant Catholics in the urban Northeast, Midwest, and Eastern seaboard. Despite my apparent perpetuation of this bias in the selection of a Boston-based case study, recognition of the transnational dimensions of parish life at SMA underscores a necessary "hemispheric perspective" in the study of American Catholicism.[9] Utilizing a borderland hermeneutical framework to analyze the experience of community at SMA also implicitly brings the experiences of Catholics in the urban Northeast into conversation with those in the Southwestern borderlands.

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[8] See Nancy T. Ammerman, "Still Gathering After All These Years: Congregations in U.S. Cities," in *Can Charitable Choice Work?: Covering Religion's Impact on Urban Affairs and Social Services,* ed. Andrew Walsh (Leonard E. Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life, 2001), 6-22; and Kevin D. Dougherty and Kimberly R. Huyser, "Racially Diverse Congregations: Organizational Identity and the Accommodation of Differences," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 1 (2008): 23-44.

[9] Timothy Matovina, *Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America's Largest Church* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 40.

A Note on Terminology

Race, ethnicity, and culture—and the words used to describe differences therein—are contested and socially constructed terms. In this project, I use the terms "Latinx" (singular) and "Latinos" (plural) to describe persons of Latin American descent. I utilize the term "Hispanic" to mean Spanish-speaking. I use the term "black" when discussing not only African Americans but also those of Afro-Caribbean descent. I utilize the terms "white" and "Euro-American" interchangeably, except where the latter refers explicitly to a community of specific European heritage. Following the *Chicago Manual of Style*, I do not capitalize "black" or "white" except where the term is part of a title or quotation.[10]

Within my discussion of the case study of St. Mary of the Angels, I utilize the terms "English Mass community" and "Spanish Mass community" to denote the community of regular attendees at each of SMA's two Sunday Masses. In emic terms, English-speaking parishioners often referred to these two communities simply as the "Spanish community" and the "English community" (or, even more colloquially, as the "nines" and the "elevens," a nod to the times on Sunday at which each of the two masses begins). Spanish-speaking parishioners referred to the two Mass communities in terms such as "*los hispanos*" and "*los ingles*." The use of the term "Spanish Mass" or "Spanish community" can be misleading, falsely suggesting that those who attend are from Spain. (In fact, most attendees are from the Caribbean or Latin America). These terms refer to the language of primary mass affiliation, not country of origin. It should also be noted that there are English-speakers who attend the Spanish mass and Spanish-speakers who attend the English mass; many parishioners are bilingual or speak languages other than English and/or Spanish). Additionally, my use of these descriptors should not suggest that language or

[10] *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), Section 8.39.

Mass affiliation is the only marker of sub-community identity at SMA; as my examination of the case study will illustrate, parishioners conceptualize difference at SMA along a number of different lines, language being the most salient.

Chapter 1: Shared Parishes and the Question of Community

1.1 Introduction

Studies of American religious congregations have been unequivocal in demonstrating that the majority of Americans worship with people who are racially and culturally similar to themselves.[1] While diverse parishes and congregations still make up a minority of faith communities, congregational diversity is increasing. Today, more than one-third of Catholic parishes in the U.S. serve two or more cultural, ethnic, and/or linguistic communities.[2] This dissertation examines the meaning of community in these "shared parishes,"[3] with a focus on the role of ritual practice in cultivating community across borderlines of race, ethnicity, and culture. In this chapter, I foreground this exploration by tracing the historical, social-scientific, and

[1] The most widely cited study is the National Congregations Survey (1998, 2006-2007, 2012). Relevant analyses of National Congregations Survey data include Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Curtiss Paul DeYoung and Michael O. Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim, *United by Faith: The Multicultural Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Mark Chaves, *Congregations in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Michael O. Emerson with Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008)*;* Robert Putnam and David Campbell draw on the Faith Matters Survey (2006) in *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010). Within Catholic parishes exclusively, Georgetown University's Center for the Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) has conducted ongoing surveys of parochial diversity, the most recent in 2013. See Charles E. Zech, Mary L. Gautier, Mark M. Gray, Jonathan L. Wiggins, and Thomas P. Gaunt, S.J., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2017). All conclude that the majority of Christians belong to faith communities in which a majority of members are racially or ethnically similar to themselves. Catholic parishes are more diverse than Protestant congregations, but diverse parishes are still a minority of all parishes.

[2] Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century,* 108-109.

[3] The use of this term will be explained in greater detail in the coming section. The term is used by Hoover in *The Shared Parish* and has also been adopted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in materials on parish diversity, as in their bilingual handbook *Best Practices for Shared Parishes: So That They May All Be One*.

ecclesial contexts from which the contemporary shared parish has emerged. I chart historical trends and transformations in immigration, demographics, racial attitudes, and ideological and ecclesiological understandings of cultural difference in U.S. Catholicism, with an emphasis on the way in which these trends and transformations have manifested themselves in embodied practice at the level of the local parish. I suggest that the contemporary shared parish should be understood not as a departure from prior models of church life but rather as the present moment in the long evolution of a church in the U.S. that, throughout its history, has been defined by movement, migration, displacement, hybridity, and difference. I then review contemporary sociological literature on congregational diversity and offer several explanations for the significant gap in studies of diverse Catholic parishes, a gap which this dissertation seeks to address. I conclude by proposing that in shared parishes today, the most urgent and open question is what it means, and whether it is possible, to call the shared parish a community, understood as an articulation of the relationship between unity and diversity.

1.2 Diversity in U.S. Parishes

1.2.1 What are Shared Parishes?

The complexity of the emerging multicultural reality of the U.S. Catholic parish is illustrated by the difficulty scholars have encountered in even developing terminology to name such spaces. This is because doing so involves implicitly answering complex questions of practice, power, belonging, culture, race, identity, mission, and ecclesiological understanding. In the field of sociology of religion, such parishes and congregations are often alternately identified as *multicultural*, *multiethnic*, *multiracial*, or *culturally diverse*. Scholars have taken a variety of positions on the issue of such naming. In his ethnographic work at a Midwestern parish with discrete Euro-American and Mexican/Mexican-American communities, Brett Hoover

preferences the term "shared parish" because, unlike the more oft-used descriptors "multicultural" or "multiethnic," "shared" does not implicitly overstate the level of integration that actually exists amongst members of distinct cultural communities within the majority of such parishes. Indeed, this act of sharing becomes definitive in the character of such parishes. Observes Hoover, "this juxtaposition of distinctiveness within a common physical space creates an unusual dynamic. Two (or more) cultures find themselves compelled to interact—or collide—across the landscape of the one facility. Sooner or later, they must negotiate with one another, even as they try to avoid it."[4] Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz imply even less interaction in describing churches like these as "parallel congregations."[5] Theologian Hosffman Ospino utilizes the term "community of communities,"[6] a term also employed by Pope Francis in his 2013 Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*.[7] In this project, I follow Hoover and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in employing the terminology of *shared parishes* to describe Catholic parishes *that serve multiple cultural, ethnic, and/or linguistic communities within the same parish facilities*.[8] Culling together various recent studies and measures of

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[4] Hoover, *The Shared Parish*, 12.

[5] Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2000), 9. Their use of "parallel congregations" follows the observation of Ana María Díaz-Stevens (1993) and Paul Numrich, who coined the term (1996). See Ana María Díaz-Stevens, *Oxcart Catholicism on Fifth Avenue: The Impact of Puerto Rican Migration Upon the Archdiocese of New York* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), and Paul David Numrich, *Old Wisdom in the New World: Americanization in Two Immigrant Theravada Buddhist Temples* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1996).

[6] Hosffman Ospino, "Rethinking the Urban Parish in Light of the *New Catholicity*," *New Theology Review* 21, no. 1 (February 2008): 68.

[7] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), paragraph 28.

[8] See Hoover, *The Shared Parish*, 2. This definition echoes the USCCB's bilingual resource, *Best Practices for Shared Parishes: That They May All Be One*, which defines shared

Catholic congregational diversity, it can be estimated that just over one-in-three U.S. Catholic parishes today are shared parishes.[9]

Statistically, most researchers define a multicultural congregation as one in which no single cultural or ethnic community comprises 80% or more of its membership.[10] Using this threshold, Emerson and Woo's analysis of the first phase of the National Congregations Survey found that in 1998, 15% of Catholic parishes could be considered multiracial.[11] By 2007, almost 20% of parishes were multiracial; by 2012, that number increased to almost 25%.[12] This analysis

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parishes as "parish communities in which two or more languages or cultural contexts are an integral part of the ministerial life and mission of a particular parish" (p. 1).

[9] Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century,* 108-109.

[10] Michael O. Emerson and Karen Chai Kim, "Multiracial Congregations: An Analysis of Their Development and a Typology," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, no. 2 (2003): 217-227; and Emerson with Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United* States. The 20% threshold is also utilized by the National Congregations Survey (NCS) to designate a multiracial congregation (1998, 2006-2007, 2012). "This definition is used because (a) the presence of 20% or more of racially different others is, research suggests, a point of critical mass, switching minority presence from that of tokenism to that of having influence on organizational policies and practices, and (b) mathematically, this level of diversity means that, under the assumption of random contact, the probability of cross-race contact is 99%." Korie L. Edwards, Brad Christerson, and Michael O. Emerson, "Race, Religious Organizations, and Integration," *The Annual Review of Sociology* 39 (2013): 213. This statistical threshold is also helpful because it guards against the conflation of the terminology of "multicultural" with the notion of "non-white." For example, a parish that is 95% Latinx may be referred to colloquially (and incorrectly) as "multicultural" or "diverse," even though the parish is essentially mono-cultural. Such a parish would not be considered statistically multicultural/multiracial. Utilizing the term "shared parish" attempts to engage in disambiguation insofar as it clearly refers to parishes that serve a multiplicity of cultural, ethnic, or linguistic sub-communities.

[11] Emerson with Woo, *People of the Dream*, 36.

[12] I obtained these figures by analyzing data from the second and third phases of the National Congregations Survey utilizing the same statistical framework, weights, and methodology Emerson and Woo (2006) utilized in their interpretation of 1998 National Congregations Survey data. I am grateful to Emerson and his colleagues for sharing this information with me through personal correspondence. The precise figures are: 1998—16.6% multiracial; 2007—19.73% multiracial; 2012—24.9% multiracial.

reveals a steady increase in parish diversity over the fourteen years between the first and third phases of the NCS. The 2006 Faith Matters Survey, the basis for Robert Putnam and David Campbell's *American Grace,* set the bar for congregational diversity slightly higher, defining a diverse congregation as one in which at least "25% of the members are of a different race than the respondent."[13] By this measure, Putnam and Campbell found that 21% of Catholics attended a diverse parish, similar to the figures obtained by the National Congregations Survey.[14] However, according to a comprehensive analysis of parish databases by researchers with the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, 35.9% of all parishes in the United States are known to serve one or more particular racial, ethnic, cultural, and/or linguistic communities.[15] Of these 6,332 multicultural parishes identified by CARA, the

[13] Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, 290. Putnam and Campbell affirm Michael Emerson's observation that people tend to overestimate the diversity of their congregations by about 5%, making their 25% diversity threshold functionally equivalent to Emerson and Woo's 20% threshold.

[14] Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace,* 292. It should be noted that whereas the National Congregations Survey estimates the number of diverse congregations per se, and relied on responses from clergy, the Faith Matters Survey estimates individual attendance at a diverse congregation and relied on responses from churchgoers. Despite these distinctions, which preclude direct comparison between the two surveys, Putnam and Campbell note that the two surveys more or less corroborate one another (p. 291).

[15] Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century,* 108-109. Because this number far exceeds the percentage of multiracial Catholic parishes estimated by the NCS, we can assume that the CARA data includes parishes that serve particular cultural or racial communities whose members do not necessarily meet or exceed 20% of the parish's membership. The CARA data also include 946 parishes—14% of the multicultural parishes identified—that serve European and other linguistic and cultural communities that would be considered racially white (e.g. Polish, Ukrainian, or French Canadian communities) and, for that reason, would not have been included in NCS data of multiracial parishes. For this clarification, see Mark Gray, "Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church in the United States" (Washington, D.C., Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2016 [data from 2013]), 7. I privilege the CARA figures because, as an organization situated in the context of a Catholic university and focused exclusively on dynamics in Catholic parish life, CARA is able to identify the nuances particular to the parish that are distinct from the congregational context.

vast majority—69% of them—serve Spanish-speaking communities.[16] Eight percent of multicultural parishes serve black, African American, or Afro-Caribbean communities. Another seven percent serve Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander communities, the majority of which are Filipino, Vietnamese, or Korean. The remaining 14% serve particular European and other linguistic and cultural communities. Many of these—Polish, Ukrainian, or French Canadian communities, for example—would be considered racially white and thus would not have been counted in diversity figures from the National Congregations Survey or Faith Matters Survey. This accounts for the difference between the CARA figures and the other two data sets.

Defining shared parishes expansively—as those that serve two or more cultural, ethnic, or linguistic communities—makes it difficult to quantify their existence in precise numerical terms. Terms like race and ethnicity, the descriptors typically utilized to gauge congregational diversity, are ambiguous and likely to be interpreted in different ways by the pastors and parishioners who respond to such surveys. Additionally, perceived racial uniformity can mask deeper cultural divides. Take, for example, a large parish in Boston shared by an African American community and a Nigerian community. Racially, both communities would be considered black; thus, in both the National Congregations Survey and the Faith Matters Survey, this parish would be considered monoracial. Yet, the African American and Nigerian communities worship at different and liturgically distinct Masses. Moreover, the relationship between the two communities is characterized by sharp discord. This ostensibly monoracial parish would certainly be considered a shared parish.[17] Thus, privileging the CARA data, which accounts for

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[16] Gray, "Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church in the United States," 7.

[17] The experience of this Boston parish echoes struggles that arose in Nigerian Catholic communities in the Washington, D.C., area over the role of linguistic, tribal, and national identities in liturgical life and parish belonging. Beginning in the 1990s, the official Nigerian Catholic Community in the Archdiocese of Washington became the site of heated disagreement

racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity, we can reasonably conclude that around a third of U.S. parishes can be considered shared parishes.

While the precise number of shared parishes in the United States is difficult to pin down, several trends can be observed. First, based on the increase in parish-level diversity that has taken place over recent decades, and on the heightened attention that shared parishes have begun to receive from both pastoral leaders and scholars, shared parishes in the U.S. are becoming increasingly common. Yet, if we extend our frame of reference further into the past, we see that American parishes have long been culturally shared spaces to some extent and in some form. Thus, it would be inaccurate to characterize shared parishes as radically new. It may be more accurate to say that the increasing presence of Hispanic Catholics (and, to a numerically smaller but significant and growing extent, Catholics from Asia and Africa) throughout the U.S. is dramatically reshaping parish life from the ground up.

As previously noted, the three phases of the National Congregations Survey seem to suggest a steady increase in Catholic congregational diversity between 1998 and 2012. This increase can be attributed to a convergence of factors, including immigration from predominately Catholic countries in Latin America and higher birthrates among Hispanic Catholics than white Catholics, coupled with numerical stagnation of white, Euro-American Catholics due both to aging and to the steady increase in those (particularly the young) leaving the Church.[18] At the

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among the mostly Igbo members and their non-Igbo Nigerian chaplain. Adding to the complexity, the Nigerian Catholic Community worshipped at Holy Names Parish, an African American parish that, in addition to the Nigerians, had also become home to immigrants from the Caribbean, Francophone Africa, Latin America, and Asia. See Michael W. Foley and Dean R. Hoge, *Religion and the New Immigrants: How Faith Communities Form Our Newest Citizens* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 197-199.

[18] The Pew Research Center 2014 Religious Landscape Survey suggested that between 2007 and 2014, Catholics decreased from 23.9% of the U.S. population to 20.3%; during the same period, non-white Catholics increased from 35% to 40% of total U.S. Catholics. The same

parish level, we see this trend reflected in the fact that the percentage of U.S. parishes offering Hispanic ministry has almost doubled since the 1980s.[19] However, if we take the long view, we can see that although the shared parish model is becoming more common and more formally institutionalized,[20] parishes serving culturally, ethnically, or linguistically diverse communities have existed since the earliest days of the church in what is now the United States. Until the sharp rise in immigration from predominately Catholic European countries in the mid-19th century, Catholics were an extreme minority in the U.S., particularly outside of the Southwest.[21] Because parishes were typically few and far between, Catholics of different cultural backgrounds often worshipped together by default. As Hoover notes, "In 1785, the pastor of the first Catholic parish in New York City, Charles Whelan, described his parish as home to English, Irish, French,

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survey showed that while 31.7% of American adults said that they were raised Catholic, 41% of those no longer identified with the faith. Strikingly, 12.9% of the American adult population is former Catholics. Additionally, 50% of U.S. Catholics were born before 1965. For an overview of trends among U.S. Catholics, see: http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-tradition/catholic/.

[19] The National Study of Catholic Parishes with Hispanic Ministry identified 4,368 U.S. parishes that intentionally serve Hispanic Catholics by offering, at minimum, mass in Spanish once a month; this is roughly 25% of U.S. parishes. See Hosffman Ospino, *Hispanic Ministry in Catholic Parishes* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2014), 5. Though the Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life, the results of which were published in 1989, excluded Spanish-speaking congregations and participants, researchers on the Study estimated that about 2,800 parishes had "significant numbers of Hispanics" and about 2,500 – around 15% of parishes – offered mass in Spanish. See Jim Castelli and Joseph B. Gremillion, *The Emerging Parish: The Notre Dame Study of Catholic Life Since Vatican II* (HarperCollins, 1987), 77-78.

[20] This institutional recognition is reflected in the USCCB's growing emphasis on fostering intercultural competence in parish ministers, as illustrated in the publication of materials such as the bilingual *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers* (2012) and in national and regional training sessions on intercultural competence given by the USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church.

[21] At the time of the American Revolution, just 1.2% of the white population of the thirteen colonies was Catholic. See Richard Middleton, *Colonial America: A History, 1565-1776* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 225.

Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese speaking people."[22] The strong mono-cultural legacies of many national/ethnic parishes, combined with the passage of restrictive immigration laws in the 1920s and the Americanizing impulse of Catholics in the postwar period, give the potentially misleading impression that until very recently, parish life was relatively culturally homogenous. In reality, although the term "multicultural" often evokes a sense of the new, shared or multicultural parishes are not a recent development. Catholic parishes have been sites of intercultural negotiation since the earliest days of Catholicism in America. Ultimately, shared parishes should be regarded as a model of church life that has existed in various forms throughout the history of U.S. Catholicism, and one that has grown in significance in recent decades as the proportion of white, assimilated Euro-Americans in the church has declined in all regions of the U.S.

Second, as Hoover argues, the "national picture" of shared parish life is one in which "a minority of Catholic parishes do the heavy lifting in terms of addressing cultural diversity while others focus more or less exclusively on Catholics of European descent."[23] CARA found that even though only around half of U.S. Catholics identify as white/Euro-American, 71% of U.S. parishes offer Mass in English only; in these English-only parishes, 88% of registered parishioners are white.[24] Hispanic Catholics, the largest non-white cultural subset of Catholics in

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[22] Brett C. Hoover, "No Favoritism: Effective Collaborative Leadership Practices in Multicultural Parishes," in *Collaborative Parish Leadership: Contexts, Models, Theology,* edited by William A. Clark and Daniel Gast (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), 105; citing a quotation from Charles M. Whelan in James Hennessey, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1981). 75.

[23] Hoover, "No Favoritism," 106.

[24] Hoover, "No Favoritism," 106, summarizing Mark M. Gray, "Special Report: Multicultural Findings" (Washington, D.C., Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2012), 6-10.

the United States, comprise almost 40% of all U.S. Catholics, yet only about 25% of U.S. parishes provide at least a minimal form of Hispanic ministry.[25] Additionally, non-white Catholics are significantly more likely than white Catholics to "parish shop," presumably bypassing their local parishes for communities that offer more linguistically- or culturally-responsive ministry. Around half of all non-white Catholics in the U.S. attend a parish other than their geographical one.[26] This trend supports the idea that the bulk of the "heavy lifting" of negotiating cultural diversity is being shouldered by a minority of parishes. It also puts into sharp focus the need for an increase in culturally and linguistically responsive ministry in parishes.

Third, from the perspectives of parishioners who belong to them, clergy who serve them, and researchers who study them, shared parishes are generally understood as culturally divided spaces. As Hoover argues in his an ethnographic study of a shared Anglo-Latinx parish in the Midwest, shared parishes are often characterized by feelings of separation or unease between members of different cultural communities. Parishioners typically attend separate, language-specific Masses and participate in separate spiritual and social activities. Outside of polite encounters in the parking lot between Masses or at occasional bilingual liturgies or parish events, most parishioners in shared parishes have minimal informal interaction across cultural boundaries. "Over time, an imperfect process of pragmatic negotiation between cultures sets in. Masses and ministries form in parallel. Religious education, prayer meetings, and socials emerge for each community."[27] Certain administrative committees, such as parish councils or finance

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[25] Ospino, *Hispanic Ministry in Catholic Parishes*, 5.

[26] Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century*, 18. According to the report, "More than half of African American parishioners and close to half of Asian American and Hispanic parishioners drive past parishes closer to their home to attend Mass" (p. 18).

[27] Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 22.

committees, may intentionally include representatives from the various cultural groups at the parish. More often, a consultative committee made up of members of a particular cultural group is formed alongside the regular Parish Council to address issues related to that group.[28] In general, cultural encapsulation remains the uneasy status quo.[29] Within this context of separation, Hoover cautions, "[t]he shared parish can easily become kind of a permanent crucible of grief, where resentments and frustrations dominate the scene over time. It can be turned into a kind of waiting room that permits immigrant groups to manage their own cultural expressions of religiosity but only until such time as they can be pragmatically coerced into adapting Euro-American religious customs."[30]

In this way, cultural encapsulation in parishes is also related to structural disparities and power asymmetries among cultural communities in shared parishes. According to the National Study of Catholic Parishes with Hispanic Ministry, only between six and nine percent of parishes with Hispanic ministry responded that various subgroups of Hispanic/Latinx parishioners in their parishes (immigrants, children of immigrants, U.S.-born children; U.S.-born adults) are fully integrated into the life of their parish.[31] More than a quarter of directors of Hispanic ministry in parishes are unpaid; those who are paid receive very little compensation on average. The National Study of Catholic Parishes with Hispanic Ministry concludes that "resources for

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[28] This model is prevalent among parishes with Hispanic ministry. See Ospino, *Hispanic Ministry in Catholic Parishes*, 16.

[29] Drawing from the field of psychology, Hoover defines cultural encapsulation as "an isolation of perspectives, where members of socially disconnected groups judge all things by their own cultural perspective and have trouble identifying or understanding the perspective of members of other groups" (*The Shared Parish,* 106).

[30] Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 222.

[31] Ospino, *Hispanic Ministry in Catholic Parishes*, 16.

ministry in parishes serving Hispanic Catholics are limited and, by and large, unequally distributed."[32]

Such descriptions acknowledge the myriad challenges posed by this emerging model of church life. Less clear, however, is where – or whether – opportunities exist for the development of authentic community across racial and cultural borders. The literature lacks concrete examples of Catholic parishes that have achieved a degree of success in fostering a robust sense of intercultural and/or interracial community, leaving scholars and practitioners to wonder whether such community is a realistic possibility in Catholic ecclesial life and, in turn, how to understand it ecclesiologically.

1.2.2 What is New About Shared Parishes?

As stated, Catholic parishes have been sites of intercultural negotiation since the earliest days of Catholicism in America. However, the shared parish has become increasingly common and has taken on a new significance today because of the confluence of several factors. First, the proportion of Latinx Catholics in the U.S. has increased, while the proportion of white, assimilated Euro-Americans has declined. Latinx, African, African American, and Asian Catholics are, in many ways, responsible for the continued vitality of Catholicism in the U.S. This trend is at odds with the continued normativity of white, Euro-American cultural norms, practices, and leadership in the church.[33] In many parishes, demographic changes have been accompanied by tensions, confusions, and *ad hoc* solutions that reinscribe the positioning of

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[32] Ospino, *Hispanic Ministry in Catholic Parishes*, 42.

[33] See Bryan Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010).

Euro-Americans as "host" and other communities as "guest."[34] However, in other (albeit rarer) cases, like that of St. Mary of the Angels, increasing cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity has occasioned a transformation in the shared life of the community. Second, in the post-national parish era, immigrants and other culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse Catholics carve out a space for themselves not in culturally homogenous national/ethnic parishes but rather in shared parishes.[35] They become a community among communities.[36] In other words, predominant models of parish life have changed. Third, attitudinal and ideological transformations within the church and broader society can be characterized as a shift from assimilationism to multiculturalism. Still, evidence of the former remains, and the latter has proven insufficient as a basis for intercultural community in a practical sense. Each of these trends is described in greater detail below.

1.2.3 Demographic Change, Race, and Shared Parishes in U.S. Catholicism

As Timothy Matovina observes, "the Roman Catholic Church in the United States is the most ethnically and racially diverse national ecclesial body in the world."[37] This profound diversity can be seen in many dioceses in the United States. In the Archdiocese of Boston, parishes minister to at least twenty-seven cultural communities, including Vietnamese, Haitian, Kenyan, Nigerian, Cape Verdean, Korean, Filipino, Polish, and Italian Catholics. The Archdiocese also maintains an active Office of Black Catholics. According to Fr. Michael Harrington, former director of the Archdiocese of Boston's Office of Outreach and Cultural

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[34] See Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 2.

[35] Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century,* 117.

[36] Hosffman Ospino, "Rethinking the Urban Parish in Light of *The New Catholicity*," 68.

[37] Timothy Matovina, *Latino Catholicism*, 38.

Diversity, the Archdiocese boasts "the largest population the world over of Brazilians outside of Brazil and the largest population of Ugandans outside of Uganda."[38] On the opposite coast, within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Mass is regularly celebrated in forty-two languages.[39]

It has become boilerplate in the history of American Catholicism to describe the church in the U.S. as a "church of immigrants." In some ways, this description is accurate. In other ways, it mischaracterizes the experience of Catholics already living in areas eventually annexed by the United States government's expansionist drive: Mexicanos and Tejanos living in the vast land encompassed by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (1848), as well as Puerto Ricans, Guamanians, Hawaiians, and others for whom the popular activist chant—"We didn't cross the border; the border crossed us!"—rings true. It also mischaracterizes the experiences of black Catholics who trace their roots in America to kidnapping, forced transport and enslavement; and of Native American Catholics, whose ancestral presence in the Americas predates the arrival of European colonizers and, in turn, of Catholicism. Indeed, as Matovina observes, it is no coincidence that those in the United States who are least able to fit their own histories into the culturally lauded "nation/church of immigrants" archetype are also those who experience the most virulent forms of discrimination.[40] In any case, immigration has been and continues to be a critical shaping factor in influencing parish-level diversity. Today, 27 percent of Catholic adults in the U.S. were born outside the country, and another 15 percent are second-generation

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[38] Michael Harrington, "Office of Outreach and Cultural Diversity Staff," http://www.catholicculturaldiversity.com/office-of-outreach-and-cultural-diversity-staff/.

[39] Matovina, *Latino Catholicism*, 38.

[40] Timothy Matovina, in remarks during keynote presentation at the College Theology Society Annual Meeting, Salve Regina University, June 2, 2017. See also Matovina, *Latino Catholicism*, 40.

immigrants.[41] Between 1980 and 2014, the number of foreign-born Catholics in the United States nearly quadrupled.[42] The majority of Catholic immigrants are from Mexico and other Latin American and Caribbean countries.[43] However, Asian and Pacific Island Catholics, particularly those from the Philippines, China, and Vietnam, are also a growing subset of the Catholic immigrant population in the United States.[44]

While immigration has always been a salient feature of U.S. Catholicism, current immigration trends intersect with frameworks of race in an important way. On a basic level, the Catholic Church in the U.S. and, increasingly, parishes themselves are becoming less white. Around 38% of U.S. Catholics are Hispanic.[45] Three percent of Catholics are African American, African, or Afro-Caribbean. Another five percent of Catholics are Asian.[46] Overall, according to estimates by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, more than half of U.S. Catholics today are not of Euro-American ancestry.[47] It is impossible to overstate the significance of this

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[41] Pew Research Center 2014 Religious Landscape Study, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/09/14/a-closer-look-at-catholic-america/. See also Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century,* 107-108.

[42] Between 1980 and 2014, foreign-born Catholics increased from 4,225,059 to 16,787,171. Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century*, 108.

[43] "The Global Catholic Population," Pew Research Center (February 13, 2013), http://www.pewforum.org/2013/02/13/the-global-catholic-population/#ftnrtn1.

[44] Tricia C. Bruce, Jerry Z. Park, and Stephen M. Cherry, "Asian and Pacific Island Catholics in the United States" (Washington, D.C., United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015), 7-8.

[45] Gray, "Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church," 9.

[46] This figure also includes Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. See Gray, "Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church," 4.

[47] Matovina, *Latino Catholicism,* 38.

transformation, particularly the extent to which Hispanic Catholics are reshaping the face of Catholicism in the United States.

Demographic change is more pronounced among younger generations. Half of Millennial Catholics, and almost half of Generation X Catholics, are non-white (predominately Latinx).[48] Change is also evident geographically. As in the past, Latinx Catholics continue to be most concentrated in the Southwest, as well as in Florida and urban centers in the Northeast.[49] In states such as California and Texas, for example, Latinx Catholics far outnumber Euro-Americans Catholics.[50] However, some of the most significant growth in need for Hispanic ministry is currently seen in parishes in seemingly unlikely places such as Alaska, Idaho, Washington, and Iowa.[51]

The significance of these broad demographic and geographical transformations can best be understood within the context of the particular and local—that is, at the parish level. In many places, particularly in dioceses throughout the Midwest and Northeast, waning parishes once populated by aging, white Catholics are experiencing revitalization as younger Hispanic families move to town. At St. Mary of the Angels, children from families in the Spanish community currently make up the majority of the parish's baptisms and virtually all of its First

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[48] Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century,* 14. Millennial Catholics are defined as those born in 1982 or later. Generation X Catholics are those born between 1961 and 1981 (Zech et al. alternatively identify them as the "post-Vatican II generation").

[49] Pew Research Center 2014 Religious Landscape Study; and Gray, "Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church," 8.

[50] In California, 67% of Catholics are Latinx. In Texas, 72% of Catholics are Latinx. See Pew Research Center 2014 Religious Landscape Survey.

[51] See, for example, the work of the Catholic Extension Society, which identifies and supports "mission dioceses," those with limited financial resources or infrastructure. Many of these dioceses serve increasing numbers of Hispanic Catholics.

Communions.[52] Additionally, while declining Mass attendance, clergy shortages, and an excess of church buildings is occasioning the closure and consolidation of parishes once largely populated by white, Euro-American Catholics in dioceses across the Northeast, new parishes are being constructed in the South and West as Catholic populations there increase, in no small part as a result of the increased presence of Latinos.[53]

Notions of race have evolved over the past several centuries. At the beginning of the 20th century, for example, the notion of "racial difference" was commonly invoked with respect to African Americans as well as foreign Europeans.[54] During periods of heavy European immigration in the 19th and early 20th centuries, European immigrant communities, such as the Irish, Italians, and Poles, endured racialization and severe discrimination upon arrival in the United States. Such discrimination often resulted in conflict among immigrant groups, and between particular groups and Church hierarchy.[55] However, gradual Euro-American Catholic

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[52] This trend is mirrored at All Saints, the parish featured in Hoover's study. Between 1996 and 1998, the number of Spanish-community baptisms jumps from just a few a year to more than 100, far surpassing baptisms from the English community. (Figure 1.4, "Baptisms at All Saints, 1950-2006," *The Shared Parish,* 55). This also echoes national data. In 2011, parishes that offered any Hispanic ministry celebrated an average of 82 baptisms in Spanish and 36 baptisms in English (Ospino, *Hispanic Ministry in Catholic Parishes*, 15).

[53] Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century,* 9-11.

[54] As John T. McGreevy notes, for much of American history, the category of race or racial difference was fluid and ambiguous. During the early twentieth century, people invoked the notion of "racial difference" with respect to both foreign Europeans as well as African Americans. See McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounters with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996)*,* 31. For a history of the racialization of the Irish in the United States, see Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 2008). For a detailed description of ecclesial and social discrimination faced by Italian Catholic immigrants in the Northeast, see Robert Orsi, *Madonna of 115th Street* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).

[55] This is a feature of American Catholic history that has been well documented by historians of American Catholicism. See, for example, McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, especially Chapter 1; and Orsi, *Madonna of 115th Street.*

assimilation, suburbanization, and economic ascendency during the postwar period, combined with new federal policies in the 1920s that sharply curtailed European immigration, resulted in the coalescing of a white racial majority in the church. Tellingly, the landmark Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life, published in 1989, excluded Spanish-speaking (and other non-English speaking) congregations and participants from the 1,039 parishes it surveyed. Although the researchers estimated that the Catholic Church in the U.S. had "significant numbers of Hispanics," the picture that emerged from the Notre Dame Study was one of a Church that was normatively white, largely assimilated, and primarily English speaking.[56]

This picture, of course, was far from accurate. The presumption of Euro-American normativity presented a significant challenge for non-white Catholics. As Kathleen Garces-Foley observes, "Unlike their European counterparts… many Latino, black, and Asian Catholics did not melt into the white-dominated Catholic parishes."[57] In the decades preceding the Notre Dame Study, movements coalesced within the Hispanic and African American Catholic communities that sought to rectify the racism and institutional neglect that Catholics of color had long endured within both church and broader society. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Chicano movement produced organizations such as PADRES, Las Hermanas, and Católicos por la Raza. These organizations, and others like them, decried the pastoral neglect and discrimination endured by Latinos in the church and advocated for greater recognition of the responsiveness to the spiritual,

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[56] See Castelli and Gremillion, *The Emerging Parish: The Notre Dame Study of Catholic Life Since Vatican II*, 77-78. Additionally, in a 1989 analysis of the Notre Dame Study, T. Howland Sanks argued that the exclusion both of Hispanic Catholics and disaffiliated Catholics contributed to a picture of parish life in the U.S. that was incomplete and perhaps overly rosy. See T. Howland Sanks, SJ, "Forms of Ecclesiality: The Analogical Church," *Theological Studies* 49 (1988), 699.

[57] Kathleen Garces-Foley, "Comparing Catholic and Evangelical Integration Efforts," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 47, no. 1 (2008): 19.

cultural, political, economic, and social realities and needs of Latinos within the church. The consciousness produced by these movements eventually led to the *Encuentros*, national gatherings of Hispanic bishops, clergy, and laypeople to dialogue, pray, and make recommendations to address the needs of Latinos in the church. [58] Additionally, in a series of pastoral letters, the U.S. Bishops made nominal efforts to address racial injustice. However, as Bryan Massingale argues, the practical response of most clergy and bishops to issues of racism and discrimination has been anemic and halfhearted.[59] Absent the sort of urgent, top-down mobilization seen from the bishops with respect issues of abortion, euthanasia, "religious freedom," and, to a lesser extent, immigration, some parishes have begun to address racial justice from the ground up.

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[58] The first *Encuentro* was held in Washington, D.C., in the summer of 1972. Virtually all of the national-level, structural efforts to address cultural diversity in the Church grew out of recommendations made at the *Encuentros*. See Richard Edward Martinez, *PADRES: The National Chicano Priest Movement* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005); and Lara Medina, *Las Hermanas, Chicana/Latina Religious-Political Activism in the U.S. Catholic Church* (Temple University Press, 2005).

[59] Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 68-70. The most recent statement on from the collective United States Catholic Bishops is *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (1979). In 1984, the ten African American bishops released "What We Have Seen and Heard," a statement on evangelization from the heart of the black Catholic experience. Since then, individual bishops have released pastoral letters on racism that exemplify critical analysis, acknowledge white supremacy in society and Church, and make prophetic and specific calls to action. Among the most recent and comprehensive is the pastoral letter and study guide written by Bishop Edward K. Braxton of Belleville, IL, "The Racial Divide in the United States: A Reflection for the World Day of Peace 2015." See also Braxton, "The Catholic Church and the Black Lives Matter Movement: The Racial Divide in the United States Revisited" (February 2016); and Donald Cardinal Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington, "The Challenge of Racism Today" (November 2017). In August 2017, in the wake of white supremacist violence in Charlottesville, VA, the USCCB created the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism. Led by African American Bishop George Murray, SJ of Youngstown, OH, the committee will support the compilation and implementation of a forthcoming pastoral letter on racism, anticipated for release in 2018.

1.2.4 Shared Parishes and the Legacy of the National/Ethnic Parish

Approaches to parish life have also changed. On an institutional level, Catholics have left behind the national/ethnic parish model for approaches that seek to serve cultural, ethnic, and linguistic groups at the parish in which such communities have chosen to call home. On a theoretical level, the transition from an assimilationist to multiculturalist mentality has influenced the way in which communities have been established. Thus, "the new reality in culturally diverse parishes is quite different from that experienced by the Catholic immigrants of the 19th and early 20th century."[60]

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, national parishes became a common institutional response to the challenge of ministering to a multiplicity of cultural and linguistic communities. National parishes were particularly common in dioceses throughout the Northeast and Midwest.[61] In the Archdiocese of Boston, for example, 74 national/ethnic parishes were established between the years of 1844 and 1965 to serve Catholics of twelve European nationalities. The most common national parishes in the Archdiocese were French, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, and Portuguese.[62] Although bishops often stressed that a primary goal of national parishes was to facilitate the assimilation of immigrant Catholics, such parishes served

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[60] Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century,* 117.

[61] According to the Notre Dame Study, by 1930, 21% of parishes in the Northeast were national/ethnic parishes. Though this may seem like a low percentage, it actually suggests that national parishes – one in every five parishes – were a common alternative model to the default territorial parish. By 1960, this number had decreased slightly to 17%.

[62] "Archives: Ethnic Parishes," Archdiocese of Boston website, accessed July 25, 2017, http://www.bostoncatholic.org/Offices-And-Services/Office-Detail.aspx?id=12292&pid=1484.

in an equal way as spaces of cultural memory, linguistic preservation, and solidarity for immigrant communities.[63]

However, the establishment of culturally and ethnically particular parishes also played a more explicitly segregationalist role. In some dioceses with significant African American Catholic populations, the African American ethnic parish was devised as a racialized parallel to the national parish. Unlike national parishes, which were understood as linguistic necessities, the establishment of ethnic parishes for African Americans primarily served to accommodate white Catholics who were uncomfortable with African Americans at their parishes. In Detroit, for example, black Catholics were already attending Mass at their local parishes before the establishment of St. Peter Claver's, the black Catholic "ethnic parish."[64] At the same time, as John T. McGreevy notes, in some cases "the separation of African-American Catholics was in part voluntary."[65] McGreevy cites the example of African American and West Indian Catholics in Boston, who in 1920 petitioned Archbishop William O'Connell for a parish of their own, despite their apparent integration at the local cathedral. The group's spokesman stated,

> Many of our Catholic young men and women coming from the South are neglecting their faith because there is no special one in charge of Negro interests in Boston. Of course we are aware of the fact that we might attend any Catholic Church but still like all other races we like our own. For instance, Irish parishes are interested in the Irish question whilst we are deeply interested in the Negro question.[66]

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[63] Roberto Treviño, *The Church in the Barrio: Mexican American Ethno-Catholicism in Houston* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 121.

[64] See Leslie Woodcock Tentler, *Seasons of Grace: A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit* (Wayne State University Press, 1990), 496. For an analysis of racial discrimination in the Catholic Church, see Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church.*

[65] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries,* 31.

[66] Cited in McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries,* 31-32.

In this way, in dioceses where national parishes were prevalent, black Catholics also utilized the prevalence of the national parish model to advocate for the formal establishment of spaces where they would experience fewer barriers to full participation in parish life.

National parishes among Hispanic Catholics had similarly ambivalent aims and ends. On one hand, such parishes met the spiritual, social, and linguistic needs of Spanish-speaking (largely Mexican) Catholics. National parishes allowed Mexican Catholics, who were often met with discrimination at Euro-American parishes, a liturgical space of their own. On the other, they served as a *de facto* containment strategy for immigrants, insulating native-born American Catholics from newcomers while preserving the outsider status of Mexican immigrants. Roberto Treviño documents the establishment of Mexican national parishes in Houston during the first half of the 20th century, noting that Mexican families, faced with icy receptions at existing parishes, sustained their faith through home-based practices until they could raise enough money to construct a national parish of their own.[67]

National parishes were not always formally established. Even in the dioceses and regions in which national parishes were most common, territorial parishes were still the norm. Yet parishes situated in neighborhoods with strong cultural identities often functioned as *de facto* national parishes, offering religious education and other ministries in languages other than English. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, in 1906, a language other than English was used at more than half of Catholic parishes nationwide (54%). Just a decade later, in 1916, nearly two-

[67] The first Mexican national parish in Houston, Our Lady of Guadalupe, was established in 1912. By 1940, most Mexicans and Mexican Americans belonged to one of the five national parishes that had been established in the area. Treviño, *The Church in the Barrio*, 121-122.

thirds of parishes (63%) used a language other than English.[68] Derogatory Protestant characterizations of Catholics as persistently foreign were not unfounded.

However, in the wake of stark anti-German sentiment fomented by U.S. participation in World War I, the bishops' enthusiasm for national parishes began to wane. Among Catholics, sentiment turned away from strong identification with European cultural and ethnic roots and toward a more nationalistic, patriotic sense of American identity. A rise in nativist anti-Catholic movements further fueled Catholics' desire to prove themselves loyal Americans over and against accusations of supposed allegiance to Rome. Many regarded the 1960 presidential election of John F. Kennedy as the moment at which Catholics in the U.S. finally "arrived." There would no longer be any doubt about it: Catholics were as American as apple pie.[69] At the same time, the rise of the civil rights movement began to shift public sentiment away from support for culturally or racially separate spaces. With the U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision striking down "separate but equal" in schools looming large in the national consciousness, the formal designation of culturally or ethnically specific parishes no longer sat well. Revisions in 1983 to the Code of Canon Law did away with the establishment of "particular parishes" except in extraordinary circumstances, thus putting a formal end to the national parish era.

National parishes began to fall out of vogue during the same decades as immigration from Mexico, Latin America, and the Caribbean and rose sharply.[70] However, unlike their

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[68] Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, 297.

[69] John Courtney Murray, for example, argued that there was no discontinuity between Catholic identity and participation in American civic life. See Murray, *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* (Sheed & Ward, 2005 [1960]).

[70] The establishment of the Bracero program (1942) brought millions of Mexican laborers to the U.S. for temporary agricultural work. When the program abruptly ended in 1964,

European counterparts, who often successfully petitioned local bishops for the right to establish national parishes, Latin American immigrants who arrived in the U.S. at midcentury and later were met with a changing ecclesial landscape. For example, in 1950, the Mexican American community in San José, California, petitioned Archbishop John J. Mitty for a national parish of their own. To their surprise and frustration, Mitty denied the request, citing discomfort with the seemingly segregating effect of a nationally separate worship space. Gina Marie Pitti argues that the Mexican American community in San José represents a community caught in the crosscurrent of ideological change over the best approach to enacting racial justice in the church.[71] Almost seven decades later, the vision of a just and integrated ecclesial community remains an open question.

1.2.5 From Assimilation to Multiculturalism, and Beyond

The move away from national parishes has been accompanied by a shift in ideological approaches to diversity. Scholars have characterized this shift as a transition from an

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American dependence on Mexican labor had already been established. This was a dependency that could not be sustained legally under the 1965 revisions changes to immigration law, which had the effect of tightening restrictions on Latin Americans entering the U.S. With avenues for legal immigration from Mexico and Latin America constrained, the result was large-scale undocumented immigration. Meanwhile, political and economic unrest in the 1950s and 60s fueled the movement of large numbers of Puerto Ricans to New York and Cubans to Florida and other cities along the eastern seaboard. In the 1980s, immigrants from Central America came the U.S. fleeing civil war and political repression in their home countries. The deleterious effects of NAFTA on the livelihoods of Mexican workers also catalyzed undocumented immigration from Mexico during the 1990s and early 2000s. For a detailed summary of the history of Latin American Immigration to the United States, see Marta Tienda and Susana Sanchez, "Latin American Immigration to the United States," *Daedalus* 142, no. 3 (2013), 48-64.

[71] See Gina Marie Pitti, "Into One Parish Life: National Parishes and Catholic Racial Politics at Midcentury," in *Catholicism in the American West: A Rosary of Hidden Voices*, eds. Roberto R. Treviño and Richard V. Fracaviglia (Texas A&M University Press, 2007).

assimilationist to a multiculturalist approach.[72] However, as many of them clarify, both assimilationist and multiculturalist ideologies continue to influence how people in parishes tend to frame and make sense of cultural diversity.[73] Moreover, as Hoover argues, neither approach adequately challenges the status quo of cultural encapsulation in shared parishes.

The assimilationist approach to ecclesial life is symbolized by the image of the melting pot that characterized the American social imagination and policy with respect to immigration during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[74] Though national and ethnic parishes accommodated cultural, ethnic, and linguistic difference, the overarching concern among priests and bishops was in facilitating the Americanization of newly arrived Catholics. This concern is illustrated in a review of a novel published in 1855 by Irish-American immigrant writer Mary Ann Sadlier entitled *The Blakes and Flanagans: A Tale Illustrative of Irish Life in the United States.* The review, published in the January 1856 edition of the Catholic publication *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, has little to say about the content of Sadlier's portrayal of the Irish Catholic immigrant struggle and instead laments the author's decision to focus on the particularities of the Irish experience at all:

> We wish Mrs. Sadlier had made it a Tale [sic] illustrative of simply *Catholic* Life [sic] in the United States…. [W]e think, the time has come when we should cease to speak of ourselves as Irish, German, English, French, or even as American Catholics, and accustom ourselves to think and speak of ourselves in religion simply as Catholics, and in

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[72] See Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 185-198; and Garces-Foley, "Comparing Catholic and Evangelical Integration Efforts," 17-22.

[73] Hoover, *The Shared Parish*, 148. See also Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*.

[74] The usage of the melting pot image can be traced to a play by the same title, written by British author and playwright Israel Zangwill and first staged in Washington, D.C., in 1908. Though the term "melting pot" did not come into use until the early twentieth century, the notion of assimilation and Americanization represented by the image of ethnic and national melting-together was operative in the U.S. throughout the nineteenth century.

> all else as men and Americans. These foreign national distinctions, though naturally dear to the immigrants themselves, who are not expected to forget their fatherland, cannot be kept up in this country, even if it were desirable that they should be…. They serve only to divide and weaken our forces, to place us in a false position in the country, and prevent us from feeling and acting as one homogeneous body.[75]

The review predates the introduction of the particular phraseology of the "melting pot" into the national lexicon; however, it illustrates an attitude toward cultural diversity shaped by the assimilationist ideology that came to be represented by the melting pot metaphor. In this framework, vestiges of cultural particularity are subsumed into a collective American identity, signified by the adoption of the English language and Euro-American customs and practices. The preservation of cultural difference through language and practices is associated with division and a weakening of the social fabric. The only adequate expression of unity is uniformity.

On an institutional level, the attitude of church authorities in the U.S. shifted away from the assimilationist paradigm to a more explicit affirmation of cultural diversity. Theologically, the notion of inculturation, which entered the Catholic missiological lexicon after Vatican II, promoted the idea that the Gospel could find a home in any culture. The U.S. Bishops took up the language of multiculturalism in pastoral letters affirming unity in diversity in the church.[76] Kathleen Garces-Foley notes that the language of multiculturalism also interfaces with notions of

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[75] "Art. III–*The Blakes and the Flanagans: A Tale Illustrative of Irish Life in the United States.* By Mrs. J. Sadlier. New York: D. & J. Sadlier & Co. 1855. 12mo. Pp. 391," *Brownson's Quarterly* (January 1856), pp. 195-196. Lacking a byline, it is not clear whether the author of the review is Orestes Brownson or another, anonymous writer.

[76] See, for example, the U.S. Bishops' pastoral letter concerning immigration, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity* (Washington, D.C., United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000).

hospitality, manifested in a particular way in the call to "welcome the stranger" with respect to Latin American immigration.[77]

However, the framework of multiculturalism also has clear limitations in providing a foundation for community across cultural, ethnic, and racial borders. Multiculturalism affords recognition to cultural "others,"[78] shifting the *telos* of public life away from uniformity and toward the celebration of cultural diversity. However, it does not offer a clear template for how, if at all, community among different cultural groups can be cultivated in particular cases. Moreover, as Kathryn Tanner argues, multicultural theory is based largely on modernist notions of culture, in which cultures are viewed as distinct and bounded wholes. Within this framework, broad cultural groups (such as Latinos, for example) are often erroneously regarded as monolithic.[79] Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, multiculturalism does not provide clear frameworks for addressing asymmetries of power and other structural inequalities that exist among cultural groups within a particular context. As Massingale notes, "racial divisions are not the result of a mere misunderstanding, breakdown in communications, or absence of dialogue. Our racial divides stem from a history of abuse, neglect, and abandonment; from the legacies of exploitation and the realities of humiliation; in short, from an absence or miscarriage of justice."[80] The task of cultivating community across boundaries in shared parishes requires more than nominal appreciation of diversity or tolerance of the presence of other cultures. It requires

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[77] Garces-Foley, "Comparing Catholic and Evangelical Integration Efforts," 18-19. See also the USCCB's *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*.

[78] Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism* 98 (1997): 25-73.

[79] Peter Casarella, "Recognizing Diversity After Multiculturalism," *New Theology Review* 21, no. 4 (November 2008), 19; cited in Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 194.

[80] Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church,* 96.

transformation of the underlying structures, both societal and ecclesial, that have undergirded the proliferation of white privilege.

Today, recognizing the inadequacy of both the assimilationist and multiculturalist paradigms, pastoral leaders have begun to draw on the language of integration to describe the practical task of forging unity in diversity in parish communities. In their bilingual handbook for fostering intercultural competence for ministers, the U.S. bishops define integration as "the process by which different groups or individuals are brought into a relationship characterized by mutuality and inclusiveness in such a manner as to create real unity in diversity without destroying the particularity and distinctiveness of each member."[81] An integrationist paradigm implicitly distinguishes unity from uniformity, emphasizing that the call to incorporate newcomers should not be understood as an outgrowth of xenophobia or identity-protectionism but rather as the central task of discipleship. In contrast to the forced adaptation of assimilation, integration suggests an organic, mutualistic process in which newcomers gradually come to be incorporated into the life and leadership of a faith community. Understood in an ecclesiological key, Matovina suggests that this integrationist paradigm embodies a theology of communion.[82] This is a trajectory I will interrogate in Chapter 2.

[81] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers* (Washington, D.C., United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014), 41.

[82]Matovina, *Latino Catholicism,* 64-65.

1.3 Theorizing the Literature Gap

A significant and growing body of literature, primarily in the congregational studies subfield of sociology of religion, examines diverse Protestant congregations.[83] Some scholars have postulated that the disproportionate overrepresentation of Protestant congregations, particularly conservative ones, in ethnographic studies of congregational diversity is due at least in part to the influence of the racial reconciliation movement of the 1990s and beyond, which gained a powerful foothold in such congregations.[84] Comparable ethnographic studies of diverse Catholic parishes, however, are significantly less common. The paucity of such studies is surprising for two reasons. First, Catholic parishes are, on average, more culturally and racially

[83] For influential qualitative accounts of multicultural Protestant congregations in the field of sociology of religion, see Penny Edgell Becker, "Making Inclusive Communities: Congregations and the 'Problem' of Race, *Social Problems* 45, no 4 (1998), 451-472; Brad Christerson and Michael O. Emerson, "The Costs of Diversity in Religious Organizations: An In-Depth Case Study," *Sociology of Religion* 64, no. 2 (July 2003): 163-181; De Young, Emerson, Yancey, and Kim, *United By Faith*; Kathleen Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide: The Multiethnic Church on a Mission* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Elaine Howard Ecklund, "Models of Civic Responsibility: Korean Americans in Congregations with Different Ethnic Compositions," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44, no. 1 (March 2005): 15-28; Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*; Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Gerardo Martí, *A Mosaic of Believers: Diversity and Innovation in a Multiethnic Church* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); and Gerardo Martí, *Worship Across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[84] Edwards, Christerson, and Emerson, "Race, Religious Organizations, and Integration," 215-216, 221-222. Edwards et al. define the racial reconciliation movement as "a movement centered in conservative Protestant circles that promoted social justice, racial equality, and the building of cross-cultural relationships. These proponents shared several common characteristics. They were African American, well versed in American-style racialization willing to associate with whites, influenced by Martin Luther King, Jr., and firm believers of the idea that reconciliation is at the core of Christian life" (p. 215). The authors argue that, beginning around 2000, racial reconciliation came to be popularly conflated with the notion of racial diversity in general, and cultivating racially diverse congregations came to be understood as a central imperative of congregational ministry. Scholarly studies of multiracial congregations proliferated in an attempt to understand this trend.

diverse than Protestant congregations.[85] Second, theologically, Catholic understandings of local church tend to be more affirming of cultural distinctiveness than many Protestant congregations. Kathleen Garces-Foley examines similarities and differences between Catholic and Evangelical Protestant approaches to addressing cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity in their churches. She observes that whereas Evangelical Protestant churches tend to promote a supra-ethnic Christian identity abstracted from cultural difference, the Catholic theological notions of inculturation and hospitality have lent themselves to greater affirmation of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic particularity, particularly since Vatican II.[86] In other words, whereas many Evangelicals might suggest that all are brothers and sisters in Christ in spite of their differences, Catholics might respond that all are brothers and sisters in Christ because of their differences.

Yet despite Catholicism's positive attitude toward cultural diversity, the relative lack of ethnographic studies of diverse Catholic parishes bespeaks larger difficulties in doing theology from the context of shared parishes. First, studying parishes presents a slightly different set of epistemological, methodological, and theological concerns than does studying Protestant congregations. Parishes are distinct from Protestant congregations in consequential ways, and the categories and analytical frameworks of congregational studies do not always easily fit with the unique features of the parish system. The most obvious distinction is the geographical basis of the parish system. Even though, as data suggest, many Catholics no longer feel bound by their territorial parish boundaries (a trend that is particularly true of younger and non-white

[85] Emerson with Woo, *People of the Dream.* The Multicultural Congregations Study found that Catholic parishes were nearly three times more likely to be multiracial than were Protestant congregations.

[86] Garces-Foley, "Comparing Catholic and Evangelical Integration Efforts," 17-22.

Catholics),[87] parish belonging is still more geographically determined than is Protestant congregational membership. Because parochial belonging tends to be more related to geography and less the result of voluntarism, intentional efforts among Catholics to cultivate a unique sense of mission and identity in their parishes can be less obvious and overt and, in turn, more difficult to characterize. These distinctions point to the need for an as-yet-underdeveloped subfield of parish studies, related to but distinct from congregational studies, and for more qualitative, ethnographically based studies of contemporary parish life.

Second, data on the diversity of Catholic parishes do not necessarily indicate actual levels of interaction among parishioners of different races, ethnicities, or cultures. Because members of shared parishes typically attend culturally or linguistically distinct Masses, the nature and extent of actual intercultural communication and community in diverse parishes can be difficult to characterize.

Third, as noted, the shared parish as a distinct model of parish life is understood to be emerging. While the coexistence of multiple cultural communities in a single parish is not new, the shared parish model as a community of communities is becoming increasingly common. In the past, particularly in dioceses and regions of the country where the establishment of national and ethnic parishes was most common, the sharing of a single parish by multiple sizeable cultural groups was often understood as an interim state, a temporary arrangement until a group could petition the bishop to establish a parish of their own.[88] Today, the culturally shared parish is not a temporary arrangement but a unique and emerging model of parish life in its own right.

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[87] Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century*, 18.

[88] Orsi's classic study of the Italian American Catholic community of East Harlem in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *Madonna of 115th Street*, serves as a salient example of reluctant and tense space-sharing between European cultural communities in a parish. See also Pitti, "Into One Parish Life."

Yet the coexistence of multiple cultural communities in a single parish still feels to many like an *ad hoc* arrangement, something that "works" for the time being but that also has a sense of indefiniteness about it. In both formal interviews and informal conversations, I have spoken with dozens of Catholic laypeople and clergy who belong to shared parishes throughout the country. Almost all of them, particularly clergy, express a degree of regret or uneasiness with the separation that exists among cultural communities at their parishes. Yet most also acknowledge that they are not sure what a better solution would look like. In any case, the task of offering a cohesive contextual ecclesiology about an arrangement that seems to many to be tentative and imperfect seems daunting if not impossible.

1.4 Toward a Borderland Ecclesiology

Shared parishes today are complex and ambiguous spaces with hybrid identities. Ambiguity is evident in the contested nature of a shared parish's mission, identity, leadership, and administration. It is experienced in tenuous efforts at relationships among parishioners and communities of different cultures or ethnicities, who often speak different languages and have little to no everyday contact. Perhaps most palpably, this ambiguity is experienced ritually, in bilingual or multicultural liturgy, prayer, and song. Is it possible to view the shared parish not as a problem to be solved but rather as a *locus theologicus*, a source of theological insight and new life for the Church? If so, what is needed is an understanding of ecclesial community that has the capacity not only to tolerate or "deal with" ambiguity and difference, but to discern within that very ambiguity and difference the working of the Holy Spirit.

In the following chapters, I will propose a practical-ecclesiological reading of the shared parish through U.S.-Latinx and postcolonial discourses of borderland identity. The shared parish is, in a real sense, a kind of borderland: a place defined by the convergence of multiple

overlapping boundary lines. How do we speak theologically about this kind of local hybridity, and how can such language shape the way in which we envision ministry in such contexts? Doing so requires, first, a recovery of the theological significance of difference in the context of the local community. Such a recovery—the task of Chapter 2—invites us to center theological reflection precisely at the site of difference, in the interstices between the borderlines of race, culture, class, and gender. It requires, in other words, a theological option for the borderlands, the in-between, marginal, mixed-up space where God has revealed Godself to dwell.

In the second part of the dissertation, I establish a conversation among late Chicana feminist writer Gloria Anzaldúa, postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha, and U.S. Latino theologian Roberto Goizetua. For all three, borderlands are spaces formed at the convergence of histories of conquest, out of which have emerged new life marked by interdwelling and hybridity and exchange. Borders and boundaries between different communities are thus conceived not as end points but as contact zones; in the words of Martin Heidegger, "the boundary becomes the place from which *something begins its presencing*."[89] Theologically, the borderland is a vital christological and soteriological category. Goizueta takes as a point of departure Virgil Elizondo's contention that Galilee, and borderland identity more broadly, marks the organizing principle for understanding the historical particularity of Jesus Christ.[90] In this way, Goizueta

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[89] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 2nd edition (Routledge, 2004), 7, referencing Heidegger.

[90] Elizondo, *Galilean Journey*. Like Gloria Anzaldúa's use of "borderlands" and *nepantla*, Jesus' Galilean identity is a theologically rich and capacious notion that, for that very reason, risks oversimplification and uncritical overextension. Goizueta recognizes, and seeks to avoid, this risk, addressing critiques that Elizondo's treatment of Galilee becomes too great a departure from the historical place. Goizueta, citing liberation theologian Michael Lee, responds that Elizondo's purpose is, first and foremost, pastoral; historical accuracy is important but not an end in itself. See Roberto Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion: Toward a Theological Aesthetics of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009), 140.

echoes Anzaldúa in reclaiming the ontological identity of *mestizaje*: the space from which "nothing good could ever come" becomes the site of revelation and incarnation. Thus, the borderland for Goizueta is "not merely a geographical but, more profoundly, a theological category, a place that makes present the glory of God."[91] This to say, the borderland should be understood as *locus theologicus*[92] for Christian thinking about community and difference. In a Church comprised of communities of difference, it is also *locus ecclesiologicus*—a space for deep reflection about the meaning and identity of the local Church in a changing world.

What makes borderland spaces distinctive is the gradual and dynamic emergence over time of something new, unpredictable, creative, and hopeful in the ambiguous in-between space between cultures, something based on the significance of the interactions between people.[93] Thus, an understanding of the shared parish through the lens of the borderland invites a focus on the practices—both liturgical and everyday—through which communities of difference negotiate a shared sense of belonging. Thus, the second half of this dissertation will examine the role of ritual practice in the cultivation of intercultural community.

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[91] Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion,* 129.

[92] According to James Bretzke, S.J., *loci theologici,* the plural form of *locus theologicus*, "generally refers to the clusters of organizing principles that help determine the focus of theology…. *Loci theologici* can also refer to the sources from which theologians draw the material for their reflection. In this sense Scripture, liturgy, the experience of the faithful, local churches, etc. become important *loci theologici.*" To claim the borderlands as *locus ecclesiologicus,* then, is to identify the borders as the source from which reflection about the Church can be drawn. See Bretzke, *Consecrated Phrases: A Latin Theological Dictionary: Latin Expressions Commonly Found in Theological Writings* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 79.

[93] Gregory Fernando Pappas, "Dewey and Latina Lesbians on the Quest for Purity," in *Pragmatism in the Americas,* ed. Gregory Fernando Pappas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 269-270.

1.5 Defining Ecclesial Community: Intimacy and Solidarity

In parishes characterized by profound diversity, in which cultural subcommunities often coexist nearly autonomously from one another, in what way is it possible to speak of the parish as a community? Occasionally, such parishes serve not only two but sometimes three or four distinct sub-communities who speak different languages, practice their faith in distinct ways, and are involved in separate ministries. They have different pastoral needs, generational compositions, gender dynamics, immigration experiences, and feelings about cultural diversity. They often hold different understandings of ministry and authority and distinct operative ecclesiologies. In these shared parishes, the most urgent and inescapable question is: *what does it mean to be an ecclesial community?* To what extent, and in what way, can the contemporary parish be meaningfully understood as a community? And how, ultimately, is it possible to cultivate community in shared parishes?

As noted, some scholars and pastoral leaders have proposed a model of the shared parish as a community of communities.[94] This model applies the ecclesial mark of catholicity to the level of the parish by portraying the parish as a larger body within which diverse cultural sub-communities are constellated. A parish that is a community of communities functions like a mini-diocese, in which each particular sub-community is ministered to according to its needs. The model is helpful insofar as it realistically assesses the distinct liturgical, pastoral, cultural, and linguistic needs of the various cultural sub-communities within a parish. Additionally, and vitally, it does not seek to unite members by promoting an ahistorical, supra-cultural, pan-

[94] For examples of the application of a community of communities understanding to parish life and youth ministry, respectively, see Ospino, "Rethinking the Urban Parish in Light of *The New Catholicity*," 68; and Ken Johnson-Mondragon, ed., *Pathways of Hope and Faith Among Hispanic Teens: Pastoral Reflections and Strategies Inspired by the National Study of Youth and Religion* (Stockton, CA: Instituto Fe Y Vida, 2007), 345ff.

Catholic identity but rather provides space for the persistence of particular cultural identities. Yet, even within a "community of communities" understanding of the parish, the question remains of how to understand "community" in the former sense—the larger, overarching parish body of which cultural sub-communities are part. Indeed, as parish life researcher Philip J. Murnion posed the question, "Beyond the rather romantic notion of community that so often is present in the Church, what is the real meaning of the parish community?"[95]

Community is a nebulous term, particularly in a contemporary parish landscape in which an increasing percentage of Catholics opt for membership in a parish other than their territorial one and draw on a variety of factors in selecting a parish to which to belong. Accordingly, scholars have disagreed about the meaning and nature of community in the parish context. In his study of the ecclesial authority of the local parish, William Clark, SJ defines community as intimacy.[96] For Clark, the authority of the local parish community is predicated upon these bonds of intimacy, through which, as the authentic embodiment of the love of Christ, the *koinonia* of the church is made manifest. Clark argues, "Personal interaction remains foundational in the origins, history, and theology of the church. It is this face-to-face community experience that I call 'intimacy' in the context of the local community."[97]

Intimacy is also the defining feature of community in the ecclesiological vision of Willie James Jennings. In *The Christian Imagination,* Jennings elaborates a vision of Christian belonging grounded in what he terms a "revolution of intimacy." Jennings' work is propelled by

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[95] Philip J. Murnion, "The Parish Community: Theological Questions Arising from Attempts to Implement Vatican II," *Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 36 (1981), 49.

[96] William A. Clark, SJ, *A Voice of Their Own: The Authority of the Local Parish* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 70.

[97] Clark, *A Voice of their Own,* 70.

a central question: Why has Christianity, a religion based on love, failed in its attempts to heal racial division? He locates this failure in what he terms modern Western Christianity's diseased relational imagination, the result of Christianity's cooperation in the political and economic racialization and exploitation of non-white bodies and spaces.[98] What Jennings calls Christians to is intimacy, to the "exercise of an imaginative capacity to redefine the social, to claim, to embrace, to join, to desire."[99] Yet in the course of daily life, in relationships broken by histories of domination and "continuing encasement in racial logics,"[100] the desire for Christian intimacy is experienced most often as a yearning for the communion that we do not yet possess. Christianity, Jennings argues, should challenge "relational imagination[s]"[101] and, in a particular way, ecclesiological imaginations. Applying Jennings' vision to the shared parish context

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[98] Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 6. Recalling the words of Toni Morrison, Jennings argues that within the "foundations of racial imaginings in the deployment of an altered theological vision of creation"[98] that emerged out of conquest and chattel slavery, whiteness became "co-creator with God." Concomitantly, blackness was created to be whatever whites needed it to be – whether "fearful or desirable," "evil or protective" – in order to preserve the domination of whiteness in the colonialist racial landscape. Black bodies were open for interpretation, exploitation, and use; like the land from which they were severed, black persons became territory to be collected and renamed, bought and sold. Jennings traces the way in which this "inverted hospitality" is perpetuated in institutions, and in a particularly pronounced and tragic way in Christian churches in the United States (p. 62-63).

[99] Jennings, *The Christian Imagination,* 6.

[100] Jennings, *The Christian Imagination*, 8.

[101] Jennings, *The Christian Imagination*, 4. See also Jennings, *Acts: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017). Jennings approaches the biblical account of the early Christian community through the wound of racial segregation. At the heart of Jennings' retrieval of Acts is his contention that the text can be read as the unfolding of what he terms a "revolution of intimacy." For Jennings, the surest gift of the Holy Spirit is the desire for what God desires: the joining together of persons long-separated by boundaries of fear, hatred, and history. Acts, then, is the story of the Holy Spirit broadening ever wider the boundaries of the People of God and of the human response to this risky, revolutionary broadening.

suggests that cultural and racial encapsulation, per se, is not the problem. Cultural separation in parishes often has as much to do with circumstance and pastoral practicality as it does with discrimination and suspicion of the cultural other. Following Jennings' logic, the real problem with cultural encapsulation in parishes is that it should unsettle us to such an extent that we are propelled to overcome it, and it does not. For Jennings, it is not separation itself but rather *complacency with separation* that is the most obvious symptom of the diseased Christian imagination. The remedy will not come in top-down insistence on appreciation of cultural diversity. Rather, what Jennings calls a "revolution of intimacy" can only occur through the transformation of relational imaginations by the Holy Spirit, manifested in practice at the most local and fundamental level.

Understanding community as a function of intimacy among members also reflects what might be termed commonsense understandings of community. In common parlance, community is understood as a network of care. People tend to describe their community as those upon whom they feel they can rely; thus, to feel disconnected from community is to perceive a consequential lack of such bonds of care in one's own life.

Yet others question the usefulness of the notion of intimacy as a descriptor of community in ecclesial contexts. Canadian theologian Gregory Baum argues that intimacy is at once too nebulous and too lofty an ideal to function as a descriptor of parish community life in any practical sense. Imposing intimacy as a litmus test for community in parishes also implicitly overstates the centrality of the parish in the lives of most parishioners.[102] Researcher of parish life Philip Murnion proposes solidarity, rather than intimacy, as a descriptor of parish communities, as solidarity more adequately evokes the image of an outward reaching, mission-

[102] Gregory Baum, "The Church of Tomorrow," in *New Horizons: Theological Essays* (New York: Paulist, 1972), cited in Clark, *A Voice of Their Own,* 70.

driven church.[103] For this reason, in this study, I understand parish community as the intersection of intimacy and solidarity. St. Mary of the Angels was selected as a case study for this study in large part because of the surprising intimacy that exists across racial and cultural borderlines there, embodied in intercultural and interracial friendships among many parishioners. Yet these relational ties are supported and enabled by structures that promote the just and equitable sharing of authority, power, and participation within the life of the parish. The intimacy expressed in the liturgy and during parish gatherings and celebrations cannot be understood apart its place in a larger ecology of longstanding organizational and administrative practices and structures that have cultivated within parishioners, and within the mission of the parish itself, habits of inclusion and equal representation in all dimensions of parish life. Thus, the particular shape of community life at SMA emerges from the intersection of kinship and love (intimacy) with intentional work (solidarity).

1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have traced the historical, sociological, and ecclesial contexts from which the contemporary shared parish has emerged. The shared parish as a model of church life is generally regarded as a recent phenomenon, emerging in the wake of a transition away from national and ethnic parishes and in response to a significant increase in Latinx Catholics. While this is the case, it is equally important to recognize that parishes have been sites of intercultural negotiation since the earliest days of Catholicism in the Americas. Indeed, neither Latinx Catholics, for example, nor the parishes that serve them, are new phenomena: Latinx Catholics

[103] Philip J. Murnion, "The Community Called Parish, in Lawrence Cunningham, ed., *The Catholic Faith: A Reader* (New York: Paulist, 1988), 188-90, cited in Clark, *A Voice of Their Own,* 70. Murnion's critique of intimacy echoes similar critiques made by other scholars of the language of communion, a debate I will examine in Chapter 2.

predate all other cultural groups in what is now the United States. Indeed, the question of how best to minister to a diverse Church has been perhaps the most consistently invoked question throughout the history of American Catholicism. As we have seen, larger social debates on how best to approach cultural diversity have been played out at the level of the parish. However, because of a confluence of demographic, geographical, and structural transformations, the shared parish has become increasingly common and has thus taken on a new significance within the Catholic pastoral landscape today. Today, more than one-third of Catholic parishes in the U.S. serve two or more cultural, ethnic, and/or linguistic communities. The question of whether or how it is possible to understand the shared parish as a community is, I have argued, the most urgent question in U.S. parish life today. In the next chapter, I will examine communion ecclesiology as the most oft-cited response to this question of ecclesial community-in-diversity. Critically evaluating the way in which the communion paradigm approaches difference both theologically and practically, I will suggest that communion is most fruitfully grounded in an understanding of ecclesial community as solidaristic task.

Chapter 2: Solidarity in Difference: Communion Beyond Unity in Diversity

2.1 Introduction

As explored in Chapter 1, more than one in three Catholic parishes in the United States serves two or more cultural, ethnic, or linguistic communities. The growth of the shared parish model has occasioned larger questions among theologians, clergy, bishops, and parishioners about the meaning and nature of ecclesial community in such contexts. In post-Vatican II ecclesiological discourse, the tension between unity and diversity in the Church is often resolved in the theological notion of communion. Communion ecclesiology – a broad term that encompasses understandings of Church grounded in a relational vision of communion among members and with Christ – offers a compelling Trinitarian vision of ecclesial unity in diversity grounded in dialogue, fellowship, and the affirmation (rather than elimination) of difference. *Communio* is frequently employed as a theological metaphor to illuminate the catholicity of the Church, expressing a relationship of mutuality between the universal Church and local dioceses, and between dioceses and the parishes therein.[1] More importantly for the purpose of this project, recent studies of shared parish life have utilized the language of communion to describe a vision of unity among diverse believers within the parish itself. In his recent study, for example, Hoover proposes the "folk paradigm" of communion as an alternative to the frameworks of assimilation and multiculturalism, the two prevailing but inadequate paradigms that have historically characterized mainstream discourse about diversity in the U.S.[2] In their publications on best

[1] In the literature, "local church" can be understood as referring either to the diocese or to the parish. Following William Clark, S.J., I speak of the parish as a "local community" rather than "local church," as the latter sometimes refers to the diocese in ecclesiological discourse. See Clark, *A Voice of their Own*, xviii-xix.

[2] Hoover, *The Shared Parish*, 185ff. See also Hoover, "A Place For Communion: Reflections on an Ecclesiology of Parish Life," *Theological Studies* 78, no 4 (2017): 825-849.

practices for ministry in shared parishes, the U.S. Bishops similarly define parish community in contexts of diversity as communion in mission.[3]

Yet, as the previous chapter demonstrated, the persistence of cultural tension, racial separation, and structural inequalities often present in these parishes suggests that in practice, unity in diversity proves challenging in ways that prevailing invocations of the language of communion do not always succeed in capturing. Propelled by this dissonance, this chapter evaluates the adequacy of communion as a way of describing the dynamic between unity and diversity in local ecclesial communities characterized by cultural, racial, or linguistic difference. I begin by examining the way difference is understood in communion literature, drawing primarily on the work of Walter Kasper and John Zizioulas. Such analysis reveals the literature's ambivalence with respect to difference, particularly racial difference. Difference is either spiritualized and idealized, or subordinated to the sacramental unity of all baptized in Christ, both of which present challenges for the use of communion as a model of shared parish life. Indeed, recent national data from Georgetown's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate on the attitudes of parishioners in shared parishes suggest that white, Euro-Americans tend to affirm diversity in the abstract but meet it with hesitation and suspicion in the concrete contexts of their parishes. Without a robust capacity to affirm racial and cultural difference, communion ecclesiology risks promoting an uncritical notion of unity in diversity that, in practice, perpetuates the marginalization of communities of color while sanctioning the normativity of white, Euro-American practices and people.

Vincent J. Miller regards "communion in place," a recommitment to the geographical parish and to the diversity of people therein, as an antidote to the deterritorializing tendencies of a globalized world. See Miller, "Where is the Church? Globalization and Catholicity," 412-432.

[3] USCCB, *Best Practices for Shared Parishes: So That They May All Be One*, 16-17.

I then suggest that a thorough consideration of the challenges and inequalities present in multicultural parishes reveal, and begin to address, a gap in reflection on communion. A more thorough consideration of the implications of communion for the church's mission *ad intra*—the church's mission with respect to itself, embodied in the way in which local communities engage in the complex task of constructing inclusive fellowship propelled by and patterned after the love of God—ultimately helps to advance conversations about the relationship between communion and mission more broadly. Drawing on the work of M. Shawn Copeland and Elizabeth Johnson, I offer an understanding of communion that more adequately accounts for the persistence of difference in local ecclesial communities. If communion describes the eschatological character of the church, its *telos*, then perhaps a complementary descriptor of the task of the Church in the local context of the parish is solidarity, understood as the concrete practice of communion across difference.

2.2 Cultural Diversity and the Communion Paradigm: A Review of the Literature

While numerous and varied trajectories of communion ecclesiologies exist from Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant perspectives, Dennis Doyle suggests they are unified by four basic features: an emphasis on the experience of the early Church, spiritual fellowship among believers and with God, shared participation in the Eucharist as a sign and sacrament of unity here and now, and attentiveness to the dynamic between unity and diversity.[4] Perhaps because of its ecumenical, ideologically capacious, and theologically robust character, communion has become the prevailing ecclesiological paradigm within the Church today.[5] Originating as a way

[4] Dennis Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Visions and Versions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), 13.

[5] For a review of the different ways *communio* has functioned ecclesiologically throughout the history of Roman Catholicism, see Joseph A. Komonchak, "Conceptions of

of describing the relationship among local churches and the relationship of this network of local churches with the universal Church, communion "has also come to describe the bonds within a local community among the believers there."[6]

The popularity of communion ecclesiology in recent decades can also be attributed to its endorsement by the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, called by Pope John Paul II in order to clarify the developments of the Second Vatican Council twenty years after its conclusion. The Synod concluded that *communio* was the guiding ecclesiological principle of the Council, an apparent pushback to what may have been regarded as an excessive focus by some on *Lumen Gentium*'s notion of Church as People of God.[7] Since then, the metaphor of *communio* has

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Communion, Past and Present," *Cristianesimo nella storia* 16 (1995): 321-340. From a Catholic, ethnographic perspective, see Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 198-216. For investigations into the ecclesiological consequences of Eucharist, spiritual communion, and solidarity in communities divided by systemic forms of violence and racism, see William T. Cavanaugh*, Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1998); M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009); Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*; and Jamie Phelps, "Communion Ecclesiology and Black Liberation Theology," *Theological Studies* 61 (2000): 672-700. For comprehensive studies of communion ecclesiology from a Roman Catholic perspective, see J.M.R. Tillard, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1980); and Susan K. Wood, "The Church as Communion," in *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook on Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield, O.S.B.,* ed. Peter Phan (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000). From an Orthodox perspective, see John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985); and Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006). From a Baptist, ethnographic perspective, see Paul S. Fiddes, "Ecclesiology and Ethnography: Two Disciplines, Two Worlds?" in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Pete Ward (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 29-30.

[6] Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 199.

[7] See Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Synod of 1985 and the Notion of the Church," *Chicago Studies* 26, no. 3 (November 1987): 330-345. In this analysis, published soon after the 1985 Synod, Komonchak examines the tendency in the Final Report to emphasize the Church as communion and mystery while diminishing the conciliar "People of God." This decision was made as am apparent response to broad "ideological misuse" of "People of God" language (p. 331). See also *Lumen Gentium,* Chapter II.

become the prevailing interpretation of post-Conciliar ecclesiology on the part of the magisterium and many theologians. While the Synod's conclusion is debatable,[8] there nevertheless remain valid reasons for the prevalence of *communio*. Doyle argues that communion ecclesiology "represents an attempt to move beyond the merely juridical and institutional understandings [of the Church] by emphasizing [its] mystical, sacramental, and historical dimensions," seen most saliently in its focus on interpersonal relationship.[9] The model has proven particularly fruitful for the ecumenical movement, as it has offered a theological basis for ecumenical dialogue. In this section, I will investigate the theological foundations and implications of an understanding of Church as communion through the writings of two of communion ecclesiology's primary elaborators, Walter Kasper and John Zizioulas.

2.2.1 Theological Foundations of Communion

German Cardinal Walter Kasper can be considered among the godparents of post-Conciliar communion ecclesiology.[10] It was under Kasper's leadership as theological secretary that the 1985 Extraordinary Synod declared *communio* to be the guiding ecclesiological principle of Council documents. In his own work, Kasper goes farther, arguing that *communio*

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[8] A major critic of this position is José Comblín, who argues that the 1985 Synod's promotion of *communio* represents an ideologically-driven attempt to undermine of the Council's emphasis on the Church as the People of God. See Comblín, *People of God*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004).

[9] Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 12.

[10] The recently translated third volume of Walter Kasper's trilogy, *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality, and Mission*, stands among the most thorough and current articulations of communion ecclesiology from a Catholic perspective and thus makes an appropriate interlocutor through which to engage the merits and growing edges of the *communio* model. As a key theological advisor to Pope Francis, Kasper's ecclesiology is all the more worthy of examination in the contemporary context. See Kasper, *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality, and Mission*, translated by Thomas Hoebel (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 21.

ecclesiology also "lies behind all… biblical images for the description of the nature of the church" and is supported by Patristic theology.[11]

Communion ecclesiology is grounded theologically and anthropologically in the relationship of self-giving love among the three Persons of the Trinity. The inner relationality of God is reflected in the intersubjective nature of the human person, whose desire for relationship is, in turn, fulfilled in the Church.[12] Thus, as Kasper states, "the Church as *communio* is the image and, so to speak, the icon of the Trinity."[13] As the locus of this relational fulfillment eucharistically, sacramentally, and socially, the Church can be understood as a school of relationship and as servant of hope for true communion among persons and with God. Communion, thus, is understood as being-in-relationship.

This intersubjective understanding of the human person, and consequently the fulfillment of the human person in relationship with God and others through the Church, is central to many iterations of communion ecclesiology. The work of Orthodox Metropolitan John Zizioulas is a prime example of this perspective. Like Kasper, Zizioulas emphasizes the intrinsically intersubjective nature of the human person, a reflection of the inner relationality of the persons of the Trinity. Zizioulas applies the Orthodox emphasis on deep connection between anthropology and ecclesiology to argue that it is through baptism into the Church that persons are transformed

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[11] Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 21.

[12] From a philosophical perspective, counter to a modernist Cartesian individualism, human subjectivity grounded in Trinitarian relationality should be understood fundamentally as intersubjectivity. This essentially intersubjective structure of human nature and being thus becomes "the point of departure for interpreting the world" (Kasper, *The Catholic Church,* 56). This intersubjective thinking is reflected, Kasper argues, in Council documents (cf. *Gaudium et Spes* 23). One can also see its prominence in the philosophical and theological work of John Paul II.

[13] Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 21.

from individualistic, egocentric persons into authentic beings-in-relationship in the image of the Triune God. It is through this transformation that one is saved, because it is only through baptism that one can move beyond the limiting individualism of what he terms the "hypostasis of biological existence" to the "hypostasis of ecclesial existence."[14] A tragic consequence of biological individualism, Zizioulas argues, is an inherited, pathological "fear of the other," which causes us to identify "difference with division."[15] He writes, "the fear of the other is in fact nothing but the fear of the different; we all want somehow to project into the other the model of our own selves, which shows how deeply rooted in our existence the fear of the other is."[16] This identification of difference with division, and the consequent rejection of the other, is not, Zizioulas argues, "merely" an ethical problem but rather an ontological one, even a cosmic one. What is required is nothing less than a new birth.[17] This ecclesial rebirth, he argues, frees us to radically embrace the other without fear and thus to enter into authentic communion in Christ through the Holy Spirit. This ecclesial mode of being constitutes true personhood, for it is only through ecclesial participation that one realizes one's potential for relational existence, born anew into participation in divine personhood.

For Kasper, *communio* points at once to the essential form of human nature and being and to an eschatological vision of hope: communion is the "answer to question of humanity" and the fulfillment of humanity's most basic hope for community and communication.[18] This is a hope

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[14] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 50.

[15] Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 1-2.

[16] Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness,* 2.

[17] Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness,* 3.

[18] Kasper, *The Catholic Church,* 59.

that remains undeterred, even in the fragmentation, disillusionment, and cynicism characteristic of late-modern/postmodernity.[19] Humanity's unwillingness to dispense with hope, even in the midst of chaos and disillusionment, is evidenced in varying and imperfect ways through modern philosophy's belief in the trajectory of human progress through technology, in the classless utopias of Marx and Bloch, and even, through contrast, in recent philosophy's emphasis on individual and social fragmentation and its concomitant abandonment of utopian ideals.[20] This postmodern recognition of human frailty, fragmentation, suffering, disillusionment, and social isolation serves not to contest the persistence of hope but rather, through contrast, to magnify it. Ultimately, argues Kasper, this unassailable hope is for that which is most fundamental to human existence – that which, as it were, is written on the human heart: communion, relationship, and communication. An understanding of the Church as communion, then, is more accurately expressed as an understanding of the Church as the servant of this vision of hope for communion. Its task is to form Christians to become servants of hope in the world.[21]

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[19] Kasper, *The Catholic Church,* 57.

[20] Kasper, *The Catholic Church,* 57. In this way, Kasper's elaboration of communion ecclesiology resonates with Brian Flanagan's contention that communion ecclesiology is most fruitfully understood as a contextual theology, situated in and emerging out of a Western, late-modern or postmodern "experience of the present," to use the terminology of Stephen Bevans. This experience, Flanagan argues, is characterized by a growing desire for ecumenical dialogue; a search for new language to express the theological and spiritual realities of the Church; and, on a broader social scale, fragmented identity, social isolation, and disintegration of community brought about by globalization and within a milieu of increasing secularization. Reading communion ecclesiology as a Western, late-modern contextual theology reveals more clearly its strengths. In view of this "experience of the present," Kasper's work functions as a compelling theological response to the problems posed for the Church and its members in the contemporary Western context. See Brian Flanagan, "Communion Ecclesiologies as Contextual Theologies," *Horizons* 40, no. 1 (2013): 55; and Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology,* revised edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 7.

[21] Kasper, *The Catholic Church,* 59.

The nature of the Church as "paradoxical anticipation"[22] of the Kingdom is revealed most saliently in the Eucharist: "In the celebration of the Eucharist, the Church understood as *communio* becomes concrete reality…. [U]ltimately, the Church lives out of the Eucharist."[23] Lest the Church be conflated with the Kingdom, however, Kasper clarifies that to understand the Church as communion is not to understand it as the comprehensive fulfillment of this hope here and now but rather as its sign and instrument, eschatologically oriented toward the fulfillment of perfect communion.[24]

2.2.2 Difference in the Communion Paradigm

In the communion paradigm, difference is approached primarily through the lens of dialogue, understood as communication across difference. According to Kasper, the relational, dialogical ends of human hoping are a reflection of the fundamentally dialogical structure of divine revelation, human nature, and ecclesial reality.[25] Dialogue is more than an exchange of ideas; because it entails encounter, it is also an "exchange of gifts."[26] Thus, dialogue discloses a sacramental quality, a revelation of the other that reveals, in some way, the ultimate Other. As such, dialogue not only bridges difference but demands it. As Kasper emphasizes, "A true dialogue can only be led by partners who each have their own identity, i.e. who have their

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[22] Kasper, *The Catholic Church,* 59.

[23] Kasper*, The Catholic Church*, 21.

[24] Kasper, *The Catholic Church,* 57-58.

[25] Kasper*, The Catholic Church*, 56.

[26] Kasper*, The Catholic Church*, 56.

conviction and position which they do not neglect or hide, on the contrary which they hold up in a dialogue and about which they want to enter into an exchange with the partner."[27]

Ultimately, it is love that transforms difference from a source of division to the basis of unity. Self-communicating, self-giving love is at the heart of mission, both divine and human. Authentic dialogue, as an expression of mission, is "purposeless"[28] – that is to say, is it not a means to an end but rather the fruit of loving and open encounter, led by the communicating and unifying Spirit of God. *Communio* suggests a hopeful paradox: true unity in Christ comes by engaging particularity. This non-instrumental, missiological approach to dialogue – including ecumenical and interreligious dialogue – is thus understood though the lens of communion as the natural, centrifugal outpouring of love. It is a response in love to the Holy Spirit and, in this way, an active, historical anticipation of the Kingdom of God.

2.2.3 *Unity, Diversity, and the Local Church*

As Doyle notes, the post-Vatican II recovery of the communion paradigm in ecclesiology has functioned as a gentle corrective to prior ecclesiological models that tended to overemphasize the juridical and institutional dimensions of the Church while underemphasizing the significance of the local, historical, and relational.[29] Understanding the Church as communion more vividly illuminates the identity and significance of the local community with respect to the catholicity of the Church. Catholicity – from the Greek *katholou,* denoting wholeness, fullness, or totality – refers to the mark of the Church that maintains the identification

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[27] Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 295.

[28] Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 295.

[29] Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 12-13.

of the local ecclesial community with the fullness of the Church and Christ's spirit.[30] Ecclesiologist Joseph A. Komonchak acknowledges the tendency to regard the catholicity of the church as implying that the particularities of the local church are accidentals and add nothing of significance to an understanding of the universal Church. He regards communion as a corrective to this under-emphasis on the local.[31] Indeed, catholicity is often misinterpreted as referring simply to the Church's geographic universality. Actually, catholicity encourages a vision of the Church that regards each local community not as one particular "member" of the "global" Body of Christ, but rather as receiving and revealing the whole Christ in and through its particularity. In this way, the "local" and "universal" should not be understood as existing in opposition or tension. As Komonchak states:

> The catholicity of the Church… is only realized in and out of the local churches. It characterizes the essential redemptive work of the local church as this gather up into unity the diversities that characterize its members, and this… provides a theological basis for territorial units such as the parish and the diocese.[32]

This directs attention to the Christ-revealing, incarnational significance of the local and particular. Every local Eucharistic community can be understood as *ekklesia tou theou,* the whole church of God.[33] It is the ecclesiological corollary to the philosophical question of the one and the many.

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[30] J.M.R. Tillard, O.P., "The Local Church Within Catholicity," *The Jurist* 52, (1992): 449.

[31] Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Local Church and the Church Catholic: The Contemporary Theological Problematic," *The Jurist* 52 (1992), 419. Zizioulas echoes the point: "We cannot speak of 'catholicity' and ignore the concrete local church" (Zizioulas, Being as Communion, 143). And Doyle, with respect to Ratzinger: "The meaning of 'communion ecclesiology' is bound up with the meaning of 'Catholic'" (Doyle 2).

[32] Komonchak, "The Local Church and the Church Catholic," 446.

[33] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 148. See also Tillard, "The Local Church Within Catholicity," 451. This echoes *Lumen Gentium* 23: "It is in and from these [particular churches]

In turn, local inclusivity can be understood as a microcosm of the catholicity of the Church. This notion of ecclesial unity and inclusivity is captured in what Zizioulas terms the "eucharistic consciousness" of the early Church.[34] It was this eucharistic consciousness, he contends, that conditioned the very nature of these proto-ecclesial gatherings. Here, Eucharist is "understood primarily not as a *thing* and an objectified means of grace but as an *act* and a *synaxis* [gathering] of the local Church, a *'catholic' act of a 'catholic' Church*."[35] The very act of gathering inclusively as church discloses a quasi-sacramental quality. Gathering as church, Christians become a living sign of the Incarnation, because such gathering reaches toward the eschatological fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper in John's Gospel that "all may be one" (Jn 17:21).[36] Indeed, as Zizioulas argues, it was not "coming together in brotherly love" *per se* that was a "Christian innovation,"[37] but rather the diverse and inclusive composition and equal standing of all those so bonded through Baptism:

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that the one and unique catholic church exists." See *Lumen Gentium,* Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (21 November 1964), in *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, edited by Austin Flannery, O.P. (New York: Costello, 1996). Komonchak expands on the point: "The generative principles—Word, Spirit, Eucharist, apostolic ministry—generate a local church as the catholic Church, the communion constitutive of any local church generating also the other local churches and the communion among them that is the one catholic Church. On the one hand, then, in terms of spiritual reality nothing more is realized on any wider or higher level of the Church's life than is realized in the local church. On the other hand, what occurs in the local churches is an event universal, catholic, in its innermost dimensions" (Komonchak, "The Local Church and the Church Catholic," 421). This echoes Karl Rahner's understanding of the theological dimension of the parish, wherein the local Eucharistic assembly is understood as the place in which the Church as event is realized most fully. See Rahner, "Theology of the Parish," in *The Parish: From Theology to Practice,* ed. Hugo Rahner (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1958), 28.

[34] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 145.

[35] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 145.

[36] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 147.

[37] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 150.

> Certainly there was a basic difference in faith that distinguished Christians from their environment. But there was also a certain distinctiveness in the manner of their gathering, which should not pass unnoticed. This distinctiveness lay in the composition of these gatherings. Whereas the Jews based the unity of their gatherings on race (or, in the later years, on a broader religious community based on this race) and the pagans with their *collegia* on profession, the Christians declared that in Christ 'there is neither Jew nor Greek,' 'male or female,' adult or child, rich or poor, master or slave, etc.[38]

In the early Eucharistic community, Zizioulas contends, divisions of ethnicity, sex, generation, class, and power were transcended. Exclusion or division is antithetical to Eucharist.

In light of the argument of this dissertation, two interrelated methodological conclusions can be drawn. First, the methodological corollary to catholicity, Komonchak argues, is an option for the local not as a reaction against the universal but as a recognition that it is in and through the local community that the universal is realized. Needed are "the construction of local ecclesiologies exploring not simply what it means to be the Church in general, but what it means to be the one Church locally, here and now, in response to specific challenges and opportunities."[39] Or, as William S. Clark states in his study of local authority in parish life, "It is local difference that, in addition to enriching the church and strengthening its authenticity in a particular place, is the very sign of the catholicity of the church's mission."[40] Relatedly, what is required is a focus on *practice* in the local community. Gathering, breaking bread, being with one another – such is the practice of communion. Communion, like the Eucharist itself, must be

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[38] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 151.

[39] Komonchak, "The Local Church and the Church Catholic," 447. "All this makes it clear that the Church's catholicity is always something that must be achieved. It *must* be realized because the essence of the Church is the assembling into diversified unity made possible because of the Word of Christ and the grace of the Spirit. But it must be *achieved* ever anew because these divine principles do not effect catholic unity, either locally or universally, on some abstract or merely formal level but only by generating among the members of the Church and among the local churches the liberated freedom by which these become the subjects at once of the Church's self-realization and of its mission in the world" (p. 446).

[40] Clark, *A Voice of their Own: The Authority of the Local Parish,* 179.

understood not as an abstract, already-achieved "thing" to be claimed, but as a constant practice, the shared, imperfect, embodied work of ordinary people at the most concrete level. It is to this claim that I will turn later in this chapter.

2.2.4 Communion and the Shared Parish

Understood as being-in-relationship, communion offers a model of Church that elevates the incarnational significance of the local and thus seems to make way for a fuller consideration of culture, diversity, and dialogue within the church. It is not surprising, then, that recent pastoral and theological writings on cultural diversity and shared parish life have looked to communion ecclesiology as an agenda-setting paradigm.

Communion undergirds the U.S. Catholic Bishops' pastoral agenda with respect to cultural diversity in the Church, evidenced in pastorals such as their 2000 letter on immigration, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*. The bishops invoke Pope John Paul II's call to "conversion, communion, and solidarity" among all people.[41] Echoing Zizioulas, the bishops argue that it is only in overcoming ignorance and mistrust of the "stranger in our midst," in trading fear for hospitality and openness to the other, that genuine communion is possible.[42] The church, and particularly in the celebration of the Eucharist, is the locus of believers' encounters with the Trinitarian communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and thus with one another.[43] In their bilingual resources for intercultural ministry, the bishops articulate the notion

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[41] John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America: On the Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: The Way to Conversion, Communion and Solidarity in America* (2000).

[42] USCCB, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity* (November 2000), "A Call to Communion" (no pagination).

[43] USCCB, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*, "A Call to Communion" (no pagination).

of the church as communion as central to a theology for intercultural ministry.[44] Similarly, in the bilingual resource *Best Practices for Shared Parishes,* the bishops define parish community in contexts of diversity as communion in mission.[45]

Recent ethnographic research in shared parish contexts similarly espouses the communio paradigm as an interpretive framework for diversity. In his study of a Latinx/Euro-American shared parish in the Midwest, Hoover identifies two prevailing "folk paradigms"[46] at work in the way in which parishioners tended to frame cultural diversity with respect to the parish community and the United States more broadly. Two prevailing theoretical paradigms, *assimilation* and *multiculturalism,* have entered into the popular cultural imagination as "folk paradigms" that shape the way mainstream Americans construct narratives to make sense of cultural diversity. Both assimilation and multiculturalism provide particular, and quite different, sets of assumptions and visions for negotiating cultural diversity in American society, and both have shaped the U.S. Church's pastoral strategy toward immigrants at various points throughout its history. While assimilation promotes Americanization and uniformity of practice, multiculturalism tends to promote a vision of cultures as static and neatly bounded wholes. Neither paradigm has proven effective at challenging what scholars have termed *cultural*

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[44] USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers*, 4.

[45] USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Best Practices for Shared Parishes: So That They May All Be One*, 32-33.

[46] The "folk paradigm" notion is drawn from the work of American political theorist Nancy Fraser, who distinguishes between formal theoretical understandings and the "folk" understandings that emerge from them as these theoretical frameworks are appropriated by the popular imagination. These folk paradigms help to frame action and condition people's understanding of a given situation or social problem. See Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 185; citing Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange,* translated by Joe Golb, James Ingram, and Christiane Wilke (New York: Verso, 2003), 11.

encapsulation, "an isolation of perspectives, where members of socially disconnected groups judge all things by their own cultural perspective and have trouble identifying or understanding the perspective of members of other groups."[47]

For this urgent task, Hoover proposes a new folk paradigm of communion. "Communion," he argues, "could serve parishes and congregations struggling with cultural diversity. It provides a vision of church unity that does not require cultural uniformity, but it also demands more of Christians than simply a vague and distant tolerance.[48] Hoover draws on the work of Tillard, Zizioulas, and Jamie Phelps to suggest that "theologies of communion could provide a general theological narrative to shape the congregational cultures of a shared parish."[49] *Communio* offers a theological framework upon which can be constructed a vision of unity in diversity capable of challenging the cultural encapsulation that characterizes the experiences of most shared parish members in the United States.

Yet Hoover's use of the communion paradigm is also somewhat perplexing. The experience of the shared parish of All Saints, which he presents as a case study in his work, is largely characterized by tense, cautious, or nonexistent relationships between members of the English and Spanish speaking communities. The experience of All Saints illustrates the profound limits of ecclesiological metaphors that perpetuate notions of unity and harmony while eliding over racial and cultural conflicts and power asymmetries. Indeed, as demonstrated by the experience of SMA, the parish examined in this project, communion on the ground requires intentional work, and it was not always clear to parishioners whose work it should be. At All

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[47] Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 106ff.

[48] Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 199-200.

[49] Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 206.

Saints, it seems that most parishioners placed the responsibility for "unifying the two communities,"[50] and the concomitant task of negotiating intricate and often subtle power dynamics among the communities, on the shoulders of ordained parish leaders. It was not clear what practical role lay people themselves felt they should play in the work of communion. As I will suggest, this is a consequential ambiguity.

2.3 *Communio*'s Growing Edge: The Question of *Missio Ad Intra*

The communion paradigm offers a capacious model of the Church grounded in self-communicating love and openness to the gift of the other. Yet *communio*'s capaciousness has also led some to observe that it has assumed a kind of hegemony as the *de facto*, singularly acceptable interpretation of the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council.[51] The suspicion is not unfounded. As Joseph Ratzinger once insisted, "ultimately there is only one basic ecclesiology" – that is, communion ecclesiology.[52] Thus, as Clare Watkins observes, "the language of *koinonia* [emerged] at the start of the twenty-first century as an established orthodoxy."[53]

Critics of *communio* have argued that such language provides an insufficient basis for an understanding of the Church's mission. Neil Ormerod argues the point convincingly: "Communion may be our eschatological end in the vision of God, but in the here and now of a

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[50] Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 203.

[51] See Richard Gaillardetz, "The 'Francis Moment': A New Kairos for Catholic Ecclesiology," *CTSA Proceedings* 69 (2014): 64-65.

[52] Cited by Nicholas Healy, "Ecclesiology and Communion," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 31 (2004): 273.

[53] Clare Watkins, "Objecting to *Koinonia*: The Question of Christian Discipleship Today—And Why Communion is Not the Answer," *Louvain Studies* 28 (2003): 327.

pilgrim Church mission captures our ongoing historical responsibility."[54] Ormerod is suspicious of ecclesiological models that cannot easily account for historical change and consequently regard the gap between the ideal and the real as a threat. In order to overcome this tension, Ormerod argues, communion must be corrected by mission. The critique is sharpened by Watkins, who argues that the use of communion rhetoric "[seduces] us into the un-evangelical belief that the Church is a tame and humanly comfortable reality, whose main purpose is the general feeling of well being and inclusion for its members."[55] The term is appealing, Watkins argues, precisely because it is so "innocuous" and "elastic" that it ultimately serves to comfortably affirm the status quo. The result is a sort of ecclesial insularity that neglects the urgency of mission.

The extent to which communion can be understood as propelling the Church beyond itself in mission to the world seems to be most at stake for both proponents and critics of *communio*. While critics on this point, such as Watkins, offer an important reminder of the need to avoid ecclesial insularity, suggestions that communion ecclesiology neglects the relationship between communion and mission outright seem to be somewhat exaggerated. Indeed, it would be false to suggest that Kasper and others neglect the relationship between communion and mission. The pastoral fruits of communion ecclesiology can be seen perhaps most clearly in the ecumenical movement.[56] The reception of communion ecclesiology beyond the Roman Catholic

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[54] Neil Ormerod, "The Structure of a Systematic Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies* 63, no. 1 (2002): 29.

[55] Watkins, "Objecting to *Koinonia*," 328.

[56] Comprehensively evaluating the ecumenical impact of the *communio* model lies beyond the scope of this work. However, the work of Kasper, whose experience as the head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (2001-2010) is evidence of his expansive ecclesiological imagination, seems to point convincingly toward the fruitfulness of communion ecclesiology for opening up new and promising avenues for ecumenical dialogue.

Church, evidenced in the work of John Zizioulas, suggests that it has served a significant purpose for the Church's mission of dialogue *ad extra*.

While the extent to which communion can be understood as propelling the Church beyond itself in mission to the world seems to be most at stake for both proponents and critics of *communio*, neither proponents nor critics have inquired as critically into the efficacy of communion in providing a model for the unfinished task of the Church *ad intra*. I would argue that what *is* lacking most critically in the way in which the language of communion has been employed ecclesiologically is a robust understanding of the relationship between communion and the Church's mission *ad intra*, described by one theologian as "the church's internal or 'in-house' mission, its own self-evangelization and ministry unto its membership."[57] This is perhaps a surprising, even ironic claim. After all, the Trinitarian shape of *communio* seems to provide a self-evident, implicit template for intra-community relationships of loving mutuality.

But the notion of Church as perfect communion sits uneasily with the recognition that local ecclesial communities are historically, culturally, and socially situated spaces and thus both shape and are shaped by larger cultural and societal forces.[58] In a U.S. context, such shaping forces include residential segregation, structural racism, white supremacy, xenophobia, and other historically and culturally rooted forms of exclusion and idolatry. As Mary McClintock Fulkerson observes, drawing on the theory of practice of Pierre Bourdieu, members of religious congregations are conditioned in bodily ways by such forces; they do not coat-check their

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[57] Richard G. Cote, *Re-visioning Mission: The Catholic Church and Culture in Postmodern America* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1996), 9.

[58] Such a view is critical because it contests the notion, common in postliberal theologies, of the Church as a culture or "counter-culture" unto itself. See Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997).

cultural inheritance when they walk in the door of a church.[59] Indeed, such bodily habituations govern to no small extent which church's doors they decide to walk into in the first place. (As the practice of "parish shopping" among Catholics suggests, this is as true in parishes as it is in Protestant congregations). These socially and culturally mediated, bodily dispositions shape in no insignificant way the shape of the boundaries, real and imagined, Catholics draw around their parishes.[60]

Just as some Protestant leaders and theologians have begun to take a step back from the racial reconciliation framework for addressing racial division in congregations,[61] so too would Catholic parishes benefit from resisting the temptation to jump too quickly to communion as a template for community in contexts of cultural and racial diversity. This is because, as scholars such as Bryan Massingale and Willie James Jennings have observed, within the Christian imagination, notions of perfection and unity – even "unity in diversity" – are bound up tightly

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[59] Mary McClintock Fulkerson draws on Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* in order to describe the way in which "racialized incorporative practices" structure the bodily practices and rituals through which place – including ecclesial place – is produced. See Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 35ff; especially Chapter 2, "Postmodern Place: A Frame for Appearing."

[60] For an analysis of how parish boundaries functioned to shape the racial and ethno-religious settlement patterns in twentieth century urban Boston, see Gerald Gamm, *Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[61] For a comprehensive critique of the reconciliation paradigm for addressing interracial relations in Protestant congregational contexts, see Jennifer Harvey, *Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Racial Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014). In *The Christian Imagination,* Willie James Jennings similarly resists a too-easy jump to reconciliation: ""The concept of reconciliation is not irretrievable, but I am convinced that before we theologians can interpret the depths of the divine action of reconciliation we must first articulate the profound deformities of Christian intimacy and identity in modernity. Until we do, all theological discussion of reconciliation will be exactly what they tend to be: (a) ideological tools for facilitating negotiations of power; or (b) socially exhausted idealist claims masquerading as serious theological accounts. In truth, it is not at all clear that most Christians are ready to imagine reconciliation." Jennings, *The Christian Imagination*, 10.

with white Euro-American cultural symbols and norms. The narrative of unity in diversity, often employed with an excess of optimism and uncritical naïveté with respect to the historical and structural dimensions of racial and cultural divisions in the Church, can function in practice as theological license to evade engagement of difficult questions of power and cultural change in local communities. Describing shared parishes as spaces of unity in diversity can become, in other words, a theological and pastoral conflict-avoidance mechanism through which power-holding communities within parishes offer nominal appreciation, even "celebration," of cultural diversity without concomitantly addressing questions of power and privilege within the life of the community.

Though some see communion as providing a convincing foundation for the task of the church in the world, less clear is how it addresses perhaps the most unfinished task within concrete ecclesial communities: inclusion and intimacy across racial and cultural boundaries. For this reason, I find myself in only partial agreement with Watkins' pointed critique: she maintains that the main purpose of communion ecclesiology has amounted to supporting "the general feeling of well being and inclusion for its members."[62] I am not convinced that it has done so. As Zizioulas argues, inclusion was the hallmark of the early Christian community; it was – and remains – a radical innovation. Inclusion is no small task. If the communion paradigm were succeeding in providing an adequate theological basis for inclusion across difference within local communities, that would be no minor feat. A perhaps more accurate critique of communion is that it has succeeded in "maintaining the general feeling of well being and inclusion" for those for whom well-being and inclusion have not tended to be at stake.

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[62] Watkins, "Objecting to *Koinonia,*" 328.

2.4 From Abstract Diversity to Real Difference

I suggest that the communion paradigm has yet to comprehensively confront the roots and consequences of real difference within Christian communities. While affirming diversity on an abstract level, it evinces ambivalence with respect to difference in the concrete. Given the near-default status assumed by communion ecclesiology in recent decades, this failure is a costly one. It risks undergirding ecclesial practices that conflate unity in diversity with status quos that uphold the normativity of white Euro-American experience within the Church in the U.S. Confronting this critical shortcoming paves the way for the construction of a more adequate understanding of communion and community in shared parishes.

2.4.1 Diversity versus Difference: Anthropological Perspectives

Before engaging the treatment of diversity and difference in communion ecclesiology, it is necessary to define the consequential distinction between these terms. Broadly, in social and political parlance, diversity tends to be viewed positively and generally involves cultural features that are "largely aesthetic, politically and morally neutral:"[63] food, music, language, dress, crafts, and artistic expressions, for example. In an ecclesial context, diversity is often associated with "international" feasts and devotions, saints, Marian apparitions, music, and other liturgical expressions. Difference, on the other hand, tends to connote practices, narratives, authorities, and (perhaps most importantly) bodies that are regarded as uncomfortably disruptive of or contrary to the practice of the status quo. As anthropologist Thomas Hylland Erickson concludes, "Bluntly put, there is considerable support for diversity in the public sphere, while difference is

[63] Thomas Hylland Eriksen, " Diversity versus Difference: Neo-Liberalism in the Minority Debate," in *The Making and Unmaking of Differences: Anthropological, Sociological, and Philosophical Perspectives,* eds. Richard Rottenburg, Burkhard Schnepel, and Shingo Shimada (New Brunswick: Transaction Pubishers, 2006), 14.

increasingly seen as a main cause of social problems associated with immigrants and their descendants."[64]

Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha distinguishes between cultural diversity and cultural difference in a postmodern and postcolonial context. According to Bhabha, the notion of *cultural diversity*, as it is commonly invoked by both scholars and in common parlance, implicitly partakes of and perpetuates critical misconceptions about the nature of culture itself. Cultural diversity relies on an understanding of cultures as comprised of

> pre-given cultural contents and customs; held in a time-frame of relativism it gives rise to liberal options of multiculturalism, cultural exchange or the culture of humanity. Cultural diversity is also the representation of a radical rhetoric of the separation of totalized cultures that live unsullied by the intertextuality if their historical locations, safe in the Utopianism of a mythic memory of a unique collective identity.[65]

For Bhabha, rhetorics of cultural diversity tend to operate in an ahistorical realm unaffected by legacies of colonialism or their resulting hybridities.[66] Diversity rhetoric posts cultures themselves as stable, static, and internally logical, which can be objectified and analyzed like museum pieces. Cultural diversity suggests the celebration (or, as the case may be, the lament) of "multiculturalism" that views cultures as discrete, totalized, internally consistent entities that, in the best-case scenario, coexist in benign and mutually noninterfering ways.

Bhabha's critique of cultural diversity rhetoric can be illustrated by analyzing the scene of a typical cultural diversity celebration-themed event. The event takes place in location that is ostensibly value-neutral (say, the parish gym) yet, in reality, is a space owned and controlled and decided upon by those who claim the status of hosts. It involves token cultural offerings (a

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[64] Eriksen, " Diversity versus Difference: Neo-Liberalism in the Minority Debate," 14.

[65] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 50.

[66] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 31.

potluck of traditional cultural foods, for example), which are collected on a paper plate, sampled, remarked over, even delighted in. The goal, implicit or explicit, of such celebrations is the nominal appreciation of diversity, emblematized by the delight taken in international culinary variety. The tacit assumption is also that this cultural sampling – a recognition, perhaps, of the creativity and worthiness of all cultures – will somehow lead to the dissolution of personal prejudices and divisions. Culture itself is understood to be like the little samples of empanada, rice and peas, and pancit around a potluck paper plate: recognizably traditional, clearly denoted, objective, individually delicious but best not to be mixed together. At the end of the event, everyone returns from the cultural field trip to their own communities and homes, which remain untouched by the encounter.

Bhabha's critique of diversity rhetoric echoes Kathryn Tanner's criticism of modern anthropological definitions of culture. Emerging as the dominant paradigm in cultural anthropology after the 1920s, modern approaches to culture emphasized an understanding of cultures as discrete, fixed entities. Anthropologists theorized cultures as internally complex but, within this complexity, largely homogeneous (that is, "cultural diversity" could be perceived among cultures, but not within them) and relatively stable over time.[67] Cultural practices, then, were understood as communicating in a fairly direct way the beliefs and values of their practitioners. Like pieces of a puzzle, any cultural artifact could be studied by anthropologists as though partially expressive of the entire character of the culture in general. Culture was thus understood to be the ordering principle of social behavior and a force for social cohesion and

[67] Tanner identifies nine features of modern anthropological understandings of culture. See Tanner, *Theories of Culture,* 25-29. See also Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 2-4.

order.[68] Moreover, modern anthropological approaches introduced to the field an emphasis on context, particularly the importance of understanding a given cultural element in its broader cultural context in order to rightly perceive its meaning and intelligibility. However, this contextual analysis emphasized a view of cultures as existing in bounded geographical and conceptual spaces and, again, as internally consistent. Additionally, like billiard balls that occasionally bounce off one another but never interpenetrate one another and are never reshaped by the encounter,[69] modern approaches regarded cultures as mutually exclusive and thus never mutually relevant or influential beyond their firmly drawn borders.

By contrast, emphasis on what Bhabha terms *cultural difference* draws attention not to a reified understanding of the cultural "contents" of various cultures, but rather to their peripheries where, Bhabha argues, meaning is constructed and identities emerge. To speak of cultural difference thus draws attention to the "significatory boundaries of cultures, where meanings and values are (mis)read or signs are misappropriated."[70] Rather than regarding cultural boundaries as spaces of division, where one culture ends and another begins, boundaries should instead be understood as relational spaces. They are spaces of exchange, conflict, intimacy, and vulnerability – spaces where, as Gloria Anzaldúa writes, "two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle, and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy."[71] They are

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[68] Tanner, *Theories of Culture,* 31-32.

[69] Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians*, 4.

[70] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 50.

[71] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera,* Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books, 2007 [1987]), preface (no pagination).

spaces where a primordial memory of oneness propels the messy work of intercultural negotiation toward an eschatological hope for communion. Chapters 4 and 5 will analyze the significatory dimension of boundaries and the implications of a postmodern understanding of borderlands for ecclesiology, ecclesial practice, and parish life.

The remainder of this chapter will identify in predominant expressions of communion ecclesiology an implicit preference for *diversity* in the abstract over *difference* in the bodily particular. It will argue that *communio*'s discomfort with difference means that, in a U.S. context, invocations of communion begin to parallel social rhetorics of colorblindness. Colorblindness seeks a kind of tense unity predicated upon the impossible and offensive (if often well-intentioned) notion that human particularity can be "unseen" and "unknown" in order to save white persons and communities from the discomfort associated with the recognition of their own non-exclusivity.[72] I will then analyze parish-level data on attitudes about racial and cultural diversity to suggest a relationship between ecclesiological timidity with respect to difference and white Catholics' suspicions toward the inclusion of racial and cultural others in their parishes. I

[72] On colorblindness as the transmission of an epistemology of ignorance, see Jennifer C. Mueller, "Producing Colorblindness: Everyday Mechanisms of White Ignorance," *Social Problems* 64, no. 2 (May 2017): 219-238. See also Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists,* 4th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014); Leslie G. Carr, *"Color-Blind" Racism* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997); and Tyrone A. Forman, "Color-Blind Racism and Racial Indifference: The Role of Racial Apathy in Facilitating Enduring Inequalities," in *The Changing Terrain of Race and Ethnicity,* eds. Maria Krysan and Amanda E. Lewis (New York: Russell Sage, 2004), 43-66. While the dynamics of colorblindness are in some ways unique to the particular social context of whiteness in the United States, it should be noted that other practices of exclusion based on "unseeing" the other exist in shared parishes beyond white, Euro-Americans. While Euro-American/Latinx parishes make up the largest portion of shared parishes, questions of exclusion and (mis)recognition often arise when two or more groups find themselves faced with the task of negotiating a shared sense of belonging. Such questions are relevant among, for example, different communities of Latinos within a parish, where differences of nationality (Mexican vs. Cuban, for example) and stark generational, economic, and immigration-related differences interact with often deeply ingrained prejudices to make the task of community a challenge.

will conclude by suggesting that an understanding of communion as both eschatological gift and solidaristic task invites a critical focus on the ecclesial practices of communities of difference as *locus theologicus*, a task that will be taken up more fully in Chapter 5.

2.4.2 Diversity in the Communion Paradigm

Central to the communion paradigm is the conviction that equal sharing in the discipleship of Jesus Christ through a common baptism renders irrelevant social, economic, ethnic, or biological distinctions. Galatians 3:27-28 is commonly cited as a summation of how, from a New Testament perspective, divisions are overcome through common membership in the Body of Christ: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Jesus Christ." This radical vision of a discipleship of equals modeled on the egalitarian practices of early Church community has guided much contemporary reflection about what a Church of communion should look like. French Canadian theologian J.-M.R. Tillard's analysis of sacramental unity, particularly Eucharistic unity, reemphasizes this point. He writes, "The sacrament shows that communion with Christ renders null and void any distinction of race, dignity, or social status. In Christ, all are equal."[73] Zizioulas echoes this hope for biological, social, and spiritual inclusion:

> At the level of nature, race, sex, and age are all differences which must be included in the diversity of communion…. Communion on the local level involves variety in respect to all such matters. This is true about social differences as well: rich and poor, powerful and weak, all should be accommodated in the community. The same must be said about the variety of spiritual gifts.[74]

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[73] Jean-Marie R. Tillard, *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ: At the Source of the Ecclesiology of Communion* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 68.

[74] John D. Zizioulas, "The Church as Communion," St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 38, no. 1 (1994): 9.

The only limit to diversity in the Church, Zizioulas contends, is that it not undermine the essential unity that characterizes its nature. Elsewhere, he goes farther: communion, as a reflection of the relationship among the three Persons of the Trinity, not does not threaten or merely accommodate otherness; it requires and even generates it.[75] Kasper, too, echoes the point: difference invites dialogue. It is good for the Church.

Yet it is also possible to identify a tension in the way ecclesiologists speak about the relationship between communion and difference. On one hand, difference is understood as a source of strength, even a gift, for the Church. If difference is a gift, it should not merely be accommodated or tolerated but honored, upheld, and welcomed. On the other hand, and at the same time, Christians are encouraged to look both backward to the early Church and forward in eschatological hope, two points at which, it is conjectured, these same differences, now interpreted as evidence of disunity, were and will be rendered "null and void," to use the words of Tillard. The Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist in particular are regarded as sites of the foretaste and momentary in-breaking of perfect communion – that is to say, unity unburdened by human distinctions.

Zizioulas echoes this theme, suggesting that:

> [T]he [early] Christians themselves soon came to believe that they constituted a *third race*, but this was only to show that in fact it was a 'non-racial race,' a *people* who… declared … that they did not care about the difference between a Greek and a Jew once these were members of the Christian Church.[76]

Zizioulas' analysis of the early Christian church illustrates the subtle but critical contradiction of prevailing iterations of communion ecclesiology: difference is affirmed as vital for unity, yet should also be transcended for the sake of unity. The former is a reflection of its Trinitarian

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[75] Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 5.

[76] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 151.

foundations: it is the distinctness in the three Persons of the Trinity that generates perfect, outward-reaching love. Yet the highest vision of human unity-in-difference that the literature presents is of a seemingly "post-racial" or "colorblind"[77] form of Church in which all differences of race, ethnicity, and culture are dissolved. In a U.S. context, such a vision of post-racial or "colorblind" discipleship within the Church has an effect similar to that of colorblindness within society at large: the normativizing of white practice, white experience, and white bodies.[78]

While it is possible to trace, through careful analysis, the varying and sometimes inconsistent ways in which the language of difference is employed in communion literature, this ambivalence presents challenges. Such imprecision is not incidental nor merely semantic but rather points to larger philosophical and theological difficulties with the notion of difference. As ecclesiologist Elochukwu Uzukwu observes, Christian theology and practice has been deeply influenced by Platonic thought and has adopted its preoccupation with unity. The result has been

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[77] For a succinct examination of the implications of the notion of colorblindness for ecclesial practice, see Leslie H. Picca, "Race and Social Context: Language, 'Colorblindness,' and Intergroup Contact," in *Ecclesiology and Exclusion: Boundaries of Being and Belonging in Postmodern Times*, edited by Dennis M. Doyle, Timothy J. Furry, and Pascal D. Bazzell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 119-124.

[78] Uses of early Christian practices in communion ecclesiology can be regarded as engaging in idealization or romanticization of the early church. Yet tensions of race/ethnicity, class, religious belonging, and citizenship marked much of the emerging self-understanding of the early Christian community. Throughout Acts, the Holy Spirit gradually expands the boundaries of salvation and inclusion in the people of God. The practices the community developed in response—the calling of the seven (Act 6:1-7), for example, or the baptism of the Gentiles (Acts 10:1-11:18)—have to do with the integration of those considered "other" into a new community of the baptized. Thus, Acts recounts how the Spirit inspires practices that reveal the porosity of human-constructed boundaries and deal in creative, inclusive ways with those once considered strangers or "other." In other words, belonging in the early Church was the result of practices of negotiation; it was a process that was not without tension. For an inquiry into racial, class, and gender dynamics and power relationships in Acts, see Demetrius K. Williams, "'Upon all flesh:' Acts 2, African Americans, and Intersectional Realities," in *They Were All Together in One Place? Toward Minority Biblical Criticism*, eds. Randall C. Bailey, Tat-song Benny Liew, and Fernando Segovia (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 289-312.

the instinctive association of unity with perfection and, concomitantly, of difference with imperfection. For Uzukwu, this tendency is manifested most glaringly in the Church's complicity with colonialism, and in paternalism on the part of Rome to non-Western cultures. It has presented serious obstacles for the process of inculturation. Without respect for the autonomy of local African churches, Uzukwu argues, *communio* rhetoric of unity in diversity has hindered rather than promoted the flourishing of the Church in Africa.[79]

M. Shawn Copeland perceives the Church's ambivalence toward difference reflected in a U.S. context, particularly with respect to race. She observes that in common parlance, "difference connotes suspicion, if not disdain. Difference communicates that which is and those who are to be avoided."[80] Thus, what results is "the temptation to dissolve difference—to ignore it or to meet it with sly or shame-faced side-long glances." [81] Copeland cites Johnetta B. Cole, who warns, "To address our commonalities without dealing with our differences is to misunderstand and distort that which separates as well as that which binds us."[82]

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[79] See Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, *A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996). The point is reemphasized by ecclesiologist Joseph A. Komonchak, who summarizes the common tendency to regard the catholicity of the church as implying that the particularities of the local church are accidentals and add nothing of significance to the definition of the universal Church. Komonchak regards the communion paradigm as a possible corrective to this under-emphasis on the local. See Komonchak, "The Local Church and the Church Catholic: The Contemporary Theological Problematic," *The Jurist* 52 (1992), 419.

[79] Hoover, *The Shared Parish*, 187.

[80] M. Shawn Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," in *Women and Theology*, edited by Mary Ann Hinsdale and Phyllis H. Kaminski (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995), 16.

[81] Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 16.

[82] Cited by Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 16.

2.4.3 White Catholics' Attitudes Toward Racial and Cultural Others

The tension between lip-service appreciation of racial and cultural diversity and suspicion of it in practice that Copeland identifies is reflected in sociological data on parish level attitudes. In a 2015 survey of more than 11,000 parishioners at 27 U.S. parishes serving diverse communities, white respondents were more likely than their Hispanic, Asian, Black, and Native American counterparts to strongly agree that their parish is multicultural.[83] This mirrors other studies that suggest that white people tend to perceive an exaggerated level of diversity in contexts in which any people of color are present.[84] In the survey, whites were also *less* likely than non-white parishioners to perceive tension between different cultural groups at their parish, and (perhaps predictably) they were least likely to report feeling like an outsider at their parish because of nationality, race, ethnicity, language, or culture.[85] Yet despite white parishioners' seemingly positive view of the status of their parishes' diversity, only about one in five strongly believed that "celebrating cultural diversity" or "understanding the different cultures that exist within the parish community" should be priorities in their parish, significantly lower than support among all non-white groups of parishioners.[86]

Additionally, while roughly half of white parishioners strongly agreed that they would like to see more diversity in their parishes, white support fell significantly when asked whether their parish should be more involved in welcoming specific non-white communities, such as

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[83] Zech et. al. *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century*, 112.

[84] Victoria C. Plaut et al., "'What About Me?' Perceptions of Exclusion and Whites' Reactions to Multiculturalism," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 101, no. 2 (2011): 337-353.

[85] Zech et. al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century,* Table 8.2, 112.

[86] Zech et. al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century*, Table 8.3, "Parish Cultural Diversity Priorities," 113.

immigrants (39% of whites strongly agreed), non-English speakers (35%), Hispanics/Latinos (38%), African Americans/Africans (39%), Asians/Pacific Islanders/Native Hawaiians (38%), and American Indians/Native Alaskans (39%). However, white support increased significantly (to between 50-60%) for welcoming people who were not explicitly non-white, such as people with disabilities, young adults, inactive Catholics, divorced parishioners, and non-Catholic spouses. (White support for welcoming low-income families fell somewhere in between, at 46% strongly supporting.) Support for increased welcome for every group was highest among Hispanic respondents (between 70 and 80%) and also high among Asian, black, and American Indian respondents (generally around or above 60%).[87]

This seemingly greater support for racial and cultural diversity in the abstract than for difference in reality is reflected in Hoover's study of All Saints. Among white parishioners there, feelings ranging from mild discomfort, hesitation, and unconscious bias to ecclesial territorialism and xenophobia complicated efforts to foster community between the parish's English- and Spanish-speaking communities.[88] White parishioners tended to express comfort with diversity only "when accompanied by some momentum toward uniformity. Unity 'feels right' when framed as uniform belief and practice."[89] Particularly when it is manifested in liturgical or other practices that fall outside of accepted Euro-American norms, cultural and racial difference can

[87] Zech et. al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century,* Table 8.4, "Parishioner Attitudes About Welcoming," 114.

[88] Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* 214.

[89] Hoover, *The Shared Parish*, 187.

provoke not only general feelings of discomfort but also a sense that the presence of such difference itself is somehow inherently un-Christian, a violation of orthopraxy or right worship.[90]

Tillard, summarizing Chrysostom, states: "At the baptismal font and at the Eucharistic table, there no longer exists any hierarchy, any preferential treatment."[91] While this powerful description of a discipleship of equals indeed represents our deepest eschatological hope, it is far from the case in history. Preferential treatment based on race, class, language, culture, gender, and ability have always characterized, and continue to characterize, ecclesial practice in reality. Falling into what theologian Katie Grimes calls "sacramental optimism"[92] risks spiritualizing real differences in deference to an aspirational notion of harmony, thus concealing inequalities, injustices, and asymmetries of power that call out for redress. Without a critical capacity to account for the sources and consequences of division in communities, communion ecclesiology risks perpetuating an image of Church that is sinless and ahistorical, one that can thus not be held unaccountable for its failings and exclusions.

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[90] Bryan Massingale, "Response: The Challenge of Idolatry and Ecclesial Identity," in *Ecclesiology and Exclusion: Boundaries of Being and Belonging in Postmodern Times*, eds. Dennis M. Doyle, Timothy J. Furry, and Pascal D. Bazzell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012): 130-136. Massingale recalls televised EWTN coverage of the 2008 visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Washington, D.C. During one liturgy, a black Gospel choir offered a song. When they were finished, one commentator remarked: "We have just been subjected to an over-preening display of multicultural chatter. And now, the Holy Father will begin the sacred part of the Mass" (p. 132).

[91] Tillard, *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ*, 68.

[92] Katie Grimes, "Breaking the Body of Christ: Sacraments of Initiation in a Habitat of White Supremacy," *Political Theology* (2015). In the article, Grimes traces how, in a U.S. context characterized by white supremacy and racism, the Sacraments of Initiation have historically been coopted so as to reinscribe racial hierarchies.

2.5 "Doing Truth:" From Unity in Diversity to Solidarity in Difference

What, then, of communion? I suggest that solidarity in difference, rather than unity in diversity, more adequately names the "human task" of the Church – communion conceived of as practice. In order to demonstrate the necessary relationship between communion and solidarity, I turn to the work of Elizabeth Johnson and M. Shawn Copeland. Johnson's retrieval of the language of *koinonia*, read through the lens of Copeland's critical understanding of the relationship between communion and solidarity, helps us to name and resolve some of the tensions posed by suspiciously benign treatments of difference in theologies of communion. As Copeland and Johnson both suggest, solidarity expresses more adequately than unity both the promise and the demands of communion. Thus, complementing the Trinitarian and eschatological character of *unity in diversity* with the praxic language of *solidarity in difference* helps to reveal more fully the robust and challenging implications of communion for local ecclesial communities characterized by difference – that is, for communities wherein "unity in diversity" names an urgent, concrete, and often elusive task.

In *Friends of God and Prophets*, Johnson draws convincingly on the ecclesiological language of *koinonia* to engage in a feminist rereading of the Communion of Saints.[93] She proposes an image of ecclesial community grounded in what she refers to as "solidarity in difference."[94] Johnson defines solidarity as

> *a type of communion* in which deep connection with others is forged in such a way that their sufferings and joys become part of one's own personal concern and *a spur to transformative action*. It entails *a movement out of a selfish seclusion and into*

[93] Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets: A Feminist Theological Reading of the Communion of Saints* (New York: Continuum, 1998).

[94] Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets,* 175.

> *relationship* where people bear one another up in mutual giving and receiving. *It is inseparable from liberating praxis for the common good*.[95]

Johnson's emphasis on the inextricable connection between relationship and transformative action marks a defining feature of solidarity. Jon Sobrino in his own work refers to this praxic notion of solidarity, defining it as the principle by which one "interiorizes, absorbs in her innards, the suffering of another… in such a way that this interiorized suffering becomes a part of her, is transformed into an internal principle, the first and last, of her activity."[96] Solidarity involves what Gustavo Gutierrez calls a "conversion to the neighbor" which propels one in a position of power and privilege to place oneself intentionally alongside the suffering victims in community and society. It is here, at the side of the neighbor, that one encounters God.[97] Solidarity does not involve mere pity, nor does it stop at compassion. Rather, it requires action. It is in this spirit that John Paul II affirmed in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* that solidarity is "not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortune of so many people" but rather a "firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good… because we are all really responsible for all."[98]

In many ways, the notion of solidarity is accountable to some of the same critiques that can be made of communion. Primary among these is the fact that overuse has rendered the

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[95] Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets,* 175; emphasis is mine.

[96] Jon Sobrino, "The Samaritan Church and the Principle of Mercy," *The Principle of Mercy: Taking the Crucified People from the Cross* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 15-26.

[97] See Gustavo Gutierrez, "Conversion to the Neighbor," in *Gustavo Gutiérrez: Essential Writings,* edited by James B. Nickoloff (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 149-155. Here Gutiérrez cites Yves Congar's notion of "the sacrament of our Neighbor" (p. 154-155).

[98] John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (December 30, 1987), 38.

language unthreatening and undemanding and has robbed it of its radical, liberative impulse.[99] Aware of this trend, Copeland calls for "an end to facile adoption of the rhetoric of solidarity" by those in positions of privilege who "ignore and, sometimes, consume the experiences and voices of the marginalized and oppressed, while, ever adroitly, dodging the penitential call to conversion—to authenticity in word and deed."[100] What Copeland decries is what we might term "cheap solidarity," akin to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's notion of "cheap grace:" a thin notion of unity in diversity that preaches forgiveness without requiring repentance, communion without confession; solidarity without the cross, without the Incarnation, without Jesus Christ.[101] Thus, Copeland argues, "Not difference, but indifference, ignorance, egoism, and selfishness are obstacles to solidarity."[102] Indeed, in a Trinitarian framework, difference is what renders love perfect. It is more than the love of self and more than the love of one like oneself. It is love that generates something new, unknown, autonomous, and untamable. It is love with social consequences; love that makes demands. Thus, assimilation, subordination, or loss of the difference of the self, including racial difference, is "antithetical to solidarity, for solidarity presumes mutually affirming, autonomous others."[103] In ecclesial and societal contexts historically conditioned discrimination and exclusion in many forms, well-intentioned claims to

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[99] Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets,* 177-178.

[100] Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 3.

[101] See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959). The point is echoed by Jamie T. Phelps, who argues for a reading of communion ecclesiology through the lens of black liberation theology, particularly the work of James Cone: "Oneness cannot be built on lies, denial, or the pretense of reconciliation." Phelps, "Communion Ecclesiology and Black Liberation Theology," 699.

[102] Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 24.

[103] Roy O. Costa, cited in Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 23.

ecclesial communion grounded in the rhetoric of unity in diversity often translate to pastoral practices that (often implicitly, even unknowingly) seek to remake the "other" in the image of the dominant, to "welcome the stranger" on the terms of the powerful. Authentic solidarity mandates the recognition and affirmation of the other as autonomous, equal, and powerful, a true image and likeness of God.

For Copeland, as for Kasper, Zizioulas, and Tillard, the truth of the Church is revealed most saliently in the Eucharist.[104] It is here, Copeland argues, that the relationship between communion and solidarity becomes clearest. However, this is not the case because the Sacrament renders all human divisions null and void or supernaturally suspends dynamics of privilege and exclusion in the community gathered before the altar. For Copeland, the Eucharist is the heart of Christian life precisely because it *makes demands* on those who receive it. Rendering divisions null and void isn't the work of the Eucharist; receiving the Eucharist compels us to recognize that doing so is *our* work. Thus, to become what we receive in the Eucharist – that is, communion, the Body of Christ – we "must do what [we] are being made."[105] Writes Copeland,

> Eucharist is at the heart of Christian community, but it is an empty gesture, a mere routine or *pro forma* act, if we have not confessed our sins; repented of our participation and/or collusion in the marginalization of others; it we have not begged forgiveness from those whom we have offended; if we have not pledged firm purpose of amendment; it we have not moved to healing and creative Christian praxis.[106]

Solidarity is not a given; like communion, it is not something that can be mandated or merely claimed. Rather, it is an "achievement of community" that should propel the community to spiritual conversion and transformative moral action. In the concrete, Copeland argues,

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[104] Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 27.

[105] Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 31.

[106] Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 30.

> we find ourselves standing before the Cross of Jesus of Nazareth yearning to grasp the enormity of suffering, affliction, and oppression; to apprehend our complicity and collusion in the suffering, affliction, and oppression of others.[107]

Eucharistic solidarity beckons us to the foot of the cross. It is from this vantage point that we perceive more honestly the wounds that divide our communities of faith. We recognize our complicity in wounding others. We admit the reality of our own woundedness. This open-eyed encounter with reality makes moral and practical claims on us. It propels us to social praxis – to what Copeland terms "doing truth."[108] Communion may well represent the deepest truth of human nature and being, as Kasper and others argue. Yet paradoxically, we confess this deep truth most adequately when we admit the vastness of the chasm between this eschatological truth and the reality of our lived communities. Any vision of the Church in history as communion must be understood as a wounded communion. Through the lens of solidarity, we recognize communion – which is to say, authentic relationships of love in and across difference – to be, in Copeland's words, a "wrenching task," something to be "dared."[109]

2.6 Conclusion

Solidarity can be understood ecclesiologically as the practice of communion. Understanding communion through the lens of solidarity helps us to recognize communion as a persistent, discomforting call to become ever more honestly what we receive. For this reason, communion ecclesiology benefits from firm grounding in the analysis of the lived practices of solidarity that communities of difference undertake. Regarding such practices, and ecclesial

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[107] Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 29.

[108] Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 3.

[109] Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 29, 4.

practice more broadly, as a *locus ecclesiologicus* helps to render our ecclesiological claims more humble and to maintain ever before our eyes the eschatological dimension of communion.[110]

As Copeland argues, "doing the truth" of what we are being made in the Eucharist is a "wrenching task." This task is manifested most saliently and consequentially in the ordinary practices that local ecclesial communities undertake: in liturgies and the celebration of the Sacraments; in listening, dialogue, and storytelling; in prayer, song, and silence; in walking together and marching together; in celebration, *fiesta,* and play; in confession, repentance, and forgiveness; in lament and protest; in eating and drinking together;[111] in sharing memories and seeking hope.[112] Such communal practices are truly that: *practice*. They are small, imperfect, often faltering efforts toward healing a wounded communion in context of the most particular, in the places where these wounds actively bleed. Like the Eucharist itself, they point our attention to the brokenness of a Body and of particular bodies. They become sites of challenge, particularly for the powerful and privileged, from whom they demand listening instead of

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[110] A focus on ecclesial practices represents an emerging trajectory in ecclesiological study. For an overview of the field as it is emerging, see the collections *Explorations in Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, edited by Christian B. Scharen (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012); and *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, edited by Pete Ward (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012).

[111] For an ethnographic account of the many kinds of bodily practices in one congregation seeking to take seriously the challenge of building ecclesial community across difference, with particular attention on the sins of racism and ableism, see Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption.*

[112] Johnson calls attention to the centrality of practices of women's memory and hope in the notion of *koinonia* she elaborates. Her understanding of practice is deeply narrative in scope; she analyzes women's practices of memory through the interpretive template of what she terms "narrative memory in solidarity" (*Friends of God and Prophets,* 164). Johnson argues that narrative distortion leads to communal and personal amnesia. When a community's "dangerous memories" are recovered, this remembering provides not merely a fuller or more complete picture of the Christian story but in some sense a quite different one than that which has come down to us through accepted, status quo narratives. A focus on practices is critical in this recovery because it is through a practice that silenced and marginalized narratives of *koinonia* are remembered, recovered, and shared anew.

speaking, learning instead of teaching, assuming the place of guest rather than host. In a world often suspicious of and hostile to difference, a "costly" understanding of communion requires this praxic grounding. Ultimately, one might hope, such practices reveal that the task of communion, however arduous, is also itself a gift.

The next chapter sharpens the focus on communion as practice by introducing a case study of a small, urban, Catholic parish that is home to significant sub-communities of African American, Afro-Caribbean, Latinx, and white Euro-American parishioners. The parish, like many in the U.S., is faced with the challenge of intercultural and interracial negotiation. Unlike most parishes, however, the community there has taken a mission-oriented approach to intercultural collaboration. As a result, parishioners are highly integrated across racial, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. Utilizing this community as a case study, Chapters 3 and 4 examine the role of liturgical and ecclesial practice in the cultivation of community in this context of difference. Chapters 4 and 5 will then suggest that such practices can be understood as cultivating what I will term borderland space.

Chapter 3: A Parish on the Borderlines

Newcomers to St. Mary of the Angels are immediately struck by three things.

First, St. Mary of the Angels is a basement with a roof. If not for the lighted statue of the Virgin Mary facing the street and an inauspicious wooden sign on the corner, the garden-level structure would hardly resemble a Catholic church. To enter, one walks down a steep outdoor staircase into the underground sanctuary. The church has no bathrooms, no nursery, and no narthex. All of the parish's gathering space is located next door at the parish house, a pale yellow, three-story Victorian that newcomers often mistake for the church itself. The church evinces generations of slow revisions: aging wooden pews, bright red carpet atop thick floorboards, a labyrinthine sound system of tangled cords and stacked speakers, garden-level windows of yellowing, shatterproof glass, adorned with the painted images of saints and the names of long-deceased parishioners. On the slim crucifix carried by altar servers during Mass, Jesus' left arm is adhered to the cross by a rubber band looped a few times around his wrist like a bracelet. The physical space of St. Mary of the Angels summons to mind the words of Pope Francis and the Latin American Bishops: this is "a poor church for the poor."[1] Its continued

[1] Speaking to a large gathering of journalists three days after his election to the papacy, Pope Francis remarked, "How I would love a church that is poor and for the poor." The remark echoes the concerns of CELAM (*Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano,* the Conference of Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean) at Medellin (1968), Puebla (1979), and Aparecida (2007). At each of these gatherings, and in the documents that were produced from them, the Latin American Bishops fleshed out the Preferential Option for the Poor. "A poor church for the poor" was the theme of the May 2017 CELAM Assembly in San Salvador. For a summary of Pope Francis' remarks, see Joshua J. McElwee, "Pope Francis: 'I would love a church that is poor," *National Catholic Reporter* (March 16, 2013), online: https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/francis-chronicles/pope-francis-i-would-love-church-poor.

existence makes it an anomaly in the Archdiocese of Boston, which shuttered or merged more than eighty of its least attended and lowest-budget parishes in 2004.[2]

Second, St. Mary of the Angels is highly racially and ethnically diverse. The community that gathers for Sunday morning Mass in English is made up primarily of elderly and middle-aged African American, Jamaican, and white women and men. There are a couple of elderly women religious and a scattering of white and black, and Hispanic families. The small choir is racially and generationally mixed. Led by a sandaled Capuchin friar on an electric keyboard, they sing a mixture of post-Vatican II folk repertoire and hymns from the Gospel tradition, all of which most people in the congregation seem to know by heart.

The crowd at the Spanish Mass, which begins an hour after the English Mass lets out, is significantly larger, younger, and more predominately female than the English crowd. The majority of families here are from the Dominican Republic, with a contingent nearly as strong from Puerto Rico. Seemingly everyone in the community, young or old, has a task. As parishioners file in for Mass, men greet them at the door, handing out missalettes and printed song sheets. High-heeled, meticulously-coiffed women bustle in and out of the sacristy; others adjust the faux-floral altar decorations. A jumble of altar servers, teens and adults, knot the rope belts of their white cassocks. Kids dart between pews; others wander over to the parish house for religious education class. Members of the large, talented choir, mostly women, crowd around microphones to practice. Accompanied by a keyboard player, guitarist, and bongo drummer, they lead merengue-style music during Mass.

Third, this is a place of embodied engagement. The small church overflows with embraces and tears, with full-throated laughter and movement, with food and family. A palpable

[2] See John C. Seitz, *No Closure: Catholic Practice and Boston's Parish Shutdowns* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

joy fills the unusual-looking space. There are two Sunday morning Masses celebrated here each week: one in English at 9 a.m., the other in Spanish at 11:15 a.m. It quickly becomes apparent at both that almost everyone knows almost everyone else by name. Several of the most involved Spanish-speaking families at the parish are related to one another; others work together or live near each other in the surrounding neighborhood of Egleston Square. At the English Mass, the high point of the liturgy is the Sign of Peace. As the choir sings "This Little Light of Mine," parishioners spill out of their pews, embracing one another with kisses, hugs, and tight handshakes. Very young embrace very old; elderly black women embrace white thirty-somethings. To the occasional dismay of recently arrived priests, exchanges of "Peace be with you" are often accompanied by "How are you feeling?" or "How's the baby?" or "Will you be at the meeting later?" The entire ritual lasts about three minutes. Eventually the music concludes and the din of fellowship dies down. Tears are wiped from eyes, deep breaths are taken, and people gradually file back into their pews for the offertory. Decades ago, the then-pastor, a bilingual Jesuit, tried to persuade parishioners to dial back their enthusiasm during the peace ritual. When that didn't work, he decided to move the rite from its usual place after to the Lord's Prayer to between the Prayers of the Faithful and the Offertory so that the raucous exchange would not compete with the otherwise prayerful transition between the Eucharistic Prayer and the reception of the Eucharist.[3]

[3] The English community's practice of exchanging the sign of peace after the Prayer of the Faithful, while unique in a contemporary context, has long liturgical precedent. Such was apparently the practice of early Christian liturgical communities outside of Rome. In an account of the liturgy written sometime between 155-157 CE, Justin Martyr describes the exchange of the kiss of peace as directly following the communal Prayer of the Faithful (*The First Apology* 65). The *Apostolic Constitutions*, a fourth-century collection of treatises likely from Syria on Early Christian liturgical worship, practice, and doctrine, similarly places the kiss of peace directly after the Prayer of the Faithful (Book VII, Section 2, XI).

This buoyant sense of embodied fellowship continues beyond the closing hymn. On Sunday mornings, most of the parish's gathering space is in use by religious education classes. For this reason, parishioners from the English Mass who have lingered for meetings or conversations typically overlap with the arrival of the many lay ministers from the Spanish Mass who serve as greeters, sacristans, musicians, and altar servers. Members from the two communities greet one another with kisses, hugs, and warm smiles. They trade inquiries after one another's families and children; some discuss parish or community events. People here seem to know and care about one another's lives.

As noted in Chapter 1, studies of American religious congregations have been unequivocal in demonstrating that the majority of Americans worship with people who are racially and culturally similar to themselves. While racially and culturally diverse Protestant congregations and Catholic parishes are more common than they were even two decades ago, they still make up a small minority of faith communities. When compared with the largely racially and culturally monochromatic character of Christian worship in the United States, it is impossible not to be struck by the seemingly organic sense of intimacy that exists across cultural, racial, and linguistic borderlines at St. Mary of the Angels. This friendship does not appear forced or artificial, as though the result of an excess of intentionality. While these obvious, embodied expressions of intimacy do not tell the entire story of intercultural and interracial community at St. Mary of the Angels, they do suggest an important starting point. How do the parishioners of St. Mary of the Angels practice community? And what does that practice suggest about the meaning of community in diversity in twenty-first century Catholic parishes?

In this chapter, I begin to construct a practical ecclesiology of communion through an examination of the concrete ecclesial practices of one such community of difference. I utilize as a case study St. Mary of the Angels/*Santa Maria de los Angeles* (SMA),[4] an urban Catholic parish in Boston, MA, that serves significant African American, Afro-Caribbean, Latinx, and white/Euro-American sub-communities. Like at least one in three U.S. Catholic parishes, SMA is a shared parish, and thus one confronted daily with the task of negotiating the meaning of community in the context of significant difference. Unlike most shared parishes, however, SMA is not characterized by the kind of cultural encapsulation described by Hoover. Rather, many parishioners described themselves as having close cross-cultural and cross-racial friendships with others in the parish. Worship, social activities, and administrative and organizational practices at SMA are observably racially and culturally diverse and frequently bilingual. This is not to suggest that SMA is free of cultural or racial tension; in interviews, some parishioners described their difficulties in forming cross-cultural relationships and in working with parishioners of the opposite Mass community. Still, SMA's diversity is palpable enough to set it apart in a very obvious way from most mainstream U.S. Catholic parishes.

I examine the place of St. Mary of the Angels from a socio-historical perspective. I contextualize SMA as a territorial parish, analyzing the community's history in conversation with research on the relationship between race, place, and the Catholic parish in the urban Northeast. I analyze how and why the territorial boundaries of the century-old parish, and the neighborhood that surrounds it, have throughout its history been uniquely situated on some of

[4] Throughout this project, I will usually refer to St. Mary of the Angels/*Santa Maria de los Angeles* as "SMA." I utilize this abbreviation not only for convenience but also because it denotes equally the parish's name in English and Spanish. Where I have referred to the parish name in English, I have done so simply for the sake of linguistic continuity with the rest of the dissertation.

Boston's most pronounced cultural, racial, and religious borderlines. To gain sense of how SMA parishioners conceive of and practice community, I draw primarily on semi-ethnographic data (primarily Spanish- and English-language interviews and participant-observations of weekly masses and Holy Week liturgies detailed in the next chapter) gathered at SMA over a four-year period. I supplement this ethnographic data with historical and archival research on Egleston Square and St. Mary of the Angels parish. I observe that based on this history and on my many interviews with SMA parishioners, the story of SMA can be understood as one of intertwined migrations: local, transnational, and spiritual. I will suggest that deeply rooted consciousness of itself as an ecclesial borderland contributed to the emergence of the parish's intercultural and interracial liturgical and devotional practices, a contention I will support in Chapter 4.

3.1 Case Study Selection

3.1.1 Why St. Mary of the Angels?

I selected SMA as a case study for this dissertation because, in consequential ways, it is both similar to and distinct from many contemporary Catholic parishes in the U.S. As noted, like more than a third of U.S. parishes, SMA can be characterized as a shared parish. SMA is home to four primary cultural sub-communities, who worship together in two Sunday masses. The English Mass is regularly attended by a community that is roughly 40% African American and Afro-Caribbean (particularly Jamaican), 50% white, and 10% Latinx and others. English Mass attendees are mostly middle aged and elderly, though the community is also home to a small number of young families with children, young adults, and teenagers. The Spanish Mass, a significantly larger and younger community, serves a community that is approximately 45% Dominican and 30% Puerto Rican, with the remaining 25% from countries throughout Latin

America.[5] Most are first- or second-generation immigrants to the United States. Nearly all children enrolled in religious education, and the majority of baptisms, first communions, and confirmations, are children from the Spanish Mass community. This description of an aging English-speaking community and a younger, growing Spanish-speaking community makes SMA similar to many parishes throughout the U.S., such as the one described by Hoover. Yet its additional status as a home for many black Catholics in Boston further complexifies the racial landscape of the small parish.

Compared to other parishes both nationally and within the Archdiocese of Boston, SMA is very small. On an average Sunday, the English Mass draws barely 100 parishioners. The Spanish Mass, on the other hand, draws closer to 300 parishioners each week. (By comparison, the average U.S. parish has about 3,300 registered parishioners.[6]) In part because of its small size, like a growing number parishes across the Northeast and Midwest SMA has been affected by parish closures and consolidations. In 2004, SMA was one of more than eighty parishes in the Archdiocese of Boston targeted for closure due to clergy shortages, declining mass attendance, and financial constraints. Two years prior, Boston's clergy sexual abuse crisis had come to light, shattering trust and driving many Boston Catholics from the Church. For the 28,000 Catholics affected by the wave of closures, the announcement came like salt in unhealed wounds.[7] When

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[5] This description of the cultural makeup of St. Mary of the Angels is compiled from observations, interviews and descriptions of parish demographics from parish members, as well as observational data from the parish's annual Pentecost celebration. At the end of the bilingual Pentecost liturgy, speakers read from a long list of nations and invite parishioners to stand when their home country is called.

[6] Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century,* 17, citing the Emerging Models Study. In the study, 16% of U.S. parishes are categorized as "small," having 430 or fewer registered parishioners; this is the category into which SMA would fit.

[7] For an in depth study of the Archdiocese of Boston's parish closures, see Seitz, *No Closure: Catholic Practice and Boston's Parish Shutdowns*.

SMA found itself on the closure list, neighborhood and city leaders collaborated with lay leaders from the parish to plan series of public demonstrations. Neighborhood stakeholders and high-profile public figures in Boston flooded the chancery with letters of support for the small parish, arguing that SMA played too important a role in the neighborhood to shutter. Though many parishes attempted to appeal their closures, SMA was the only one to do so successfully. Since 2012, SMA has been part of a three-parish collaborative that shares a single pastor.[8] Additionally, SMA has a longstanding relationship with the Jesuits at nearby Boston College. Jesuit priests often come to celebrate the English Mass, and every year to two years the Spanish Mass community receives a new Jesuit deacon. Though SMA is a diocesan parish, many parishioners in both Mass communities identify the presence of the Jesuits and the Ignatian spirituality that undergirds the parish's retreats and other prayer opportunities as one of the things they appreciate most about the parish.

While in some ways SMA seems to be a microcosm of the state of Catholicism in Boston and the Northeast, in other ways the parish is an outlier among U.S. parishes.[9] Most notably, unlike most parishes, for decades the SMA community has taken an intentional, mission-oriented approach to intercultural collaboration. As noted in Chapter 1, what Hoover terms "cultural

[8] While each of the three parishes preserves its own facilities and budget, they share clergy, staff, and a single parish council. The process of clustering parishes in the Archdiocese of Boston began in 2011, following the 2004 closures. The purpose of the clustering was to address clergy, personnel, and finance shortages.

[9] Katherine DiSalvo argues that studying the parish culture and practices of an outlier parish – in the case of her research, a predominately Hispanic Catholic Church in New York City with much higher levels of civic participation than is typical for Catholics – supports the idea that parish culture, and not merely denominational culture, affects individuals' participation. In this sense, St. Mary of the Angels represents another such outlier, whose unique parish culture and practices help to account for the high levels of lay leadership, civic participation, and intercultural collaboration of its members. See DiSalvo, "Understanding an Outlier: How Parish Culture Matters in a Highly Participatory Catholic Church," in *Review of Religious Research* 49, no. 4 (2008): 438-455.

encapsulation" is the uneasy norm in most shared parishes. But SMA intentionally eschews the parallel-communities approach. The parish is marked by high levels of intercultural participation in both the administrative and liturgical life of the parish. This commitment to diverse community is propelled in part by SMA's mission statement, which articulates a commitment to the cultivation of intercultural community through the practice of joyful worship:

> Saint Mary of the Angels is a multicultural and multilingual Catholic community of believers in Jesus Christ and His message. We strive to live our faith in joyful worship, providing spiritual nourishment, a welcoming and inclusive environment and sense of family in all our activities, and committing ourselves to promote justice in our neighborhood and broader world.
>
> *La Parroquia Santa María de los Ángeles es una comunidad Católica multicultural y multilingüe de creyentes en Jesucristo y su mensaje. Nosotros procuramos vivir nuestra fe en alegre adoración, proveyendo alimento espiritual, un ambiente agradable e inclusivo y un sentido de familia en todas nuestras actividades, y comprometiéndonos a promover justicia en nuestra vecindad y el mundo más amplio.*[10]

This spirit of collaboration is evidenced most obviously in the bilingual nature of many of the parish's liturgical, spiritual, and administrative practices. Bilingual parishioners serve as translators at parish council meetings and other committee gatherings, on the annual Lenten parish retreat, and at other parish events. The parish bulletin is printed in English and Spanish, as are the large banners bearing the parish mission statement that hang in the parish house. Intentional effort is invested in assembling committees and planning teams that include parishioners from both Masses, as well as a representative proportion of Africa American and white members of the English Mass community. These formal structures of intercultural representation and collaboration are manifested most clearly in liturgical and social practices at

[10] The mission statement, which was composed by the bilingual parish council through a yearlong consultative process in 2001, is posted in English and Spanish in both the church and parish house and read aloud in both languages at the beginning of every parish meeting. According to parishioner Alma Cisneros, who served on the council at the time, the goal of devising the statement was both to codify what the parish was already doing and to articulate a clear agenda for its ministry into the future.

SMA, which tend to be highly participatory, lay-led, and diverse. It is this joyful worship that initially drew me to SMA and which, I believe, make it an apt case study for an examination of the role of shared ritual practice in cultivating community across cultural borderlines.

Finally, as noted above, SMA was among the only parishes of the dozens slated for closure in Boston in 2004 to successfully protest its shuttering. As demonstrated in interviews I will examine toward the end of this chapter, the parish ultimately evaded closure in 2004 not because of parishioners' sentimental connections to it but instead because its role in the urban neighborhood in which it is situated was deemed to be too vital to dismiss. It is clear that such a community has much to reveal about the relationship between parish, place, solidarity, and communion.

3.1.2 Why Holy Week?

Holy Week marks the liturgical, aesthetic, and intercultural high point of the year at SMA. I have chosen to focus on Holy Week practices because this is the point in the liturgical year at which lay participation is highest and most concentrated. Over the course of the week, five primary bilingual liturgies or devotions take place: Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, the Good Friday Neighborhood Way of the Cross, the Good Friday liturgy, and the Easter Vigil. During Holy Week, SMA is the site of intense and intentional intercultural liturgical participation and planning. This reflects national trends, which suggest that in parishes with Hispanic ministry, the liturgies of Holy Week are those likely to be celebrated bilingually.[11] Additionally, the Holy Week liturgies are largely lay-planned and include the participation of a large number of parishioners from both the English and Spanish communities. On a more affective level, the week is filled with what Christopher Tirres, in his description of Good Friday at San Antonio's

[11] Ospino, *Hispanic Ministry in Catholic Parishes*, 15.

San Fernando Cathedral, calls an "aesthetic charge."[12] The creative liturgies and practices of the week bring together lived experience and Christian story and symbol in a vivid way, marking an "intensification of experience;" they "engage people at the level of the imagination."[13]

The goal of this study is to enter into conversation with and advances existing literature on Holy Week practices in marginalized or culturally minoritized communities. Such work includes studies of public Way of the Cross rituals and other Good Friday practices in U.S. Latinx communities by Karen Davalos, Christopher Tirres, Virgilio Elizondo, and Roberto Goizueta.[14] Tirres identifies the "integrative capacity" of the Good Friday rituals at San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, drawing together Christian tradition and the everyday, ethics and aesthetics, past and present, within a U.S.-Latinx cultural context. The present study advances the literature by examining the extent to which shared participation in ritual in contexts marked by cultural diversity discloses a similar integrative capacity.

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[12] Christopher D. Tirres, *The Aesthetics and Ethics of Faith: A Dialogue Between Liberationist and Pragmatic Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 18.

[13] Tirres, *The Aesthetics and Ethics of Faith,* 18.

[14] See Karen Mary Davalos, "The Real Way of Praying: The Via Crucis, *Mexicano* Sacred Space, and the Architecture of Domination," in *Horizons of the Sacred: Mexican Traditions in U.S. Catholicism,* eds. Timothy Matovina and Gary Riebe-Estella (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 41-68; Tirres, *The Aesthetics and Ethics of Faith*; Virgilio P. Elizondo and Timothy M. Matovina, *San Fernando Cathedral: Soul of the City* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998); Elizondo and Matovina, *Mestizo Worship: A Pastoral Approach to Liturgical Ministry* (Liturgical Press, 1998); Elizondo, *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise*; and Roberto S. Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995).

3.2 Parish, Place and Communion: SMA as a Territorial Parish

3.2.1 Defining the Territorial Parish

St. Mary of the Angels, like most Catholic parishes, is a territorial parish, a community established to serve all Catholics living within a fixed geographical boundary.[15] The Code of Canon Law describes the parish as "a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted" within a diocese.[16] "As a general rule a parish is to be territorial, that is, one which includes all the Christian faithful of a certain territory."[17] Whereas Protestant congregations tend to draw members from a broad geographic area based on "some specialized identity in terms of ethnicity, style of worship, interests, or other tastes,"[18] Catholic parishes are distinguished by their localized orbits. Because of the local proximity of their membership, parishes (and parish-like Protestant congregations) are more likely than niche Protestant congregations to "function as actors in local neighborhood affairs."[19] Indeed, the defining features of the parish according to Canon Law—community and stability—are upheld by the parish's geographical nature, which

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[15] For a genealogy of the term *parish* and its relationship to place, see Tricia Colleen Bruce, *Parish and Place: Making Room for Diversity in the American Catholic Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), especially pp. 14-33.

[16] Code of Canon Law, 515.

[17] Code of Canon Law, 518.

[18] Ebaugh and Chafetz, *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations*, 25. See also Omar M. McRoberts, *Streets of Glory: Church and Neighborhood in a Black Urban Neighborhood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); and Nancy T. Ammerman, *Congregation and Community* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

[19] Ebaugh and Chafetz, *Religion and the New Immigrants*, 25. Ebaugh and Chafetz categorize congregations along a continuum from "parish-like" to "niche-like" based on the proximity of congregants' residences to the church itself. Of the thirteen Houston-area congregations they studied, the two Catholic parishes ranked, unsurprisingly, among the most "parish-like," meaning that their members lived relatively close to the church (p. 27, fig. 2).

binds people to place and implicitly communicates the sacredness of the particular, local, and ordinary. John McGreevy draws on Karl Rahner's understanding of the parish to suggest that the strongly neighborhood-oriented parishes of the urban Catholic exemplified the theological notion that

> the individual came to know God, and the community came to be church, within a particular, geographically defined space. Communities with distinct physical boundaries–as opposed to communities defined by occupation or gender–actually *became* Church in the context of the liturgy, just as Christ became specific, and corporeal, in the celebration of the Eucharist.[20]

The territorial parish can also be contrasted with the personal parish, communities formally established by bishops in order to serve a specific group of the faithful, whether on the basis of rite, nationality, linguistic need, or other factors (e.g. a preference for the Tridentine Latin Mass).[21] Established on the basis of affinity rather than geography, personal parishes are the exception that proves the territorial rule.[22] Territorial parishes sometimes appear to function as *de facto* personal parishes, attracting parishioners of similar national, ethnic, or ideological backgrounds. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century urban Catholic centers of the Northeast, for example, many territorial parishes were often *de facto* Irish or other European national parishes because residential homophily[23] among recent European Catholic immigrants

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[20] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 24. McGreevy is summarizing Rahner, "Theology of the Parish," 25-32.

[21] For a qualitative study of contemporary personal parishes in the United States, see Bruce, *Parish and Place*.

[22] Code of Canon Law, 518.

[23] Miller McPherson, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and James M. Cook, "Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks," *Annual Review of Sociology* 27, no. 1 (2001): 415-444. Homophily refers to the tendency of individuals to form groups with those demographically, socially, and culturally similar to themselves. Early sociological studies of homophily proposed two types of homophily: status homophily (i.e. demographic similarity, as in race, gender, age, education, occupation, etc.), and value homophily (i.e. similar in values, beliefs, attitudes,

in these urban centers was strong.[24] Today, territorial parishes located in relatively culturally homogenous areas function somewhat similarly to national parishes; in the West and Southwest, for example, many territorial parishes serve communities that are predominately Latinx simply because it is Latinos who live within the parishes' boundaries. On the other hand, so-called "niche" or "boutique" parishes have emerged that attract parishioners with similar cultural affinities, liturgical sensibilities, music tastes, or ideological persuasions from beyond the parish's geographical boundaries.[25] Indeed, data suggests this trend is on the rise as the propensity of Catholics to attend their territorial parish is declining. Three decades ago, roughly 85 percent of Catholics attended Mass at their geographical parish.[26] Yet recent data suggest that today, more than 30 percent of parishioners bypass their geographical parish and instead attend Mass at another parish.[27] This practice, colloquially (and usually derisively) referred to as

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religion, etc.). See Paul F. Lazersfeld and Robert K. Merton, "Friendship as a Social Process: A Substantive and Methodological Analysis," *Freedom and Control in Modern Society* 18, no. 1 (1954): 18-66. Stohlman (2007) proposes the notion of "congregational homophily – the tendency for congregations to be comprised of individuals occupying similar social and cultural locations." See Sarah Stohlman, "At Yesenia's House… Central American Immigrant Pentecostalism, Congregational Homophily, and Religious Innovation in Los Angeles," *Qualitative Sociology* 30, no. 1 (2007): 69. In the content of religion in the U.S., among the demographic and belief factors enumerated by scholars of homophily, race continues to stand out as a powerful separator in congregations. According to the review of literature on race and ethnicity in U.S. religious congregations by Matthews, Bartowski, and Chase, religion and religious congregations in the United States "both [reinforce] and [challenge] the racial-ethnic divide." Yet, "what drives these tendencies toward racial homogeneity [in congregations] is considerably unclear" See Todd. L. Matthews, John P. Bartowski, and Tyrone Chase, " Race and Ethnicity," in *Handbook of Religion and Society* (Springer, 2016), 427, 428.

[24] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 10.

[25] Miller, "Body of Christ of Religious Boutique? The Struggles of Being a Parish in a Consumer Culture," 15-19. See also Miller, "Where is the Church? Globalization and Catholicity," 419, 429.

[26] Data from the Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life, 1987.

[27] Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century*, 18.

"parish shopping," is particularly common among non-white and younger Catholics.[28] While critics regard parish shopping as a corruption of catholicity by a consumerist mindset, the prevalence of this practice among non-white Catholics suggests that many of those who exercise choice in parish belonging may simply be going where they are being served or welcomed. Additionally, as I will argue in the next section, dynamics of residential segregation complicate arguments that territorial parishes more authentically embody communion than parishes of choice.

3.2.2 The Territorial Parish, Residential Segregation, and the Question of Communion in the Urban Northeast

The communion paradigm, when applied to the question of parochial belonging, draws attention to the significance of local community. As John Zizioulas notes, a defining feature of early Christian liturgical gatherings were their broad inclusivity of all believers within the local geographic area. On this point, he notes the absence of "specialty" liturgies in the early practice of the Church. There were no Masses for children, families, or youth.[29] The Church at Corinth, for example, was the gathering of all Christians in Corinth, regardless of sex, ethnicity, age, or social class. The communion of the local Eucharistic community was thus expressed and

[28] "More than half of African American parishioners and close to half of Asian American and Hispanic parishioners drive past parishes closer to their home to attend Mass. About two-fifths of Millennials (those born in 1982 or later) and more than a third of post-Vatican II generation parishioners (those born between 1961-1981) say they too drive past a parish closer to home to attend Mass at a parish of their choice." See Zech et al., *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century*, 18.

[29] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 153-154.

revealed in the extent to which the gathering of the local church fostered unity through "the transcendence of all divisions in Christ."[30]

Juxtaposed against the backdrop of early Christian ecclesial belonging, the practice of choosing to belong to a parish other than one's territorial parish is regarded by *communio* scholars as problematic. They argue that the proclivity to "parish shop" detracts from the capacity of local communities to encompass the diversity of their local population by encouraging homophily. That is, when given a choice, people generally choose to congregate with others who are similar to themselves on the basis of factors such as race, social status, language, culture, values, beliefs, and attitudes. Attending Mass at a new parish thus becomes an exercise in scrutiny—the partly-subconscious microanalysis of the homily, musical selections, parishioners' attire, bulletin announcements, and church decor for evidence of the parish's operative politics, identity, and class—rather than in worship.

The work of Vincent J. Miller exemplifies a *communio*-based critique of parish shopping. Miller views deterritorialized parochial belonging as detrimental to the realization of communion at the local level. Miller attributes the rise of deterritorialized parish belonging to forces of globalization that have contributed to a de-emphasis on deep commitment to one's local place. On an ecclesial level, Miller argues, deterrotorialization "threatens the church's ability to be present in and to any particular place."[31] The deterritorialization of the parish has robbed it of a key dimension of its meaning and human significance. It has transformed the territorial parish into what Miller terms a congregational parish; instead of gathering with the "everybody" of

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[30] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 162. Paul's excoriation of the Corinthians for maintaining distinctions between rich and poor at the liturgical meal (1 Cor 11:17-22) can be understood in this light.

[31] Miller, "Globalization and Catholicity," 418.

one's neighborhood, people now seek out parishes that suit particular preferences: better music, more lively homilies, a greater emphasis on social justice, a more traditional liturgical style. Deterritorialized ecclesial belonging has the consequence of sorting people into like-minded enclaves; as a result, Miller argues, "Believers lose the habits of cohabiting with people who are different from them."[32] Paradoxically, by venturing beyond parish boundaries, believers fall out of practice of venturing beyond interpersonal boundaries. Dialogue, compromise, and patience are requisites of membership in a community of those unlike oneself. Thus, Miller argues: "The current deterritorialized, congregational model of community makes *communion in place* the exception rather than the rule. Thus, *inclusivity of difference becomes more difficult to sustain as communities become more theologically and ideologically monochromatic and unbound from territorial space*."[33]

Miller regards membership in one's geographical parish as an antidote to this trend. Resisting the temptation to seek out a like-minded community, and instead committing oneself to worship with one's literal neighbors, compels one to listen, cooperate, and negotiate, to enter into dialogue, to decenter one's own preferences and desires.[34] In a way analogous to the social movement maxim "Think globally, act locally," Miller argues that deep commitment to the local "grounds deeper global relationships."[35] Only the truly local can reveal the particular injustice in one's midst. Thus, "the local community functions as a heuristic space for expressing local

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[32] Miller, "Globalization and Catholicity," 421.

[33] Miller, "Globalization and Catholicity," 426; emphasis mine.

[34] Miller, "Globalization and Catholicity," 426.

[35] Miller, "Globalization and Catholicity," 427.

problems and inviting a response from the church."[36] Zizioulas, from an Orthodox perspective, also leans heavily on the relationship between locality and diversity. Only a church that is truly local, Zizioulas reasons, could include those of different races, cultures, sexes, and classes. Non-geographical Eucharistic gatherings abstract themselves from locality based on some extrinsic unifying factor (cultural commonality or professional affinity, for example). They can be important and pastorally helpful "extensions of the reality of the Church. But they lack the element of catholicity which is suggested by the eschatological nature of both Church and eucharist."[37]

The way in which both Miller and Zizioulas locate the relationship between communion and locality is compelling. Indeed, as noted in the previous section, both theologians and sociologists of religion have observed that one of the features that most distinguishes the parish from the congregation is its radical commitment to the local. Yet there are two critical factors that complicate the assumption that territorial parish communities will be less determined by homophily and thus more encompassing of difference then "boutique" parishes. First, the firm persistence of residential segregation in the United States complicates and undermines and the assumption that a geographically bounded and localized ecclesial community will also be one characterized by significant forms of difference. In the U.S. context, geographical placed-ness is not the result of random chance, nor even the result of personal decision. Rather, where one lives – and thus the geographical parish within whose boundaries one resides – is influenced in

[36] Miller, "Globalization and Catholicity," 430.

[37] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 256.

determinative ways by race and class.[38] Discriminatory federal, state, and local housing policies, disparities in socioeconomic status and economic mobility, and the persistence of racial prejudice and discrimination have contributed to the extreme residential segregation of black Americans and the moderate segregation of Hispanic and Asian Americans in U.S. metropolitan areas.[39] According to Douglas S. Massey et al., the first seventy years of the twentieth century witnessed a shift in racial segregation "from the macro level (states and counties) to the micro level (municipalities and neighborhoods)."[40] When segregation falls along neighborhood lines, neighborhood-based institutions such as parishes often bear the starkest evidence of this color-line division. Civil rights legislation passed in the 1960s and 1970s slowly helped to mitigate (though hardly eliminate) overt racial discrimination in housing. At the same time, significant immigration from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and the Pacific during the latter decades of the twentieth century changed the face of the debate about racial-residential segregation. Compared to African Americans, Latinx and Asian Americans experienced much more moderate levels of residential segregation. (This was the case despite significant increases in their populations due to immigration, increases that would have predicted more significant segregation levels.) However, during that same period, rising socioeconomic inequality led to a significant increase in residential segregation on the basis of income. Rising social class isolation was accompanied by correlated residential isolation along political, ideological, education-level,

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[38] Douglas S. Massey, Jonathan Rothwell, and Thurston Domina, "The Changing Bases of Segregation in the United States," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 626, no. 1 (2009), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3844132/.

[39] Camille Zubrinsky Charles, "The Dynamics of Racial Residential Segregation," *Annual Review of Sociology* 29 (2003): 171. See also Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright, 2017).

[40] Massey et al., "The Changing Bases of Segregation in the United States."

and professional lines.[41] Thus, Americans are not only residentially segregated on the basis of race and class, but also on the basis of values, beliefs, lifestyle, politics, and ideology.

According to 2010 U.S. Census data, Boston continues to rank among the most racially segregated major cities in the country.[42] Boston's pattern of racial residential segregation reflects the national trends described above. Using data from the U.S. Census and Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research, Camille Zubrinsky Charles has demonstrated that segregation in Boston from 1980-2000 showed modest decreases in black segregation from whites while increasing Hispanic segregation. These patterns are likely due to demographic changes and shifting population distributions. As sociologist Richard Alba has argued, black neighborhoods have become less segregated as Hispanics move in, but these changes do not reflect a large change in greater exposure with whites.[43] A recent *Boston Globe* analysis of mortgage data among white, black, and Latinx families confirms this assessment, demonstrating a stark racial divide in and around the city. Most black and Latinx families who buy homes in Boston are primarily confined to Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, the area of the city where SMA is located. According to the report, "In 2015, black households received

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[41] Massey, Douglas S., Jonathan Rothwell, and Thurston Domina. "The changing bases of segregation in the United States." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 626, no. 1 (2009): 74-90. For an account of the consequences of residential homophily written for a popular audience, see Bill Bishop, *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart* (Mariner, 2009).

[42] Nationally, Boston ranks eleventh in black-white segregation, fifth in Asian-white segregation, and fourth in Hispanic-white segregation. John R. Logan and Brian J. Stults, "The Persistence of Segregation in the Metropolis: New Findings from the 2010 Census," Census Brief Prepared for Project US2101 (2011), http://www.s4.brown.edu/us2010.

[43] Camille Zubrinsky Charles, "The dynamics of racial residential segregation." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29, no. 1 (2003): 167-207; and Richard D. Alba, Nancy A. Denton, Shu-yin J. Leung, and John R. Logan, "Neighborhood change under conditions of mass immigration: The New York City region, 1970-1990," *International Migration Review* (1995): 625-656.

41 percent of all the home-purchase loans in [heavily African-American, more economically disadvantaged area of] Mattapan, but none in the [wealthier and/or gentrifying areas of] Back Bay, Beacon Hill, the North End, Allston, the Fenway, downtown, Mission Hill, or the South Boston Seaport area, according to the banking council." Similarly, "Latino borrowers received 21 percent of the loans in Hyde Park, but none in the Fenway, the North End, Mission Hill, or the Seaport." Additionally, the analysis noted,

> Even when they are in the same income bracket as whites, minorities in the Boston region are turned down for mortgages at a higher rate and live in substantially less well-off neighborhoods, according to a study by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council in Boston. The average white family earning $78,000 a year in metro Boston lives in a neighborhood where the median household income is $72,400 a year, while the average black household earning $78,000 a year lives in an area where the median is $51,100 a year. A similar but smaller gap exists for Latinos and Asians. And these disparities persist at all income levels and have grown since 2000, according to the council."[44]

While there is no available data on Catholic parish segregation in Boston today, an imperfect analogy can be made to another residentially determined institution: public schools. Since the 1988 end of Boston's controversial busing program aimed at pubic school desegregation, racial and economic segregation in Boston's public schools has steadily intensified.[45] Like parish attendance, public school attendance is determined residentially but mitigated by choice and opportunity. Those who decide to go elsewhere do so because of some combination of economic opportunity, transportation availability, social affinity (in schools, for example, a desire for Catholic education, bilingual education, or an arts-based magnate school; in

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[44] Katie Johnston, "Around Massachusetts, Racial Divides Persist," *Boston Globe* (April 17, 2017), https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2017/04/17/around-massachusetts-racial-divides-persist/HqQrm3TcH1od1j2qQ2F44J/story.html.

[45] Jennifer B. Ayscue et al., "Losing Ground: School Segregation in Massachusetts," The Civil Rights Project (May 9, 2013), https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/losing-ground-school-segregation-in-massachusetts.

parishes, for example, a desire for Mass in Spanish, good music, or more traditional liturgies), and the subtler but often unduly determinative force of prejudice and unconscious racism.

The history of race, place, and Catholicism in the U.S., particularly in the Northeast, reveals a complex and fraught relationship between parish boundaries, racialized practices of community, and theological language. McGreevy explores the role of white Euro-American religious belief in structuring residential communities and preventing racial integration from taking root in neighborhoods throughout the urban North during the twentieth century.[46] The incarnational, quasi-sacramental significance of neighborhoods and their parishes was a vital feature of U.S. Catholicism in the urban Northeast. Parish boundaries, McGreevy argues, were complex in their effects. On one hand, they fostered ethnic enclaves that promoted cultural solidarity, civic empowerment, and spaces of welcome and refuge for new immigrants; on the other hand, they "occasionally [became] rallying points for bigotry and sometimes "proved unable to separate 'community' from racial mythology."[47]

Historically, as McGreevy notes, "Parish histories [throughout the urban Northeast] report with numbing regularity pastors commanding parishioners to purchase homes within the parish."[48] Historical records report startlingly high rates of homeownership among working-class immigrant Catholics, rates that exceeded even those of their more highly educated and economically successful native-born American, Jewish, and Protestant counterparts.[49] High rates of Catholic homeownership in an urban neighborhood guaranteed a level of stability for a parish,

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[46] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries,* 4-5.

[47] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries,* 5.

[48] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 19.

[49] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 18.

which, unlike Protestant churches and Jewish synagogues, could not simply be sold and relocated if its parishioners decided to move away. "The permanence of Catholic parishes anchored Catholics to particular neighborhoods."[50] Concomitantly, Catholics living in the urban northeast were less likely than Protestants and Jews to "relocate away from the expanding African American ghetto."[51] The practice of Catholic homeownership thus served at once as an ecclesially stabilizing force and as a bulwark in maintaining the ethno-religious purity of predominately Catholic neighborhoods.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that historically, "racial violence in the North centered on housing and not, for the most part, on access to public space, employment issues, or voting rights. Indeed, through most of the twentieth century, neighborhoods in the northern cities were significantly more segregated (in terms of African-American and 'white') than their southern counterparts."[52] Furthermore, Catholics were more likely than their Protestant and Jewish counterparts to oppose African American integration efforts in neighborhoods. Historical accounts from cities such as Boston, Chicago, and Detroit suggest that opposition to the residential integration of African Americans was heaviest in predominately Catholic neighborhoods.[53] At midcentury, Catholic laypeople and clergy in the North continued to invoke the national parish tradition as grounds upon which to "persistently [refuse] African-Americans to particular neighborhoods, schools, and churches."[54] McGreevy cites an example of a Detroit

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[50] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries,* 20.

[51] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries,* 19.

[52] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries,* 4.

[53] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 103.

[54] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 101.

priest refusing absolution to an African-American penitent, "informing [him] that he had his [own] church and that he should go there to confession."[55] In another case, a Chicago priest justified his opposition to racially integrated parishes by stating, "There's always been this sort of situation in the Church. There's always a Polish Church and a Mexican Church. Nationality churches. This is the same thing. As a matter of fact, when this parish was set up the colored requested it themselves."[56]

In Detroit, white Catholics pushed for the establishment of African American "ethnic" parishes on the same precedent as national parishes, with one vital – and telling – difference: African Americans spoke English. Unlike recent Polish immigrants, for example, African Americans did not require language-specific ministry. African American ethnic parishes thus became in equal measures spaces of cultural refuge and empowerment for black Catholics and an instrument of segregation for white parishioners seeking an institutional "out" from welcoming African Americans into their communities.[57]

The emergence of Catholic social thought during this period had remarkably little effect on the way in which most Catholics in the pews thought about racial difference. Between 1954 and 1979, the U.S. Catholic Bishops promulgated three pastoral letters dealing with racism and institutional segregation.[58] In the most recent, *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (1979), the bishops

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[55] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries,* 101, footnote 78. See also Tentler, *Seasons of Grace: A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit.*

[56] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries,* 101, footnote 79.

[57] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries,* 101.

[58] In the wake of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision and the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement, many Protestant leaders published documents condemning racism and setting justice-oriented agendas. Four years later, the Catholic bishops issued a brief letter entitled *Discrimination and the Christian Conscience*. Published at the insistence of authorities in Rome, who urged the bishops in the United States to speak out more forcefully against racial

decried racism as "not merely one sin among many" but "a radical evil that divides the human family and denies the new creation of a redeemed world."[59] Yet despite the forcefulness of its call for an end to racial injustice, the document was not widely publicized at the time and still remains largely unknown by most Catholics. According to studies conducted in subsequent

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injustice, the statement evinced reluctance. Urging "prudence," (DCC 6) they proposed a solution of "quiet conciliation," which they curiously attested had thus far "produced such excellent results (DCC 1). Advocating a middle road between gradualism and activism, they called on "sober-minded Americans of all religious faiths" to "quiet and persevering courage" (DCC 6, 7). A decade later, the bishops made another attempt to connect Church teaching with Catholics' racial attitudes with *The National Race Crisis* (1968). Lamenting the inadequacy of their prior letter, the bishops called on Catholics to "recognize their responsibility for allowing these conditions to persist" and lambasted "a white segregationist mentality [as] largely responsible for the present crisis" (NRC 2). The bishops acknowledge the persistence of discrimination and segregation in Catholic parishes, schools, and institutions, and called on each of these to respond urgently to the social crisis (NRC 2-3). Its primary drawback was that, in a reversal of the 1958 statement, it was heavy on social analysis but light on theology. Thus, the relationship between Catholic tradition, the Gospel, and the struggle for racial justice remained unelaborated. Their 1979 letter, *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, was their most forceful statement against racism. The letter marked the first time the bishops explicitly used the language of sin with respect to racism. *Brothers and Sisters to Us* evinced a more nuanced understanding of racism than previous documents. The bishops acknowledged that most Americans probably realized that racial discrimination was wrong. Yet there nevertheless remained an "unresolved racism that permeates our society's structures and resides in the hearts of many among the majority" (BSTU, no pag). Thus, they implicitly distinguish between what Massingale terms commonsense racism and unconscious racial bias (Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 26ff). They evinced recognition of the systemic nature of racism in society and in the structures and institutions of the Church and acknowledged the colonial legacy of contemporary racial division, nodding to racism's historical and transgenerational character. For its merits, the document largely failed as a catalyst for change in the Church and among Catholics. As Massingale notes, the document was not widely publicized at the time and remains largely unknown by most Catholics. Despite its merits, the letter evinced an uninterrogated understanding of Catholic identity projected through what Joe R. Feagin calls a "white racial frame." The letter's title begs the question: who is "us"? People of color are "brothers and sisters," but white Catholics remain the implicit "us," the insiders, the self-appointed arbiters of hospitality. See Joe R. Feagin, *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression* (New York: Routlegde, 2006), 25. Feagin defines the *white racial frame* as the matrix of subconscious and deeply embedded images, stereotypes, narratives, emotions, and actions that shape how white people view and act toward people of color. It encompasses prejudice, stereotypes, narratives, images, emotions, inclinations, and benefits. See also Feagin, *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[59] USCCB, *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, no pagination.

years, racial attitudes among Catholics actually grew worse.[60] Due in no small part to the persistence of residential segregation, most white Catholics in the urban Northeast continued to structure their lives in ways that remained largely untouched by isolated and poorly publicized attempts on the part of their leaders to address the Church's racial divide. Today, given the historical roots and contemporary persistence of racial, economic, social, and political segregation in metropolitan areas, including Boston, it is clear that simply belonging to one's geographical parish does little to guarantee that believers ecclesially "[cohabit] with people who are different from them." Indeed, when parish belonging is determined geographically, residential segregation leads to parochial segregation. Thus, while Miller applies the problem of choice to the like-minded communities created in niche parishes, territorial parish membership is also the result of choices, albeit choices of a different kind: the personal, often unconscious choice to live near those racially, economically, and socially similar to oneself; housing policy decisions at the local, state, and federal level; banks' decisions about whose loans they will guarantee. Colonial and racial legacies continue to shape places and the people who inhabit them. Thus, "communion in place" cannot, in such contexts, break through forces of segregation but instead risks blessing and reinforcing such forces.

The second complication in the argument put forth by scholars such as Miller and Zizioulas has already been explored but bears reiterating. Shared parishes emerge when a parish's territorial boundaries *do* encompass a racially, culturally, or linguistically diverse population (though even in such cases, neighborhood-by-neighborhood segregation often continues to exist). Yet, as Hoover's study illustrates, the lived experience of shared parishes

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[60] Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church,* 68-70. Pastoral and liturgical practice similarly remained unchanged with respect to race. For example, most Catholics surveyed had not in recent memory heard homily on racism (p. 69).

should counteract any urge to idealize the multiethnic parish as a place that, by force of demographics alone, compels communion and dialogue across difference. As Hoover describes, most shared parishes are characterized by cultural encapsulation, a "live and let live" *modus operandi* that manifests in the uneasy coexistence of parallel communities that orbit around one another, making use of the same parish space with minimal cross-cultural interaction. Parishioners attend different Masses, participate in different ministries, and socialize within their cultural boundaries but rarely across them. As Chapter 1 illustrates, such cultural or linguistic differentiation within a parish is much more the result of practicality and the desire for a culturally-resonant liturgical experience than of discrimination; this community of communities model should in no way be understood as negative in and of itself. Nevertheless, it serves as an important reminder of that the fact of diversity does not automatically translate into the work of communion. Put another way, the forces of segregation and homophily do not cease operation within a parish's four walls.

3.3 A Neighborhood, A Parish, and an Elevated Railway (1906-1987)

It is clear that race, place, and parish exist in a highly complex and context-specific relationship. It is also clear that the strictly territorial nature of the typical U.S. parish is changing. Nevertheless, even when a territorial parish draws parishioners from beyond its geographical boundaries, its canonical status as territorial nevertheless continues to undergird its mission as existing to serve whomever happens to reside in the surrounding neighborhood. Indeed, "*paroikos,*" the Greek root of the English word parish, means both "neighbor" and "soujourer," underscoring the local parish's perhaps paradoxical mission of inclusivity and radical particularity.

For Miller, the practice of communion relies on the (re)unification of parish belonging and geographical place. On all of the obvious levels, this is a contention with which I agree. As Rahner's understanding of the parish communicates, a commitment to the sacredness of the particular is the locus of communion. However, the social, political, and racial ambivalences of place, particularly forces of residential segregation, are largely left unexplored and unproblematized from a theological perspective by advocates of a return to the territorial parish as a means of promoting "communion in place." When such factors are considered, the question becomes, then: Which place? Whose community? The experience of SMA, as a community of difference with both a local and trans-local membership that is at the same time grounded in a deeply rooted commitment to the neighborhood within which it is situated, nuances such conclusions about communion and belonging.

SMA is a territorial parish.[61] Observers beyond SMA have suggested that the parish's unique identity and trans-local membership make it a *de facto* congregational-type, "boutique" parish, attracting white Catholics seeking diversity and progressive peers and Spanish-speaking Catholics seeking ethnic and linguistic solidarity. However, such perceptions are inaccurate. Place plays a foundational role in the historical and ongoing identity of SMA. It also undergirds the way in which parishioners – both those who live within the parish boundaries and those who live beyond them – articulate and practice their commitment to SMA and to the Church more broadly. Let us examine briefly the 112-year history of SMA as a local church, emphasizing its historical embeddedness in and continued relationship with the surrounding neighborhood. Since its earliest days, SMA's parish boundaries have encompassed some of Boston's most pronounced religio-ethnic, racial, and economic borderlines. Thus, I explore SMA's identity as a

[61] Throughout this dissertation, I utilize the term "local"—of or belonging to a place—synonymously with the dryer-sounding "territorial" to describe SMA.

kind of spiritual, cultural, and ecclesial borderland, and its history as one of continually intertwined movements and migrations: local, transnational, and spiritual. This borderland identity has become foundational for the mission and identity of the parish and of the kinds of ecclesial practices that make this place.

3.3.1 Where is the Church? A Community of Borders

As a territorial parish, the geographical location of St. Mary of the Angels is significant. SMA is located in upper Roxbury in Egleston Square, an urban neighborhood situated along a transportation corridor that borders Roxbury and Jamaica Plain. SMA is located on the corner of Walnut Avenue and Columbus Avenue. A block to the northwest of the church is busy Washington Street, over which once ran the elevated tracks of the MBTA Orange Line. A major traffic thoroughfare despite its skinny streets, Washington is lined with a patchwork of corner stores, barbershops, hair and nail salons, liquor stores, and small restaurants. Since the area's initial development in the late nineteenth century, Egleston Square has been a neighborhood defined by the interplay of multiple dynamics, particularly public transportation, domestic and international migrations, and religious and ethnic diversity.[62] SMA, in turn, has always been a parish defined by movement, its parishioners both "neighbors" and "sojourners."

Egleston began to urbanize in the mid-1800s as Bostonians, seeking a reprieve from the dirty, densely populated city, moved to the nearby countryside.[63] As a new century dawned, the

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[62] For a local historian's account of Egleston's "transit oriented past," see http://www.bostonstreetcars.com/egleston-square.html. As another local historian recounts, "ethnic diversity has always been Egleston's calling card." See http://archive.boston.com/blogs/yourtown/boston/dirty-old-boston/2013/07/egleston_eschewed_eternally.html.

[63] Though Roxbury and Jamaica Plain would later be incorporated into the Boston city limits, at the time they were still peaceful escapes from downtown. But the serenity would soon

transformation of Egleston from bucolic countryside to urban center was catalyzed by the construction of the elevated electric train. Elevated tracks were constructed above busy Washington Street, and a station was built in Egleston Square in 1906. The area quickly became a bustling transportation hub. An influx of Catholic settlement accompanied the railway expansion. By the early twentieth century, Egleston Square had primarily become home to working-class German and Irish immigrants, who found employment in the area's tanneries, print shops, factories, and breweries, and as domestics in the homes of wealthy merchants and brewers.[64]

Optimistic for the prospect of a flourishing Catholic community in the area, Archbishop John Williams established St. Mary of the Angels on May 26, 1906, to serve Egleston's burgeoning working-class Catholic immigrant population.[65] The church was built on what was once a sprawling estate, whose large Victorian house—three stories tall with a wide, welcoming

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be transformed by the arrival of the electric streetcar and the subsequent advent of multifamily housing in the form of Boston's iconic triple-deckers. According to Heath of the Jamaica Plain Historical Society, "Egleston Square is a classic example of housing development following public transit lines. It also shows how the expanded capacity of the transit lines made possible public acceptance of increased density with the development of multi-family housing between 1910 and 1930." See Richard Heath, "History Time: The Origin of Egleston Square's Name" (November 15, 2011), http://archive.boston.com/yourtown/news/jamaica_plain/2011/11/history_time_the_origin_of_egl.html. See also the online archive of Boston public transportation maps, photos, and notes: "Egleston Square," *Boston Streetcars*, http://www.bostonstreetcars.com/egleston-square.html.

[64] "Egleston Square, Roxbury/Jamaica Plain," in *Commercial Casebook: Egleston Square, Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011,* http://historicboston.org/wp-content/uploads/Casebook-Egleston-Square.pdf. See also St. Mary of the Angels Parish Timeline, compiled through parishioner research for the occasion of parish's 100th anniversary in 2006, http://www.rc.net/boston/stmaryoftheangels/timeline.html.

[65] Its territorial boundaries were carved out of the territory covered by nearby St. Joseph Parish. The early history of St. Mary of the Angels was detailed in the Archdiocesan newspaper, *The Boston Pilot,* on the occasion of its centennial anniversary. Patrick E. O'Connor, "St. Mary of the Angels, Roxbury Celebrates Centennial Year," *The Boston Pilot.* (September 15, 2006). Web: https://www.thebostonpilot.com/article.asp?ID=3262.

front porch—now served as the parish rectory.[66] Alongside it, plans were drawn up for a granite-block, Gothic-style church with a square tower.[67] While parishioners awaited the church's construction, they gathered with founding pastor Fr. Henry Barry to celebrate Mass in the West End Street Railway Car Barn on the corner of Washington and School Street. On March 8, 1908, builders completed construction on the church's basement. It was envisioned that the rest of the church would be built gradually as the Catholic population of the neighborhood increased and, with them, funds for construction.[68] Indeed, growth prospects seemed strong as upper Roxbury embraced its emerging identity as a "streetcar suburb." In the meantime, a supposedly temporary flat roof was constructed atop the basement chapel. St. Mary of the Angels parishioners could finally move out of the car barn and into their new, if mostly underground, church.

From its earliest days, SMA was something of an outlier in the archdiocese. Small in both territory and membership, it had been assigned one of the "smallest geographical areas in the entire archdiocese."[69] In 1907, a year after it was established, SMA served only 209 families.[70] With the exception of a nearby mission, "no other Catholic church in all of Dorchester and upper

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[66] O'Connor, "St. Mary of the Angels, Roxbury Celebrates Centennial Year."

[67] Richard Heath, "The Architectural History of Egleston Square (August 14, 2017), http://www.jphs.org/locales/2005/9/30/egleston-square-by-richard-heath.html.

[68] This method of beginning the construction of a church first and completing it as the funds materialized was not uncommon in the Archdiocese at the time. According to James W. Sanders, in Boston, the policy was "one of first designing a monumental church, then building the basement with available funds ad roofing it for church services, and then building the upper church as money came in, a process that took ten to twenty years." According to Sanders, St. Mary of the Angels is the one remaining "basement church" from this period. Sanders, "Boston Catholics and the School Question, 1825-1907," Chapter 4, in *From Common School to Magnet School* (Boston, 1979), cited in Gerald Gamm, *Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), *Urban Exodus,* 155.

[69] Gamm, *Urban Exodus*, 72-73.

[70] Gamm, *Urban Exodus,* 73.

Roxbury was supported by so few people."[71] Indeed, no sooner was SMA established than the religious makeup of the neighborhood began to shift dramatically. In 1908, two massive fires—one in Chelsea, another on the East Boston waterfront—displaced large numbers of Jewish families, some of whom resettled in the area.[72] In the years that followed, a large Jewish community coalesced just across Walnut Avenue from SMA. In 1913, Jewish congregation Beth Hamidrash Hagadol purchased land for a temple on the SMA/St. Joseph's boundary a few blocks north of the parish, and Jewish residents began to replace Catholics in large numbers. In the fall of 1922, another Jewish congregation broke ground on an enormous temple less than a mile up the road from SMA.[73] Just six years later, Fr. Charles A. Finnegan, SMA's pastor at the time, noted that Walnut Avenue had become a stark dividing line between the Jewish and Catholic blocks within the SMA parish boundaries. East of Walnut Avenue, he noted, the parish boundaries encompassed 740 homes—only twelve of which were occupied by Catholic families.[74] Census data from 1940 attests to the sharp divide between Jewish and non-Jewish blocks of upper Roxbury, with Walnut Avenue marking the northwestern boundary of Jewish settlement in Roxbury and Dorchester. To the east of this invisible boundary, at least 85% of white residents were Jewish; across the street, only between 10-35% were.[75] The archdiocese

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[71] Gamm, *Urban Exodus*, 73.

[72] Rebecca Solovej, "Jews in East Boston," *Global Boston*, a digital project of the Boston College Department of History, https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/east-boston/jews-in-east-boston/.

[73] Gamm, *Urban Exodus*, 69. The spectacular, iconic building that originally housed Congregation Mishkan Tefila still stands at its original site, though the congregation since relocated. After the temple was sold, it went through a number of transitions, most recently serving as the home of United House of Prayer For All People.

[74] Gamm, *Urban Exodus,* 81.

[75] Gamm, *Urban Exodus*, Map 15*,* 80.

soon realized that it might have been excessively optimistic in its sweeping establishment of new parishes in upper Roxbury and Dorchester.[76]

These religio-ethnic boundaries may have been invisible, but they were decisive and highly significant. Gamm cites the memoir of Theodore H. White, who as a Jewish child grew up in the enclave bordered by SMA. White recalls the significance of these boundaries on his childhood: "Within the boundaries of our community we were entirely safe and sheltered. But the boundaries were real. We were an enclave surrounded by Irish. Across Franklin Park to the west lay the lands of the lace-curtain Irish, who lived in Jamaica Plain and Roslindale; they were, if not friendly, at least not pugnacious." However, to the east, across the railroad tracks near Blue Hill Avenue, "lived very tough Irish–working class Irish." Venture beyond this boundary, White recalled, and bloody fights were sure to ensue.[77]

Given the decisiveness of the Jewish-Catholic boundary that bisected SMA's already small territory, the parish's Catholic population in the area remained small, as did funds to build the church. Prohibition forced the breweries in Jamaica Plain out of business, resulting in a loss of employment for many of the area's German Catholics. The Great Depression had a similar effect on other local industries and businesses. By midcentury, it was one of only four parishes in the Roxbury-Dorchester area that did not support an elementary school.[78] Thus, as it turned out, none of those hoped-for things—the Catholics, the funds, the towering Gothic church—would

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[76] As Gamm notes, "In the summer of 1908, Archbishop O'Connell appointed a special commission to recommend changes in the parish boundaries in the Dorchester-Roxbury." Such recommendations even included the closure of St. Paul's Parish, which had just opened that year. The suggestion was not implemented. See Gamm, *Urban Exodus*, 72-74.

[77] Theodore H. White, *In Search of History: A Personal Adventure* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 22, cited in Gamm, *Urban Exodus,* 78-79.

[78] Gamm, *Urban Exodus*, 93.

arrive in Egleston. By the 1930s, plans to build a church atop the basement foundation were abandoned for good. St. Mary of the Angels would remain a basement church, and its membership would remain small.[79]

In later decades, Jewish families left Roxbury for Newton as non-white families moved into the area.[80] Once again, SMA encompassed the ethnic borderlines. As African American and later Latinx and Caribbean residents replaced Jews in the blocks around SMA, parish membership continued to shift. Two black Protestant churches established in upper Roxbury in 1926 and 1939 formed a neat triangle with SMA. Clusters of African American families began to settle in the blocks surrounding the two churches, drawn in part by a vibrant social center run by one of them, St. Mark Congregational Church.[81] The initial settlement of non-whites in upper

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[79] SMA's basement status recalls Robert Orsi's analysis of the *chiesa inferiore*, the "basement church" where Italian American worship was relegated in East Harlem and where Italian-American identity was forged in a marginalized, underground way. See Orsi, *Madonna of 115th Street*, 54.

[80] Neighborhood transformation in the Egleston Square area was accelerated by the suburbanization of the area's Jewish residents, an "urban exodus" that Gamm traces not to the blockbusting, redlining, and white flight of midcentury, but earlier, to patterns of religious institutional belonging and urban Jewish out-migration set in motion in the 1920s. The Depression had a deleterious effect on the finances of Roxbury's Jewish community, which, not unlike the Catholics, realized they had been excessively optimistic in their building plans (p. 150-151). At the same time, Jews outpaced Catholics in the ascent from working-class to middle-class, fueling their exodus from the city to suburbs like Newton and Brookline. Because Jewish congregations were moveable, communities like Mishkan Tefila were more apt to abandon their buildings in pursuit of suburban real estate. Catholics, meanwhile, were more likely to remain at their territorially fixed parishes and, in turn, in their urban neighborhoods. Gamm thus refutes the common argument that the onus for the Jewish exodus from urban Boston should be directed toward the Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group (BBURG), which was established in 1968 "to provide home-mortgage funds to low-income black families" and is widely regarded as responsible for displacing Mattapan's Jewish community and fueling the area's "rapid and tense racial transition" (p. 42). In reality, Gamm demonstrates, Boston's urban Jewish community began to suburbanize during the 1920s, long before the establishment of the BBURG.

[81] St. Mark Social Center, part of St. Mark Congregational Church, became home to the first black Cub Scout pack in the country and the first black Boy Scout troop in Boston, among other landmark accomplishments. See Gamm, *Urban Exodus,* 61.

Roxbury and Dorchester was concentrated in the blocks surrounding SMA. By 1950, as many as a third of residents on many of the blocks within SMA's parish boundaries were African American. By 1960, the parish encompassed the boundary "between three blocks that remained all-white… and blocks where many black families had already settled."[82] In the decades that followed, SMA continued to encompass a racial boundary between predominately African American blocks and blocks that were racially mixed.

One longtime parishioner, Martin Williams, an African American lay leader and English Mass attendee, recalled moving to Egleston Square with his wife in 1976. At the time, his wife was Catholic, but he was not. His experience vividly and humorously captures much of what was at stake in the residential transitions of this period:

> We bought a house less than a two-minute walk from St. Mary. The seller was a women who was in Irish immigrant. I could tell she wanted to sell us the house, but I thought I needed to do something to solidify that potential sale, so I asked her where was the closest Catholic church. And she said, "Oh it's right there down the street…. Are you Catholic?" I said, "No, but I'm thinking about converting." Which was kind of a lie at the time, but that sealed the deal. "I want you to have my house" [she said]. So we bought the house, and we still live in it.[83]

Almost two decades later, Martin made good on his promise to the Irish former owner of his house and converted to Catholicism. It was just as well, as he already attended Mass there with his family and had sat on the Parish Council for years. The Irish former homeowner's desire to sell her home to a Catholic emblematizes the complex racial and religious push and pull that influenced white, Euro-American Catholic residential patterns during the mid-twentieth century.

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[82] Gamm, *Urban Exodus,* 88.

[83] Interview, Martin Williams, April 2013.

3.3.2 The Elevated Tracks Come Down

Just as 1906 marked the twin arrivals of St. Mary of the Angels and the Orange Line to Egleston Square, 1987 marked a year of demolitions and revisions for both. That year, a snowstorm caused the flat, decaying roof of St. Mary's to cave in. It was replaced with a pitched roof constructed atop the basement sanctuary, reinscribing SMA's permanent status as a basement church. And on April 26, 1987, trains roared over the heads of Egleston Square residents for the last time. While the elevated Orange Line had brought transportation to the area, spurring the development and growth of the neighborhood, it had also subsequently brought crime and divestment to the streets below the tracks. The darkness from the shadows cast by the overhead tracks along Washington Street made the streets below inhospitable and dirty. Local merchants boarded up their Washington Street storefronts and relocated their shops to the sunnier Centre Street area of nearby Jamaica Plain.[84] While the white, middle class population of that area grew, Egleston Square became home to increasing numbers of low-income black and later Hispanic families. Exacerbating the decline was a massive highway project proposed by the state. Beginning in the 1960s, residents of the Egleston area, mostly minorities and immigrants, were among those who had begun to be displaced from their homes to clear space for a proposed eight-lane highway, the so-named "Southeast Expressway." Already precarious neighborhoods were further ripped apart, homes abandoned, and stores boarded up. Neighborhood activists from Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Hyde Park, and the South End banded together to successfully put a stop to the expressway project, a stunning achievement. Although much of the damage to the affected neighborhoods, now cleared of their residents, had already been done, at least there

[84] "Egleston Square, Roxbury/Jamaica Plain," in *Commercial Casebook: Egleston Square, Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011*, web. Photos of the area taken in 1973 support this description. See "Egleston Square," *Boston Streetcars*, web.

would be no highway bisecting the community. The already-cleared corridor became a string of parks and green space; underneath them, the once-elevated Orange Line was relocated underground.[85] The dismantling of the tracks running over Egleston transformed the physical landscape of the neighborhood. For the first time in more than eight decades, streets were flooded with daylight and a peaceful silence replaced the roaring clatter of trains.[86]

3.3.3 Becoming a Borderland Community

It was by chance that SMA had been established in the same area where Roxbury and Dorchester's first Jewish and African American Protestant congregations would both be built. Gamm notes that while the respective communities were "still small and scattered… the new buildings themselves became nodes for the nascent ethnic communities. As additional Jewish or black families searched for housing in Dorchester and Roxbury, they were most likely to seek homes in these emerging ethnic centers."[87] Yet as McGreevy notes, urban Catholics' recalcitrance to ethnic newcomers and their unwillingness to move out of their homes and in turn to abandon their parishes during this period often shaped the settlement patterns of ethnic

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[85] "Egleston Square, Roxbury/Jamaica Plain," in *Commercial Casebook: Egleston Square, Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011*, web.

[86] The corridor was originally intended for the construction of a massive eight-lane highway project. In the late 1960s, the state undertook a large-scale displacement/relocation of largely immigrant and minority residents and businesses located along the route of the proposed project. But community activists from Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and the South End – the three Boston neighborhoods most affected by the project – banded together objected to the highway plan, prompting state officials to change course and opt for the construction of an underground rapid transit line that would replace the elevated Orange Line. See "Egleston Square, Roxbury/Jamaica Plain," in *Commercial Casebook: Egleston Square, Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011,* web; and "Boston's Elevated Orange Line Goes Underground," *New York Times* (May 3, 1987), http://www.nytimes.com/1987/05/03/us/boston-s-elevated-orange-line-goes-underground.html.

[87] Gamm, *Urban Exodus,* 60.

newcomers, particularly African Americans. Gamm reiterates this conclusion within the context of Roxbury and Dorchester:

> In making credible commitments to their neighborhoods, in restricting membership to local residents, and in establishing clear boundaries and definite centers, Catholic parishes have sustained strong neighborhood attachments…. Parishes are the institutional fortresses of "defended neighborhoods." Where Catholic attachments are fiercest–in the blocks surrounding a strong parish church–the housing supply for non-Catholics is sharply limited.[88]

Gamm convincingly demonstrates that the boundaries many Roxbury-Dorchester Catholic parishes effectively functioned as racial boundaries during the transformations of the latter half of the twentieth century.[89] If this is the case, why, then, did SMA's boundaries not hold? How, in other words, did SMA become not a boundary but a borderland? Several factors may have contributed. Unlike many other parishes in Dorchester and Roxbury, whose boundaries coincided with major streets, railroad tracks, or other prominent urban features that came to signify racial dividing lines, SMA's boundaries encompassed both sides of Washington Street and Columbus Avenue, two busy thoroughfares that also eventually marked boundaries between predominately African American blocks and those that were predominantly white or racially mixed. Additionally, the parish was situated not only near the (somewhat nebulous) border between Roxbury and Dorchester, two communities with similar racial and economic profiles, but also on the border with Jamaica Plain, an area that remained relatively more white than Roxbury. Finally, SMA's small and economically precarious status may have prevented it from becoming what Gamm terms a "strong parish" with "strong attachments."[90] Given the prevalence

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[88] Gamm, *Urban Exodus,* 60. The term "defended neighborhoods" is cited from Gerald D. Suttles, *The Social Construction of Communities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

[89] Gamm, *Urban Exodus,* 83-88.

[90] Gamm, *Urban Exodus*, 60.

of shared family housing in Egleston Square and the working-class (and thus economically precarious) status of the Catholics there, one can surmise that a significant number of parish members did not own their own homes, making them more vulnerable to population shifts. As the next section will demonstrate, for a century, SMA remained a parish constantly on the brink of demise, even as it became an indispensible neighborhood institution.

Ultimately, SMA became a place not delimitated by boundaries but defined by them. Successive waves of migration and neighborhood change altered the demographics of SMA and Egleston Square, but the arrival of newcomers did not cause the exodus of who already worshipped there. After decades of such transitions, the result was a culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse neighborhood and a parish that reflected it. In many ways, the parish has mirrored the trajectory of its faithful. Like many of its parishioners, the parish originated in multi-family housing of sorts, the shared space of the railway car barn. Like its parishioners, its story is one of urban migration. As a basement church, its unusual architecture intensified its marginal status and quirky, participatory, sometimes *ad hoc* liturgical style. Despite the permanence of its basement locale, the structure continues to disclose a sense of the incomplete, an architectural reminder of the Church's pilgrim state. In front of church facing cacophonic Columbus Avenue stands a large, all-white statue of the Virgin Mary, at whose feet always lay some small, weatherworn offering – a candle, a teddy bear, a small bouquet of carnations. Peacefully she gazes toward the bus stop in front of the church, quietly welcoming those who might arrive.

Arrive they did. During the latter decades of the twentieth century, Egleston Square became home to a sizeable Dominican and Puerto Rican population, as well as an increasing number of residents from elsewhere in the Caribbean (especially Haiti and Jamaica), Africa

(especially Cape Verde, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Liberia), and Asia (especially Laos and Vietnam). A Spanish Mass was initiated in 1971 to serve the influx of Spanish-speaking parishioners who had recently arrived in Egleston, taking the mission of the parish in a new direction and in some sense reinvigorating it. Until the 1990s, SMA had three Masses: a Gospel-oriented black Catholic mass, another English-language mass attended by mostly white Euro-Americans, and a Spanish Mass. The two English Masses were eventually combined, resulting in a racially mixed worshipping community and a blended liturgical and musical style. Maintaining the cohesiveness of the diverse community required consistent effort on the part of the community's English- and Spanish-speaking lay leaders. Longtime parishioner Alma Cisneros recalled a period in the early 1990s during which SMA did not have a pastor. Two religious sisters administered the parish, while a Haitian diocesan priest would come to offer Mass. As it turned out, archdiocesan officials were having difficulty locating a bilingual pastor for SMA. Alma recounted with passion a meeting that took place at SMA between parishioners and an archdiocesan representative, who suggested that SMA's Spanish-speaking community could simply attend a nearby parish that offered Mass in Spanish:

> One of the bishops came and we had a meeting in the church, and it was packed. And they're saying, "Well, you know, we're having difficulties finding a bilingual priest…. So you know, and the Spanish speaking community can go to Our Lady of Lourdes." He got *blasted* out of the room! We just told him in no uncertain terms this parish is not going to divide up. We're entitled to a Spanish-speaking priest, or a priest who speaks Spanish, and that's all we'll take![91]

The Archdiocese ultimately sent SMA a Euro-American pastor who had spent time in Latin America and spoke Spanish fluently. "So that worked," Alma concluded.

In part to avoid such suggestions of division in the future, SMA decided to enshrine its "borderland identity" as a multicultural parish in its mission statement. Prompted by a diocesan-

[91] Interview, Alma Cisneros, April 2017.

mandated parish "self-audit" of its mission and ministries, in 2001 SMA began a yearlong collaborative process of formulating a mission statement for the century-old parish. Once formulated, the mission statement was printed bilingually on large poster boards and hung on the walls of the church and the parish house. After a century of local transformation that had resulted in a neighborhood and parish that were racially and ethnically mixed, the decision to articulate this multicultural identity as a central dimension of the parish's mission was highly intentional and done with careful consideration. Alma recalls the Council debating,

> Do we put "bilingual"? Do we put down that we're "open and inclusive"? How do you define who we are in terms of that piece of our identity and race and language and ethnicity and all that? That was the best way we could think of it…. And it's an evolutionary thing. Today "multicultural" and "multilingual" may not be the same as it was in 2002.

Indeed, over the last two decades, the Spanish community transitioned from predominately Puerto Rican to predominately Dominican. Before establishing a larger community at a nearby African and African American personal parish, SMA was home to a sizeable Nigerian community. Similarly, members of the Hmong community once formed a small but influential voice at SMA. They, too, have largely moved out of Boston, returning occasionally for the Easter Vigil or other significant events. Similarly, many of the young English-speaking families in the English community have been driven out of the city over the years by rising costs of living, creating a noticeable age gap in English Mass attendees.[92]

Through each of these transitions, SMA has remained a place flexibly encompassing of movements, a place somehow capable of holding and welcoming difference. "[SMA] feels very welcoming, and people come," Alma stated. She contrasted the feeling at SMA with that of a nearby, more typical shared parish where its two cultural sub-communities operate separately

[92] Interview, Alma Cisneros, April 2017.

from one another. "I guess they're both thriving. But it's an odd kind of a situation from our perspective and how we view church." Ultimately, Alma clarified, SMA's self-articulation as a multicultural community was not driven by a progressive desire to be about diversity for diversity's sake. Rather, she recalled, the mission of this community of difference was intimately related to its practice of worship. "It was a big discussion," she recalled. "How do we describe the worship [here]? I remember just people [saying], 'Joyful, joyful. It's really *joyful*.' You come in and you just feel that."[93] The relationship between the practice of joyful worship and the community's ecclesial self-understanding will be explored in the next chapter.

3.3.4 Who is the Church? SMA as a Local Parish

While many SMA parishioners live within the parish's territorial boundaries, others do not. The English community tends to attract Catholics who are politically and theologically progressive and social justice oriented. In the English community, parishioners tended to describe their initial arrival at SMA as a mixture of dissatisfaction with former or nearby parishes and a serendipitous personal invitation from someone else – a friend, coworker, fellow neighborhood activist, priest, or deacon – to come to SMA. An older white woman, a longtime parishioner and lay leader in the English community, found SMA as she and her husband sought a parish that was progressive and diverse after theirs, a small and struggling community not unlike SMA, closed its doors.[94] An older Jamaican woman, a member of the English community since the early 1980s and a longtime singer in the choir, proudly attested to driving past "two parishes in my backyard" on her way to SMA.[95] Several older white parishioners described their

[93] Interview, Alma Cisneros, April 2017.

[94] Interview, Gayle McInerny, October 2015.

[95] Interview, Victoria Thompson, April 2017.

decision to come to SMA as the result of disagreements with the pastors at their previous parishes or disillusionment with their former parishes or the Church in general. An older African American woman, a member of the parish for two decades, had chosen SMA because she was seeking a black Catholic community and she preferred SMA's later Mass time to the earlier one at more prominent black Catholic parish nearby.[96]

The decision to bypass one's geographical parish for SMA was not confined to the English Mass community. The Spanish Mass has become a spiritual home for Dominican and Puerto Rican Catholics living beyond the immediate neighborhood, often invited by word of mouth. A member of the Spanish Mass community, a recent immigrant from the Dominican Republic, had been attending a parish closer to her home when a friend invited her to SMA. When she attended the Spanish Mass for the first time, she recalled, "I felt like I was at home because [other parishioners] treated me very well. I felt like I was in my parish in Santo Domingo."[97] She took public transportation across town or carpooled with other parishioners for a year before buying a car. Now, she said, "it's easier because I can go to more activities and more things, like on days other than Sundays."[98]

In both English and Spanish Mass communities, parishioners who have left the neighborhood nevertheless maintain their membership at SMA. Ana Díaz, a longtime lay leader in the Spanish community originally from the Dominican Republic, recalled that she originally came to SMA in the mid-1980s because she and her family had just moved into an affordable housing unit down the street from the parish:

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[96] Interview, Michelle Archer, April 2017.

[97] Interview, Yamaris Rodríguez, April 2017 (translated from Spanish).

[98] Interview, Yamaris Rodríguez, April 2017 (translated from Spanish).

> That Sunday morning, I decided that, hey, I'm going to take my three kids and just walk around and see if I find a Catholic church. And just on the corner of St. Mary's, I ask a lady, 'Do you know where is a Catholic church around here?' And she said, 'Right there! Right there!'

Like so many others, she did not realize that the usual basement structure and its neighboring Victorian house was a parish. She stayed because almost immediately, she found herself deeply involved in the life of the parish. At her prior parish, "I was just one more parishioner. That's it. But St. Mary's was welcoming." She recalled,

> Just [my] second Sunday [there], they asked me to be on the Parish Council. And almost right away, like maybe the following Sunday… they came and said, "We are missing one of the readers. Can you read?" I was in the microphone, and I thought people heard my heart bumping instead of my words. But it was great. I never felt strange, like a stranger. Ever.[99]

It was there, as a representative of the Spanish community, that Ana formed some of her closest cross-cultural relationships at the parish. Decades later, Ana no longer lives in the neighborhood, but she still comes to SMA.

Others have been driven out of the city by the rising cost of living, exacerbated in recent years as Roxbury – long regarded by white Bostonians as a dangerous and undesirable ghetto – increasingly finds itself targeted by gentrification. Some drive long distances to attend Mass at "their" parish; some do so weekly, others only during Holy Week. Notably, nearly all parishioners from both communities described their initial visit to the parish as the result of a personal invitation by someone else.

The largely politically progressive identity of the English community serves as the element of SMA membership most open to critique from Miller's perspective. Suggestions that SMA should be construed (and consequently critiqued) as a congregational-type parish could be strengthened by its strong tradition of lay leadership in both communities. When SMA was

[99] Interview, Ana Díaz, October 2015.

assigned a pastor who was viewed unfavorably by many in the parish, particularly in the English community, parishioners encouraged one another with reminders that the parish did not belong to the pastor; it belonged to them.[100]

Given the seemingly elective, congregational-type nature of membership among some SMA parishioners, it might seem as through SMA should be regarded as a *de facto* personal parish. If personal parishes are those that cater to the shared need or preference of some relatively homogenous population, it might be argued that SMA offers a home for Catholics with a shared affinity for diversity, social justice, Spanish Mass, or Dominican-style liturgical music. However, as illustrated in the previous section, SMA's territorial status has long been and remains perhaps the most vital feature of the parish's identity and mission. Indeed, many of the parish's most important liturgical and ecclesial practices have emerged spatially and relationally, from SMA's situatedness in the Egleston Square neighborhood.

Additionally, despite the shared identity markers that seem to suggest that SMA is a "boutique" parish, the majority of parishioners do, in fact, live within or close to the parish boundaries. Egleston Square, the neighborhood within which SMA is located, is 54% African

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[100] Such attitudes are reminiscent of the trustee system of parish authority that proliferated in the early days of Catholicism in the Northeast and Eastern Seaboard. Until the first wave of Catholic immigration from Europe in the nineteenth century, the paucity of Catholic hierarchical presence in the Northeastern United States meant that Catholicism developed in the United States as a largely lay-led, home-based phenomenon. In such contexts, authority was often exercised by lay-led Catholic organizations. Steeped in a democratic spirit and the congregational ethos of American Protestantism, these organizations clashed with Church hierarchy particularly over property ownership and pastoral appointment. See Bruce, *Parish and Place,* 17. The late nineteenth century controversy over trustee-elected Polish pastor Fr. Dominic Kolasinski is an infamous example of the way in which trusteeism fueled debates over parish authority. See Tentler, *Seasons of Grace*, 127-130; and Lawrence D. Orton, *Polish Detroit and the Kolasinski Affair* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981).

American, 29% Hispanic (primarily Dominican), and 7% white.[101] When I began my research, demographic information led me to assume that most white English community members were commuters, perhaps attracted to the parish for its diversity, progressive politics, or some other factor. In actuality, I was surprised to learn that while affinity did play a supporting role in many white parishioners' decisions to come to SMA, the majority of them also lived within or near the parish's territorial boundaries. Some lived in the boundaries of one of the two other nearby parishes within which SMA is clustered. Others began attending SMA when they lived within the parish boundaries, had since moved away, and had maintained their membership, driving across town every Sunday morning to attend. Still others lived in the nearby neighborhoods of Dorchester, Roslindale, or Jamaica Plain. Nearly every white parishioner with whom I spoke articulated some geographical connection to SMA or Egleston Square; few seemed to have selected the parish on reputation or recommendation alone.

3.4 Threats of Closure and the Fate of the Urban Parish (2004-present)

An unintended consequence of the expressway threat was the flourishing of a spirit of local activism and the cultivation of strong neighborhood associations that remained dynamic even after the highway project was abandoned. SMA parishioners were among those highly involved in this neighborhood activism; many remain active at both parish and in the neighborhood today. This spirit of neighborhood activism hit home when Egleston residents found themselves faced with the task of salvaging another neighborhood institution: St. Mary of the Angels itself.

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[101] These figures are based on search results of the 02119 ZIP code, using 2010 U.S. Census data, http://www.city-data.com/zips/02119.html.

On the morning of May 25, 2004, Fr. David Gill, S.J., answered the door of the St. Mary of the Angels parish house. Gill, a Jesuit priest and professor at Boston College, had been serving as interim pastor of St. Mary's since the prior November.[102] He was greeted by a FedEx deliveryman bearing a letter for which he was asked to sign. The letter informed him that St. Mary's was one of a large number of parishes that the diocese had decided to close in a massive reconfiguration plan, precipitated primarily by financial turmoil. Coming in the wake of the clergy sex abuse crisis, which had come to light in 2002, the rash of parish closures felt to many like salt in open wounds. The parish was instructed to develop a timeline for closing and to provide the Archdiocese a date by which it would shut its doors for good. Around Boston, pastors opened their rectory doors that morning to similar news. Letters had gone out to all 357 parishes in the Archdiocese informing them of their fates. Of them, 65 received the same verdict as St. Mary's: they were slated for closure.

Data from the 2004 closures reveals that the 65 parishes slated for closure share certain characteristics:

1. **Urban.** Of the parishes slated for closure or merger in 2004, 54.3 percent were located in urban areas, while 40 percent were located in suburban areas and 5.7 percent in small towns. In all, 27 percent of urban parishes in Boston – more than one in four – were slated for closure (compared with 18 percent of suburban parishes and 10 percent of small town parishes).[103]

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[102] St. Mary of the Angels Parish Timeline, compiled through parishioner research for the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the parish, http://www.rc.net/boston/stmaryoftheangels/timeline.html.

[103] In 2004, the Archdiocese of Boston included 140 urban parishes, 155 suburban parishes, and 42 small town parishes. See Bill Dedman, "Closings at a Glance," *Boston Globe*, http://www.boston.com/news/specials/parishes/. Figures cited in this paper do not include 20 parishes in Lawrence and Lowell whose fates were decided separately from the May 25, 2004

2. **Small.** Parishes slated for closure had an average Sunday Mass attendance of roughly half that of parishes that were permitted to stay open.[104]
3. **Multilingual.** More than one in four parishes (27 percent) offering Mass in a language other than English were shuttered by the 2004 closures. By contrast, 19 percent of English-only parishes were closed.

With few exceptions, such characteristics are connected: urban parishes in Boston tend to be smaller – both physically and in congregation size – than sprawling and often more recently constructed suburban parishes. Given the demographics of Boston's urban areas themselves, most urban parishes serve territorial areas whose demographics are multicultural and/or multilingual and are located in areas that areas that perhaps once were Catholic but now boast a religiously diverse population.

Throughout the latter decades of the twentieth century, St. Mary of the Angels came to be recognized throughout the Archdiocese of Boston as a home for both black and Hispanic Catholics. The result was a Catholic community with a deeply hybrid cultural and linguistic identity. In 2004, on a given Sunday, SMA served a congregation that was about fifty percent Hispanic, twenty-five percent African American, and twenty-five percent white. At that point, the parish offered two Sunday morning Masses, one in English and the other in Spanish. St. Mary's represented the perfect storm of characteristics: it was urban, small, and multicultural. Given the trends, it would have been almost miraculous if SMA had *not* ended up on the list.

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announcement. Thus, though there were 357 parishes in the Archdiocese of Boston at the time of the closures, statistics used in this paper only include 337.

[104] Parishes slated for closure had an average Sunday Mass attendance of 559. Parishes that stayed open had an average Sunday attendance of 1,068. Data derived from a month-long Sunday Mass census conducted in October 2003.

The morning that the closures were announced, Boston Archbishop Seán O'Malley held a press conference. Expressing his sympathy for the roughly 28,000 Boston parishioners whose parishes had received bad news that day, he nevertheless emphasized the factors that seemed to make the closures necessary and inevitable:

> Changes in population, the movement of people from the cities to the suburbs, the decrease in the number of active Catholics have all contributed to the present predicament. At this time, over one third of our parishes are operating in the red, the deterioration of our parish buildings and churches (that in the city of Boston alone would cost over 100 million dollars to repair), and the aging clergy (130 pastors are over 70 years of age) have forced us to make the hard decisions that we have announced today.[105]

At SMA, indignation at the news was fueled by irony: seventeen years prior, in 1987, propelled by the foresight of the Parish Council and its then-pastor Fr. Jack Roussin, SMA had stopped accepting direct subsidies from the Archdiocese. Recognizing that the parish's small size and poverty made it vulnerable to closure, should the Archdiocese ever decide to do so, the decision was made for the parish to become entirely financially self-supporting. Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, who was the director of youth ministry and religious education at SMA when the decision was made, recalled:

> [I]t was our own Parish Council… that said, they're beginning to close churches all around. And they're talking about it. If we continue to be on subsidy, we're going to be on that list. We're small, and we're costing them money. Let's go self-supporting… And so the parish council for a number of Sundays made this presentation to the community. It was a fearsome thing because what if it doesn't work? What if it doesn't work? The [Archdiocese] told us we could not go back.[106]

Weekly offertory collections, which prior to the decision had barely reached $200 most weeks, leapt into the thousands – this in a largely working-class community with just two Masses each

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[105] Remarks of Boston Archbishop Seán O'Malley on Parish Reconfiguration (May 25, 2004), http://www.bostoncatholic.org/Parishes-And-People/Content.aspx?id=14128.

[106] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

Sunday.[107] The parish's spring Grand Annual fundraising effort raised tens of thousands more each year to cover – just barely – the cost of keeping the parish open. Thus, when news of SMA's impending closure reached parishioners' ears, the announcement was met with incredulity. Though economically marginal in its own right, not only was SMA not a financial burden on the cash-strapped Archdiocese, it hadn't accepted any direct subsidy from the Chancery in seventeen years.

3.4.1 A Community Mobilizes

Backlash against the closing of St. Mary of the Angels began in earnest. In the wake of the announcement, neighborhood organizations and residents, including many non-parishioners, mobilized in support of the parish. During the height of the gang crisis in Egleston Square during the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period I examine more closely in the next chapter, SMA helped to organize neighborhood demonstrations they called "Hands Around Egleston Square." Neighborhood advocates would join with residents to surround troubled parts of the neighborhood, blocking off streets in a public show of solidarity and protest against the crisis of drugs and violence that had taken the lives of too many of its young people. Fifteen years after SMA parishioners joined their hands around Egleston Square, Egleston Square joined its hands around SMA. Less than a month after the closure announcement, parishioners, neighborhood organizations, local businesses, and community leaders gathered for "Hands Around St. Mary's," joining hands around SMA in a pubic embrace of the vital role the parish had played in the neighborhood for almost a century. Throughout that summer, parishioners held 24-hour prayer

[107] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

vigils at the parish. They took turns sleeping in the church to ensure that its doors would remain the next morning.[108]

Letters streamed into the Chancery from all over the city and beyond. From Beacon Hill, Boston Mayor Tom Menino, who though not a parishioner himself had for many years joined the neighborhood Good Friday Way of the Cross, wrote to the Archbishop emphasizing the critical role SMA continued to play in Egleston Square.[109] Harvard medical anthropologist Paul Farmer penned a letter of support from Haiti. As a young medical student at Harvard, Farmer had lived in the SMA parish house with fellow student Jim Kim and then-pastor Fr. Jack Roussin, with whom he would later go on to found the international nonprofit Partners in Health.[110] Sr. Margaret Francis, who was out of the country at that point, penned a three-page letter and sent it to the Archdiocese. She recalled, "I ended [it] by saying, 'This is not nostalgia. I'm not like the people on the corner saying, *I got all my Sacraments there*…. It's more than that. It's more than that.'"[111] The theme of the parish's indispensible role in the fabric of the neighborhood was echoed by Alma Cisneros. She recalled:

> When they told us they were going to close us, there was a real strong rally between both [the English and the Spanish] communities, and the [neighborhood] community at large. Because a big strength of helping us stay open was not so much, or not just, "Oh, this has been my parish my whole life and I was married here, and blah blah, and all that stuff," which a lot of other people [at other parishes facing closure] was kind of their point. But we had such letters of support from the community, from the health center, from people across the street, from the library, from Urban Edge, from the Black Ministerial Alliance, saying, *This church has been here. It's a really important part of the neighborhood and*

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[108] Interview, Bernadette Silver, April 2013.

[109] Interview, Sr. Josephine Beyard, April 2013.

[110] The time that Farmer spent living in the SMA parish house is recounted in Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World* (Random House, 2003), Chapter 14.

[111] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

> *the community*…. And a lot of that was because we *had* worked together with these people on a *lot* of things, you know, whether it was the local politicians or our state reps. Just, like, being the people on the street.[112]

Race also played a role in the campaign to keep SMA open. Martin Williams, a longtime African American lay leader, recalled bluntly: "We… played the race card. We said, *The Archdiocese is not going to close a black parish in Roxbury that was financially independent.*"[113] SMA's interracial membership and its close proximity to a large personal parish established specifically to serve Boston's African American community meant that SMA was not widely recognized as "the" black Catholic parish in Roxbury. Nevertheless, the majority of the parish's English-speakers were African American and its liturgical and musical style was steeped in the Gospel tradition.[114] Closing SMA would mean closing a deeply rooted home for black Catholics in Boston.

That fall, largely in response to overwhelming protests, SMA received a two-year reprieve of the closure decision. The following June, Cardinal Seán O'Malley reversed the decision entirely, announcing that SMA would remain open indefinitely. Most parishes whose names appeared on the closure list in 2004 – many of which mounted equally fervent protest campaigns and ten of which formally appealed to the Vatican – were not so fortunate.[115] A disproportionate number of urban parishes were closed in Boston that year and in the years that followed, their parish boundaries reconfigured and their parishioners redirected to the

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[112] Interview, Alma Cisneros, April 2017.

[113] Interview, Martin Williams, April 2013.

[114] Interview, Martin Williams, April 2013.

[115] The Vatican rejected all ten appeals. The decision took almost six years. Lisa Wangsness, "Vatican Rejects Appeals From 10 Closed Parishes in Boston Area," *Boston Globe* (May 17, 2010).

communities whose doors remained open. SMA, for its part, could remain; parishioners of a place defined by a century of movement were granted the unexpected peace of staying put. In 2006, having averted closure, parishioners celebrated SMA's hundredth anniversary with a procession, led by Archbishop Sean O'Malley, from the site of its first home, the railroad car barn on the corner of Washington and School Street, to its underground sanctuary. The car barn had, after many transitions of its own, become a community center named after former SMA pastor Jack Roussin.

3.5 Conclusion: SMA as a Place of Interwoven Migrations

To examine the history of St. Mary of the Angels and Egleston Square is to chart an urban topography of migrations. Throughout its history, SMA has sat at the intersection of displacement and homecoming, urbanization and white urban exodus, congregational transition, domestic and international migrations, spiritual searching, and the threatened spiritual exile of parish closure. Today, creeping gentrification and increasingly limited access to affordable housing continues to force more longtime residents out of the neighborhood. Now more than a century old, SMA is not only a community of communities; it is a journey of journeys.

What parishes like St. Mary of the Angels call forth is a lived ecclesiology that encompasses dynamism, change, ambiguity, and the coexistence of cultural and social identities that are mutually influential but also persistent in their particularity. SMA can be understood as a crossroads, a borderland, where communal identity and belonging is negotiated constantly through ritual, liturgical practices of community. Revisiting the persistent question of local belonging and communion occasions a recognition of the tension that exists between two poles: a) the ideal of "communion in place," in which the faithful are encouraged to dive deeply into the local, to ecclesially "bloom where they are planted," to recognize Christ incarnate in the ordinary

and everyday of the local community; and b) the inertia of residential segregation, which distorts and atomizes the experience of the local in reality, lulling us into a false belief, born of privilege, that we have landed here by accident, that transmogrifies the human desire for stability into a paralyzing fear of the other. McGreevy and Gamm both recognize this homogenizing impetus of the local and its relationship with urban parish life.

The experience of a community like SMA suggests that the radical end-point of this call to the local is not merely to go to church where we live. It is to make our lives with those whose fellowship as Church we should desire, those whom we have been unconsciously formed to fear and avoid. At the conclusion to *The Christian Imagination,* Willie Jennings argues, "We are in need of a vision of the journey of faith imagined as the joining of peoples now separated by violence, poverty, or race. Where, however, is this space of joining and communion? Is it only mental space, space conceived but never lived? Is it only a possibility?" Jennings continues:

> The space of joining and communion is always ready to appear where the people of God reach down to join the land and reach out to join those around them, their near and distant neighbors. This joining involves first a radical remembering of the place…. This must be done to gather the fragments of identity that remain to learn from them (or at least from their memory) who we might become in that place…. This joining also involves entering into the lives of peoples to build actual life together, lives enfolded and kinship networks established through the worship of and service to the God of Israel in Jesus Christ.[116]

This imagined space of which Jennings writes is one of both "joining and communion," both task of solidarity and gift of love, embodied in a primordial memory of unity written on the place. Such communion indeed "binds people to place"[117] – but which place? Jennings suggests that communion must challenge and defy the forces of residential segregation: "The identities being formed in the space of communion may become a direct challenge to the geographic patterns

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[116] Jennings, *The Christian Imagination*, 286-287.

[117] Jennings, *The Christian Imagination*, 286.

forced upon peoples by the capitalistic logic of real estate." He continues, "We who live in the new space of joining may need to transgress the boundaries of real estate, by buying where we should not and living where we must not, by living together where we supposedly cannot, and by being identified with those whom we should not."[118]

But segregating structures are strong and not quickly or easily overcome. Radical change requires, among other things, a transformation of imagination, a transformation that occurs not over days or years but generations. In a Catholic context, parishes have the capacity to become agents of such transformation to the extent that they participate in forming believers for communion by inviting this radical joining. Parishes like SMA, then, are communities that embody this subjunctive state, inviting parishioners to live into an eschatological vision communion through concrete practices of joining together across borderlines, practices of solidarity in difference.

Practical theology, Mary McClintock Fulkerson states, is theology from a place.[119] In this chapter, I have offered the shape of the place that is SMA. I concluded by gesturing toward an understanding of shared practice, particularly practices that embody and recall histories of movement, as forming the lived context for an emergent practical ecclesiology. Within a practical ecclesiological framework, we can begin to perceive the capacity of practice to become an integrative site, a borderland space, wherein members of a parish community characterized by significant difference negotiate a lived sense of ecclesial community. To this end, in the next chapter, I examine how parishioners at St. Mary of the Angels creatively construct shared

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[118] Jennings, *The Christian Imagination*, 287.

[119] Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, Part I.

liturgical and spiritual practices within a parochial context characterized by significant cultural, racial, economic, and generational difference.

Chapter 4: Passion of the Neighborhood:

Negotiating Difference Ritually in Shared Parishes

"We have a tradition of migration, a tradition of long walks."

—Gloria Anzaldúa[1]

4.1 Introduction—*Encaminémonos*

"*Encaminémonos a llevar nuestra cruz.*

Now let us begin our walk with the cross."

We emerge onto the street through the basement stairwell, bubbling up and covering the city pavement like a wellspring over rocks. Leading the procession is Javier, a short, gray-haired Puerto Rican man dressed in jeans and a black windbreaker. On his shoulder, he carries a large cross. The crowd winds behind him, spreading out over the length of a block. A woman holds her boyfriend's hand and the leash of a large dog. An older woman, leaning on a cane, slowly navigates the uneven pavement. Teenagers bunch together at the fringe of the crowd, hanging on each other's arms and resting their heads on each other's shoulders, their hands tucked in hoodie pockets and thumbing smartphones. Children dart in and out of the crowd, leaping like gymnasts onto the concrete half-walls and garden edges that line the sidewalk.

Despite its ostensible solemnity, the procession is also a busy, joyful space. Walkers greet one another with warm embraces. Some spot friends across the crowd and wave in ebullient, smiling silence. As we pass, neighbors step out of their apartments and lean against porch rails to watch. Above us, children press their faces up against third-story window screens, making faces

[1] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*/*La Frontera*, 33.

at the passersby below. It is noisy and hushed at the same time, the mostly silent walkers enveloped by an urban symphony of honking horns and the vibrating bass of car radios and the percussive crunch of our own footsteps. Columbus Avenue is cacophonous, even by Boston standards. A major thoroughfare to a nearby medical center, ambulance sirens pierce the air at all hours of the day and night. Cars speed down the sloping street, often squealing to profanity-laden stops to avoid unexpected pedestrians. At the end of the block, Columbus meets two other busy streets in a confounding, asterisk-like intersection. Today, at the sight of the crowd, traffic slows as curious drivers look on. One driver rolls down a passenger-side window, leans over, and calls out, "What's going on?"

"It's *la caminata.* The *via crucis*," a woman calls back in Dominican-accented English. Today is Good Friday 2013. The people of SMA are walking the *Via Crucis*, the Way of the Cross.

The Stations of the Cross is a traditional Roman Catholic devotion in which a series of fourteen stations mark successive points along Jesus' journey to his death on the cross as it is recounted in the Gospels and remembered in the Tradition of the Church. In their earliest form, the Stations originated as a medieval devotional for Christians on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Walking the *via sacra* ("sacred way") or *via dolorosa* ("sorrowful way") gave pilgrims a way to meditate on Jesus' passion and death by ritually retracing his final steps.[2] Most Roman Catholic churches bear some depiction of the fourteen stations, typically in the form of artist renderings or small reliefs placed around the nave of the church. Sometimes, the stations are translated into

[2] For an account of the medieval origins of the Stations of the Cross, see Sarah E. Lenzi, "The Stations of the Cross: The Placelessness of Medieval Christian Piety" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2016).

performance in the form of "passion plays," in which groups of faithful, often children, dramatically reenact the final hours of Jesus' life, culminating with his death on the cross.

The stations in this Way of the Cross are not the typical fourteen statues lining the walls of a church sanctuary. Rather, the stations are places in and around Egleston Square—street corners, apartment buildings, storefronts, community organizations—where suffering and hope have visited the neighborhood throughout the prior year. On the day of the liturgical year marking Jesus' abandonment, torture, and execution at the hands of authorities, SMA parishioners and their neighbors have come to ground the dying and rising of God in a place – *this* place.

Unlike other well-documented public practices of the *Via Crucis* in urban contexts, such as the Good Friday rituals at San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, TX,[3] and in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago,[4] the Way of the Cross in Egleston Square is not a passion play. There are no sworded Roman Guards, no beleaguered and bloodied Christ-figure. The only material used in the SMA ritual is the cross. A seven-foot-tall construction of cardboard, spray-painted brown to resemble wood, it is at once light enough to be carried by an old woman or group of children and large enough that it's very presence interrupts the flow of traffic and the steps of people on the streets.

A breeze rattles the blossoming cherry trees, sending a shower of pale pink petals down on our heads and shoulders, swirling around our shoes. The day is warmer this year than it has

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[3] For accounts of the Good Friday Way of the Cross at San Fernando Cathedral, see Elizondo and Matovina, *San Fernando Cathedral: Soul of the City;* Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment*; and Tirres, *The Aesthetics and Ethics of Faith: A Dialogue Between Liberationist and Pragmatic Thought*.

[4] Davalos. "The Real Way of Praying: The Via Crucis, Mexicano Sacred Space and the Architecture of Domination," 41-68.

been in recent years. Usually, early April in Boston is damp and chilly. But today, the sun is shining. As we walk, a young Dominican woman at the front of the procession begins to sing. The clear, mournful notes resound from clangy speakers tethered to the bed of a pickup truck, echoing off the brick facades of the apartment buildings that line the street.

Madre, óyeme; mi plegaria es un grito en la noche.
Madre, mírame, en la noche de mi juventud.
Madre, sálvame, mil peligros acechan mi vida.
Madre, llename de esperanza, de amor y de fe.
Madre, guíame; en las sombras no encuentro el camino.
Madre, llévame, que a tu lado feliz cantaré.[5]
La la, la la la, la la la,
La la, la la la, la la…

Turning down another street, the cross is passed to a second shoulder, that of the pastor, a Spanish priest who serves SMA and its two sister parishes. As he walks, he presses his cheek against the cross it and clasps the wooden beads of a Rosary.

Finally, we come to a stop in front of a Seventh Day Adventist Church. It is situated in a renovated house at the border of a busy Roxbury intersection about a half-mile up the road from SMA. Two months earlier, an innocent thirteen-year-old African American boy was shot in the stomach by a drive-by gunman as he walked to meet his mother for Friday night choir practice at the church.[6] He was rushed into emergency surgery and survived the shooting, but the bullet left scars both visible and invisible on his body and that of the community. Today, two people stand

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[5] Cesáreo Gabaráin, "Madre, Óyeme" ("Mother, Hear Me"), (1973)
Mother, hear me; my prayer is a cry in the night.
Mother, look at me; in the night of my youth.
Mother, save me; a thousand dangers stalk my life.
Mother, fill me with hope, with love, and with faith.
Mother, guide me; in the darkness I can't find the way.
Mother, carry me, so that at your side I will happily sing…

[6] Dan Adams and Gal Tziperman Lotan, "Church prays for Roxbury youth hit by gunfire," *Boston Globe* (Metro: January 12, 2013).

on the lawn to greet the crowd—the victim's mother and the church's pastor. The crowd has grown since the walk began, and we spill from the sidewalk onto the church lawn and into the busy street, flowing like water between parallel-parked cars and into the bus lane.

Standing under the shadow of the cross, two women pass a microphone back and forth:

"*Jesús cae tres veces.*

Jesus falls three times."

The readers pause and the crowd recites together a verse of the traditional Stations of the Cross devotional, which is printed in the booklets handed out in the sanctuary of SMA where the ritual began:

> Like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth.

Some genuflect, their knees hitting the cold, cracked concrete of the Seaver Street sidewalk.

Te adoramos, O Cristo, y te bendecimos. Porque por tu santa Cruz redimiste al mundo.[7]

Alternating between English and Spanish, they continue to read, their words echoing over the crowded intersection:

> The instruments of torture – whips, crown of thorns, cross – all blood-letting, caused a weakened Jesus to fall, then fall, then fall again. Each time he got up to pursue his terrible journey to Calvary. How? We can't even imagine. We stand in front of Berea Seventh Day Adventist Church. This was the destination of Gabriel just a short time ago and today we remember his journey. As Jesus fell that first Good Friday, so Gabriel fell a few months ago, shot by unknown young people in a drive-by car. As we walk, let us recall recent deaths by peers in our neighborhood, and promise that we will get up, get up again and get up continuously by living non-violent lives, by reaching out to younger neighbors and to the families of victims and perpetrators alike. We pray that there will be someone there for all recuperating Gabriels as well as for those who have acted violently when the realization of what they have done to another human being grips them with feelings they can't handle. We pray in gratitude for all the members of the Seventh Day Adventist

[7] (Spanish) "We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world."

> Parish and Roxbury neighbors who so lovingly support Gabriel and his mother as both his physical wounds and the wounds of memory continue to heal.[8]

When they finish reading, they pass the microphone to the boy's mother. She pauses a moment, closes her eyes, and began to sing. It is clear from the awed reactions of the readers that this was not in the script. Her voice is arresting, laced with tears of lament and praise. Next to me, an African American woman hums along; other voices join in with an "Amen". When she finishes, people applaud and emerge from the crowd to embrace her.

The procession continues. The cross is passed to the shoulder of an elderly Jamaican man, who after about ten minutes of walking passes it on to a Dominican mother. The crowd makes its way down the street to a short-term respite care facility for persons experiencing homelessness, scheduled to reopen after several years of closure. Outside, a formerly homeless woman who relocated to Boston from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina spoke of the joy she felt as she was recently handed her first set of house keys. Hers was the story of an everyday resurrection signifying two more Stations: Simon and Veronica aid Jesus as he walks.

At the next station, Jesus encounters the women of Jerusalem in front of the public bilingual elementary school across the street from SMA. Its longtime principal, Margarita Muniz, was a Cuban immigrant and prolific educator. A pillar in the Egleston Square community, she fought to keep the school open during the 1970s. During the darkest days of the gang epidemic in Egleston Square, one parishioner recalled to me, Principal Muniz would open the doors of the school every weekend and keep them open late into the night, providing the children of the neighborhood a safe haven from the violence of the streets. Weeks earlier, she had died of cancer, and her loss was deeply felt in the community. A fourth grade boy, the son of

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[8] Text is from the program handed out to participants in the Neighborhood Way of the Cross.

Dominican immigrants and a student at the bilingual elementary school, steps into the center of the semi-circle. Next to him, his friends hold the cross together. Taking the microphone, he unfolds a piece of paper from his pocket and begins to read, first in English and then in Spanish. Confidently, he relates his gratitude for the education he receives there and the pain he and his classmates felt after the loss of their beloved principal.

Turning a corner and continuing up the street, the procession stops next outside of a brick apartment building where a beloved Puerto Rican *abuela* had lived for decades, a symbol of stability and love during turbulent times. Surrounded by her seven children and many grandchildren, she had recently died. Now, on the corner, her family members gather under the cross, muscled and tattooed grandsons wiping away tears as their abuela's life and death is enfolded into the dark and hopeful language of the final stations: Jesus is stripped of his clothes, nailed to the cross, dies, and is laid to rest in the tomb.

The procession concludes with a prayer on the front lawn of the parish. Members of the youth group walk among the crowd handing out Styrofoam cups of soil and a plastic bag of seeds. We are invited to plant the seeds along the nubby concrete and iron fence of the parish house. When, 52 days later, the SMA community returns to the parish lawn for its annual, raucous Pentecost potluck, the seeds will have shot up into giant sunflowers. After the prayer and planting concludes, participants are invited into the parish house to partake in the heaping pot of soup, prepared and left to simmer by a member of the Spanish community. Later that evening, some will return to the church for the Good Friday liturgy, but attendance will pale in comparison to the multitude now pressed into the kitchen and hallways of the parish house for soup and stories.

In Chapter 1, I offered a contextual overview of Catholic parishes serving multiple cultural, ethnic, and/or linguistic communities. While the emergence of shared parishes has garnered increasing scholarly and pastoral attention in recent years, concrete studies of such parishes remain few. Moreover, studies of highly racially and culturally integrated Catholic parishes are virtually absent from the literature. One of the most pastorally and theologically vital (and yet understudied) dimensions of shared parish life is the meaning and nature of intercultural community in such contexts. While the shared parish is often referred to as a "community of communities,"[9] it is unclear what form community in the former, more encompassing sense should take. What does it mean, practically/pastorally, ecclesiologically, and theologically, to be an ecclesial community of difference? And what sort of practices contribute to the cultivation and flourishing of intercultural community in parish contexts? Because the ecclesiological and practical dimensions of these questions are inextricable and mutually informative, I approach the question of intercultural community through the disciplinary lens of practical ecclesiology.[10]

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[9] This language seems to have been introduced into the ecclesiological lexicon by Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia in America*: "One way of renewing parishes, especially urgent for parishes in large cities, might be to consider the parish as a community of communities and movements…. This will make it possible to live communion more intensely, ensuring that it is fostered not only "ad intra", but also with the parish communities to which such groups belong, and with the entire diocesan and universal Church" (140-141). Since then, bishops, scholars, and practitioners have employed the language to ground new models of small-group based ministry in large and/or diverse parishes. See, for example, Johnson-Mondragón, ed., *Pathways of Hope and Faith Among Hispanic Teens*; and Ospino, "Rethinking the Urban Parish in Light of *The New Catholicity*," 63-72.

[10] Methodologically, I looked to existing studies in practical and lived ecclesiology, primarily those grounded in ethnographic fieldwork. See for example, Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*; Ward, ed., *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*; Scharen, ed., *Explorations in Ecclesiology and Ethnography*; and Hoover, *The Shared Parish,* especially Chapter 5, "Challenging Cultural Encapsulation in the Shared Parish." I have also looked to scholars working within the discipline of religious studies whose work borders the

In this chapter I trace the way in which SMA parishioners have developed rituals that fostered intercultural community in ways that corresponded to the evolving and deeply intertwined relationship between parish and neighborhood. I focus on SMA's Holy Week rituals, and in a particularly way on its community-based Good Friday Way of the Cross. I observe that not only on Good Friday but throughout Holy Week, parishioners intentionally create walking-based rituals, or accentuate existing ones, within the liturgical rites as a way of fostering embodied communion across diverse experiences of migration, displacement, and change. These rituals, in turn, become integrative spaces where journeys converge. The parish's transpiration-centric history undergirds and is evoked in these rituals. Drawing on five years of participant-observation at SMA's Holy Week liturgies, and on interviews with a diverse cross-section of SMA parishioners, I analyze these practices of community through a ritual studies lens, drawing heavily on the work of Adam Seligman, Robert Weller, and Catherine Bell. At once informal, improvisational, and intentional, ritual practice at SMA discloses a sense of the "impure," hybrid, and emergent, constructed at the intersection of social reality and social imagination. Drawing attention to the many forms of boundary negotiation that take place during the Way of the Cross and other Holy Week rituals, I argue that in intercultural ecclesial contexts, ritual has the capacity to create what I term borderland space, the non-discursive, embodied space of emergent community-in-difference. I conclude by examining some of the ways in which ritual at SMA becomes the site of border crossing.

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sociological/historical and the theological, such as Orsi, *Madonna of 115th Street*, especially Chapter 8, "The Theology of The Streets," 219-232.

4.2 Crossing the Boundary Between Parish and Neighborhood

Between the 1950s and 1970s, the blocks encompassed by SMA's small parish boundaries transitioned from largely Irish Catholic and Jewish to predominately African American and, to a lesser extent, Latinx. During the 1960s, the city had begun to displace residences and businesses in and around Egleston Square for the planned construction of an expressway that would have bisected Roxbury and Jamaica Plain. The project was eventually cancelled, a stunning and hard-fought victory for neighborhood activists, whose leaders included a number of SMA parishioners. But damage to the neighborhood by the displacements and "urban renewal" projects in Roxbury had already been done. According to one local documentarian, Egleston became a "casualty of Roxbury's decline."[11] Contributing to the problem were the elevated Orange Line tracks that ran over Egleston, casting dim shadows on the streets below and driving businesses out of the once-thriving corridor. The elevated tracks ran adjacent to the hulking, multistory Academy Homes housing project, which was also torn down, redesigned, and rebuilt when the tracks were. By the 1970s, Egleston had gained a reputation as seedy and unsafe, a locus of crime and drug activity.

In 1976, the arrival of Fr. Jack Roussin began a new era for the parish. Roussin, a diocesan priest, was appointed parish administrator in December of that year and later served as pastor of SMA in until 1992. Under Roussin's leadership, a new sense of mission came into focus at SMA as the parish embraced its embeddedness in Egleston Square and concretized this relationship in practice. One of the first things Roussin did after arriving at SMA was to renovate the now dilapidated, visibly neglected three-story Victorian that still served as the rectory. Roussin repainted the house and persuaded a friend at the fire department to condemn its

[11] For a local historian's account of the neighborhood during this period, see Gil Propp, "Egleston Square," *Boston Streetcars*, http://www.bostonstreetcars.com/egleston-square.html.

crumbling porch, forcing the archdiocese to pay for its reconstruction.[12] Beyond the basement chapel, the house was parishioners' only gathering space. Transforming it into a hospitable space was a visible "sign of renewal,"[13] not only for the parish but for Egleston Square.

Roussin was white and spoke Spanish. Friendly and open, he was a "city priest" committed to what one parishioner called "shoe leather ministry."[14] As violence in Egleston increased, Roussin became well known in the neighborhood for his constant presence on the streets. Longtime parishioners recalled his gift for remembering the name of seemingly every person that he met. He cultivated deep relationships with parishioners and neighborhood residents, particularly the youth. One such young person was William Morales. As a young man in the 1980s, Morales was a leader of Egleston's gang, the X-Men. Three decades later, he now serves as director of Egleston's YMCA and is a well-known community leader and mentor. He models his own work after the role that Roussin played in his life, working primarily with adolescent men to understand and express their masculinity in healthy, nonviolent ways.

When Morales was young, Egleston Square was a hotbed of gang activity. According to Morales, Egleston's status as a transportation crossroads contributed to the rise of gang activity there. Even after the elevated Orange Line tracks came down and were relocated several blocks away, Egleston Square remained a major public transportation hub because many busses stopped there. Thus, Egleston was an almost inevitable stop for anyone using public transportation in the area, including members of rival gangs. He recalled,

> Every other city gang member needed to come through Egleston in order to get to get to places. So can you imagine if you're at war with different people in the world and they

[12] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

[13] O'Connor, "St. Mary of the Angels, Roxbury Celebrates Centennial Year."

[14] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

> needed to come through a terminal to get home. While they're waiting for their ride home, they would do their damage, and then take somebody else's place. And so we felt the threat of the gang epidemic as a result of the fact that people kind of came through here. And we also began to respond to that threat very quickly. We wanted to protect our neighborhood, protect our families, protect our own friends, protect our own investments. We didn't want people to just come in here and take over.[15]

Morales recalled that there wasn't intentional recruitment of members on the part of gang leaders. Young men and boys seeking protection gravitated toward gangs, which coalesced residentially around particular neighborhoods and housing projects. But territorialism was not a concept invented by the gangs of the 1980s and '90s; it had been part of the youth experience in upper Roxbury since the early decades of the twentieth century. As noted in the prior chapter, memoirs from Jewish children who grew up in the area during the early decades of the twentieth century evinced a defensive and deeply felt territorialism. Thus territory was and remained a potent force in the lives of young people in the neighborhood. The streets that functioned as boundaries between rival religious and ethnic cohorts, and later rival gangs, came to mark in a real way in a real way the geography of residents' experiences and imaginations, marking the border, both invisible and definitive, between insider and outsider, us and them. Similarly, throughout its history, Egleston's identity as a transportation hub and ethnic borderland of sorts complicated its relationship with group identity and the notion of territory in real and consequential ways.

Throughout the 1980s, as gang activity gang activity in Egleston increased, Roussin's presence on the streets became a critical fixture in the neighborhood. Through the leadership of Roussin and other parishioners who were engaged community leaders, SMA became a living symbol of deep relationships between parish and place. Morales recalled the relationship Roussin cultivated with local gang members, including himself:

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[15] Interview, William Morales, April 2013.

> By the time I was 16, the gang epidemic in Boston got really ugly…. Fr. Jack was coming out to the block. And Fr. Jack was a smoker. So his thing was that he was always reaching out to us not by inviting us to the church but by really bringing the church to the corner. So that meant that he would spend many nights out here on the corners with us while we're in the middle of, we're hustling drugs and doing stuff. He knew we smoked, so he'd bring an extra pack of Newports, share a cigarette with us, and have a conversation. He never projected his message, ever using Jesus, or God, or saints or anything. He knew how to sort of change the tone a little bit to just, if anything, kind of ignite our conscience a little bit about what it is we're doing and why we're doing it. And then to really start saying, "You know, you're thinking of now. What's the long term? I mean how long do you think you're gonna do this and get away with it?" So it was a very different thing. He developed a deep relationship with some of the most hardcore guys in this block. And they all had his respect. They're like, "If he says something, we respect it."[16]

Roussin's approachability and solidarity gave him the credibility to challenge. During those years, the SMA youth group became an important neighborhood institution. The group was attended by as many as forty-five teens on Friday nights. Sr. Margaret Francis and other volunteers would take them bowling or to the movies—anything, she explained, that would offer them an alternative to participation in the violence of the neighborhood. "We needed to get them out of here," Sr. Margaret Francis recalled. "And we always drove them home at night. We never just came back to the parking lot."[17]

The youth group was significant in part because it ministered to youth and families on all sides of the violence – victim and perpetrator alike – and extended belonging across the blocks that demarcated gang boundary lines. The youth group marked a trans-territorial space, where territorial lines and group identities converged and even temporarily dissolved. Indeed, Sr. Margaret Francis recalled, "I had [at least] two [young people]… [with] whom we were involved as a parish here on both sides of the violence. People who were *affected* by the violence, people

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[16] Interview, William Morales, April 2013.

[17] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

who *did* the violence. I had one young man, and he came on all our overnight trips, and [later] the police asked me, 'Weren't you afraid of him?' And I said, 'Never ever.'"[18]

4.3 The Emergence of a Ritual

As gang violence in Egleston Square increased, so did SMA's involvement in efforts to promote peace and nonviolence in the neighborhood. During the 1980s, Roussin and lay leaders at SMA started walking through the streets of Egleston Square on Good Friday. Already a visible presence in the community, the Neighborhood Way of the Cross emerged as a natural and intentional extension of the Gospel for a parish that increasingly regarded the streets as its sanctuary. As Sr. Margaret Francis recalled, "Jack was a strong believer that church needed to be in the streets. We were only a basement church, you know, no pitched roof. You had to look hard to see us if you were going by." The permanence of SMA's basement status became a symbol of its perennial poverty and its economically and racially marginalized parishioner community. As a result, SMA became a community characterized by simplicity, with no delusions of liturgical grandeur. The walls of the church, like those of most Catholic churches, are lined with statues depicting the fourteen Stations of the Cross. Beneath each one, someone had long ago taped small Maryknoll posters depicting each station in images of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. In the neighborhood walk, the stations become places in the neighborhood. After all, as Sr. Margaret Francis commented, the real church was in the streets, with the people.[19]

According to Martin Williams, longtime parishioner and early organizer of the Good Friday ritual, the Way of the Cross evolved as "another way of our going to the community, taking ourselves to the community, saying we were in solidarity with trying to make the

[18] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

[19] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

neighborhood an inviting place, a safe place." He continued, "It was organic in a way. It just sort of happened, and people in the parish embraced it. I think people walking through the neighborhood also appreciate it."[20] Roussin led the procession dressed in his liturgical vestments. He was accompanied by altar servers carrying large candles, as at mass. Walkers took turns carrying a large cross. The overtly liturgical appearance of the procession served a purpose: Roussin did not want the large crowd to raise alarm among neighbors. Rather, according Sr. Margaret Francis, one of the walk's original organizers, Roussin "want[ed] them to know that today is Good Friday, and we're out here to make a statement. And we made hard statements in those days."[21] The purpose of the walk, she recalled, was clear from its inception: to speak out against the violence and suffering taking place on the streets of Egleston.

"It was kind of small the first couple years," Martin recalled. "Every year we'd go different places. But we'd always do what we're doing now. [We'd] go to the agencies, organizations that were doing something special…. If there was a tragedy, we would stop there. Or a block, an intersection where there was a lot of drug trafficking, we would stop there. And in some cases, guys would be on the street, obviously dealing drugs." Soon they began inviting other churches to join, both Catholic and non-Catholic. Though grounded in Catholic ritual, the walk became interreligious in its scope. Soon SMA began inviting other churches to join. One memorable year, three other churches participated. Sr. Margaret Francis recalled,

> We all walked our own neighborhoods, but we carried a rock, because of the hardness that's in our neighborhood. But we needed to use this to build up and not to destroy. We all met down at the Ruggles Street [MBTA] Station, and we planted a tree. Each community that came had endured violence. And so we came with that. There was a tree planting that we all wanted new life to come for all people. We had large gatherings, very large groups walking. And then we all planted our rock around [the tree].

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[20] Interview, Martin Williams, April 2013.

[21] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

Another year, during the height of the gang epidemic, each participating church was asked to bring carnations to represent the number of young people killed from their respective neighborhoods. "There were thirty-something from here, and seven or eight from there," one organizer recalled. "We had about forty-six or so carnations. And at Jackson Square [station, where the groups came together], we measured off a gravesite and put the carnations on the grave site in memory of the kids that were killed that year."[22] It was not by accident that the multiple participating churches always selected a MBTA station as their convergence point. These literal intersections represented in some way the kind of place that SMA was: a station on the border between converging and sometimes rival cultures, neighborhoods, histories; a place of stops and starts; a place always on the way, at once stable and frenzied, unhomely and home.

In a community where gang violence is prevalent, movement holds an additional layer of meaning. As Sr. Margaret Francis observed, "You know, when you've got gang-related issues, you don't cross over into another area. And so [the Way of the Cross was a way of saying] no, we are coming together as one."[23] If SMA was the heart of the neighborhood, the streets were its veins. By incarnating Jesus' Passion through the limbs of the neighborhood, it exposed the body's wounds, drawing them together, laying bare the ways in which the wounds of one street bled into the wounds of another. By dwelling in places of healing, they embodied hope for the resurrection of the whole body, the whole neighborhood, the whole wounded world. One longtime organizer described the Neighborhood Way of the Cross as the "passion of the neighborhood."[24] To tell the story of this passion truthfully and completely required such

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[22] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

[23] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

[24] Interview, Sr. Josephine Beyard, April 2013.

crossing. Thus, the stations were never limited to the wounds of parishioners but rather those of the entire local community, which touched the territories of several rival gangs. The ritual laid bare the weight of this pain, this cross, not for some people, not for "their" people, but for all people. To tell the whole story and to tell it honestly, they had to cross streets and neighborhoods. This embodied crossing was efficacious and revelatory. Discursive and legalistic strategies of negotiating justice and difference risk perpetuating binaries of oppressor/oppressed, innocent/guilty, victim/perpetrator. But in real life, in a world of sin and grace, everyone is implicated in the wounds of everyone else. Indeed, telling the Passion in the vernacular of Boston's famously labyrinthine streets served another purpose: it revealed the ambiguity of causal lines of fault and blame and thus the inherent blurriness of the borderlines themselves. Consequently, it placed participants in a position to recognize the fruitlessness of revenge and retribution. Everyone is good and sinful; everyone at various turns is both victim and perpetrator. Everyone is caught up in circumstances and structures beyond their control. This is not to downplay the importance of individual decision-making—indeed, as Morales vividly recalled, Roussin's credibility on the streets gave him a unique gift for calling on the consciences of him and his fellow gang members. But by laying bare the deep geographical and moral interconnectedness of the community and its wounds, the ritual revealed that the peace could not be worked out according to the violent logic of an oppressor/oppressed binary.[25] What was needed, rather, was a capacity to confront with greater complexity and nuance the often-ambiguous character of moral decision-making in contexts of structural sin. The embodied,

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[25] Anzaldúa writes that through an oppressor/oppressed lens, both parties are "reduced to a common denominator of violence." Any life-giving counterstance to violence must proceed in action, not reaction. See Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera,* 100-101. Miroslav Volf is also a critic of the oppressor/oppressed dichotomy. See Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

aesthetic act of walking shoulder to shoulder with others and stopping, occasionally, to quite literally stand in the place of someone else, perhaps a rival, became a transformative act, a bridge to empathy.

Thus, the Way of the Cross did not just represent a contextualization or dramatization of the Passion story of Jesus Christ. By transgressing boundaries, the boundaries themselves were renegotiated. Through ritual actions of walking, stopping, kneeling, praying, listening, and singing, the ritual itself effected the negotiation of power and the reformation of relational imaginations.[26] It did not only name the wounds; with its presence, it bandaged them.

4.3.1 Hector Morales, Jr., and the Passion of a Neighborhood

Streets have memories. One memory that marks a landmark in the terrain of memory at SMA was the late fall night in 1990 when the violence in Egleston reached a fever pitch and redefined the relationship between SMA and the neighborhood. Hector Morales, Jr., the younger brother of former gang leader and current community leader William, was a soft-spoken teenager. As a child, Hector had moved with his mother and brother William from Puerto Rico to Brooklyn, New York, and later to Roxbury. As teenagers, Hector and William joined the youth group at SMA, their local parish. Their family was poor and often on the brink of eviction. William turned to drug dealing as a response to his family's poverty and quickly gained a reputation as a leader in the powerful X-Men gang. For Hector, however, his older brother's high profile on the streets deterred him from getting involved in gangs and drug dealing. But several

[26] As will be explored in detail in the next section, this understanding of ritual as an effective practice of power negotiation recalls the ritual theory of Catherine Bell in her classic *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (1992). As Bell argues, understanding ritual as practice allows us to recognize it not as an act that merely represents cultural processes or power relationships but can actually be understood as the active enactment and negotiation of power relationships. Thus, for Bell, ritual is better understood as "ritualization," which more adequately captures its active, ongoing sense, as well as the agentic capacity of its practitioners.

unprovoked violent encounters with members of a rival gang, the result of mistaken identity due to his close physical resemblance to his older brother, left him shaken and defensive. After William was imprisoned on drug charges, Hector took his brother's place on the streets.

On the night of November 24, 1990, two plainclothes police officers approached Hector and a group of X-Men on the corner of Washington and School Street. What ensued would become the subject of a highly contested investigation into police conduct and an infamous moment in police-community relations in the city of Boston. It would also become the source of heartache and a catalyst for the work of justice for the neighborhood and its parish. According to reports, Hector pulled out a .12-guage shotgun and fired at the two officers, who sustained minor injuries. The officers returned fire, hitting Hector four times. He died at Boston City Hospital three hours later.[27]

In the confusion and chaos that followed, the neighborhood erupted in violence. The night culminated in a standoff between police and gang members, the two groups positioned on opposite sides of Washington Street. Roussin raced to the scene, persuading Sr. Margaret Francis to join him. "He said, 'You're in youth ministry. You have to walk those streets and the kids have to see you here."[28] Three days later, around 350 people pressed into the wooden pews of St. Mary of the Angels for Hector's funeral. The mass began with a candlelight procession from the spot on School Street where Hector had been shot and continued up Washington Street and Columbus Avenue to the parish. Some marchers carried signs, like the one that read:

HECTOR MORALES DIED FROM VIOLENCE IN OUR STREETS

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[27] Anthony De Jesus, *Implicit Protest on Urban Battlegrounds: The X-Men, The Greater Egleston Coaliton and the Establishment of the Greater Egleston Community High School* (1998). Paper presented on COMM-ORG: The On-Line Conference on Community Organizing and Development, http://comm-org.wisc.edu/papers.htm.

[28] Interview, Sr. Margaret Francis Miles, April 2013.

REVENGE IS NOT THE ANSWER
ONLY PEACE AND LOVE
MORE JOBS FOR OUR YOUTH[29]

According to William, the crowd included members of rival gangs, who had declared a truce in order to pay respects to the young man of color killed by the police. Roussin requested that the funeral be held at SMA. Hector and his family had been parishioners since his childhood; he had received his first communion there and been an active member of the youth group. Besides, William recalled with a wry laugh, no funeral home in the area would accept him. "They were afraid of the wake."

As the funeral mass drew to a conclusion, pallbearers carried Morales' casket on their shoulders up the steep stairway of the basement church. They did not stop for the hearse. Instead, they made a right turn down Columbus Avenue and, in William's words, "just kept walking." William, who was still in prison at the time, had watched the tragedy unfold from television. He recalls what he was told about his brother's funeral:

> They were supposed to take my brother's body out of the church and into the hearse, and the guys took it and marched it down the street. The funeral [director] was afraid, because they didn't know how to tell the guys, "You can't do that. You can't do that." They were so afraid.
>
> So Fr. Jack said, "Just do this: Take the [hearse] to School Street and Washington and wait for us there. Get there quick.' And so Fr. Jack actually had to put himself out front… because this is not something that was planned, and then *lead* that group of kids, because they didn't know where they were going to take the casket. They would have just continued to walk. They probably would have walked all the way to the cemetery with it. And then he said, "We'll just bring it right here to School Street and Washington," because my brother was killed right here on the corner.[30]

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[29] Efrain Hernandez, Jr. and Adrian Walker, "Call for Peace Accompanies Funeral for Young Gunman," *Boston Globe* (November 28, 1990).

[30] Interview, William Morales, April 2013.

In silence, hundreds of people fell into a procession behind the casket. Led by the dead, carried on the shoulders of the living, victims and perpetrators walked shoulder to shoulder down the busy city street to the corner where Hector had been shot.

Hector, just nineteen years old when he died, was one of 73 young people killed in Boston that year. The 1990 death toll represented a staggering 230 percent increase in youth homicides over a three-year period and marked the apex of Boston's gang epidemic.[31] In the tense aftermath of Hector's death, Roussin and other community leaders worked to maintain peace in the neighborhood. The shooting catalyzed already fervent calls for greater investment in youth services in Egleston Square.

That spring, on Good Friday 1991, the Neighborhood Way of the Cross followed the same route the impromptu funeral procession had taken: up the steps, down Columbus Avenue, to the corner of Washington and School Street. On that corner where her young son had been killed, Hector Morales' mother stood before the crowd. She spoke of her suffering: one of her sons was dead; the other was in prison. That year, the corner where she stood marked the fourth station: Jesus meets his mother.[32] That fall, the Greater Boston YMCA opened its doors on that same corner: the place where Hector Morales had been murdered, where his mother had cried, and where, almost a century prior, the railcar barn had stood inside of which the first SMA parishioners had celebrated mass. In 1997, twelve years after being released from prison, William Morales became the Executive Director of that YMCA. Eight years after that, the

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[31] Ashley G. Lanfer, "The Heart of the City," Working Paper 9, Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston (Cambridge, MA: Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, November 22, 2003), 90. Web: http://www.hks.harvard.edu/var/ezp_site/storage/fckeditor/file/pdfs/centers-programs/centers/rappaport/applied/hotc_finalreport.pdf.

[32] Tom Coakley, "Procession Mixes Politics, Prayer," *Boston Globe* (March 3, 1991).

building that housed the YMCA was ceremoniously renamed. That Good Friday, William Morales stood on the corner of Washington and School Street outside of the Father Jack Roussin Community Center. This time, he spoke of resurrection.

4.4 Walking Holy Week at St. Mary of the Angels

4.4.1 Tradition and the Everyday

Almost three decades after Hector was shot, the SMA community continues to gather each year on Good Friday to bring the cross into the streets, ritually marking through word, place, and movement the individual and collective sufferings and hopes of the neighborhood. The stations change from year to year, so the procession never takes the same route twice. After almost four decades, it is probably impossible to name a street in the miles surrounding the parish that has not been traversed by the procession or a corner at which the cross has not stopped. As was true of the corner of Washington and School streets, places disclose a surplus of meanings: the corner that one year symbolizes suffering and death might the next year mark the site of resurrection. When asked to recall a favorite memory from a prior walk, every parishioner I interviewed unearthed a different story: memories of prayers in front of liquor stores known to sell alcohol to teenagers and on corners where young people's lives were cut short, at the sites of arson in low-income housing complexes and on the doorsteps of health centers serving the homeless, outside of the local police station and in front of spots where drug deals were known to occur. One year, a parishioner from Colombia received word several weeks before Easter that her brother had been murdered. Unable to return to Colombia for the funeral, the procession stopped at her home.[33]

[33] Interview, Ximena Rojas, April 2013.

In the Gospels, Jesus' passion, life, death, and resurrection occur in a linear fashion. But reality is rarely so linear. Thus, sometimes stations are combined or their traditional order changed; suffering, death, and resurrection get intermingled in the fabric of the real. The neighborhood *via crucis* leads walkers through a journey in which suffering and hope are mixed up together in the organic rhythm of everyday life. On these streets, crucifixions occur in the intractable persistence of violence and the loss of young lives; in housing instability and systemic racism and educational disparities. Hope, in turn, is embodied in everyday resurrections: the neighborhood organization offering opportunities to teenagers, the freshly painted mural of a beloved community matriarch, the local library branch once abandoned and now reopened.[34] And then there are the moments in between the violent crucifixions and joyful resurrections, the quotidian heartaches and hopes of everyday life carried by the people who come to walk. Thus, despite the stark and purposeful contrast between the crowd gathered in solemn prayer and the bustling frenzy of city life, the walk is not so much an interruption of ordinary life as it is a mutual ingression of holies. In it, the holiness of everyday life and the sacred story of Jesus' crucifixion come together, woven together organically by common threads of suffering, injustice, and new life.

Mapping of the geography of sin and grace in the neighborhood is mostly an act of listening—to neighbors tell their stories, to parishioners voice their prayers during mass, to the

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[34] The notion of "everyday resurrections" is drawn from the work of Ivone Gebara. Gebara argues that, particularly for women, the experience of "fragile redemption," like the experience of "the crosses of our existence," can be located in the course of daily life: "Salvation will not be something outside the fabric of life but will take place within the heart of it…. The process of salvation is a process of resurrection, of recovering life and hope and justice along life's path even when these experiences are frail and fleeting. Resurrection becomes something that can be lived and grasped within the confines of existence." See Gebara, *Our of the Depths: Women's Experience of Evil and Salvation*, trans. Ann Patrick Ware (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2002), 121-122.

local news, to the community meetings held in the parish house, to the Gospel proclaimed each Sunday morning from the basement ambo. These are the signs of the times, scrutinized annually in an act of everyday faithfulness to the cross. Each Lent, the joys and anxieties of the community are strung together like beads on a rosary into that year's Way of the Cross, the passion of the neighborhood. The annual selection of new stations dislodges the temptation toward nostalgia for the radical, lauded past of the parish's activism under Roussin's leadership. Logistics, too, play a role in the selection: stations along the two-hour journey must form a walkable path.[35] The planning of the Stations reveals the deeply lay-led character of leadership and ritual life at SMA. Like most events at the parish, whether liturgical, devotional, or social, the Good Friday devotion predominately represents the work of lay people. The pastor of SMA offers a prayer at the beginning and end of the ritual, but he is not highly involved in its planning. Rather, the stations are constructed organically, continuously, and in a lay-led manner out of the fabric of everyday life and prayer.

Organizers meet in the weeks leading up to Good Friday to finalize a route, communicate with those who live or work at each proposed station, secure a police escort, and compose the text to be read at each stop and printed in the program. In reality, however, planning for the ritual is a continuous, organic process. SMA is part of a large network of neighborhood organizations, and many of its members have spent decades working in the community and serving on local housing, business, and development councils. Community coalitions frequently hold meetings in the SMA parish house, bringing together representatives from area agencies. One of the ritual's longtime organizers, Sr. Josephine Beyard, describes the other forms of attentiveness that contribute to selecting the stations each year. Most often, her inspiration comes from the people

[35] Interview, Sr. Josephine Beyard, April 2013.

themselves, from her conversations with parishioners and other members of the local community during their moments of greatest need and sorrow. She listens attentively to the Prayers of the Faithful at mass, during which an altar server walks up and down the aisle of the church with a microphone, passing it to anyone who has a prayer to bring to the ears of the community. "People will talk about things and pray about things and bring it to a daily prayer or a Sunday prayer," she notes. "And then, you know, it clicks in the back of my mind that we need to do something."[36] This subtle but explicit connection between the ordinary Sunday liturgy and the creative character of the Good Friday ritual reveals their common foundation in the lived experience of the people and Church Tradition. As I will argue in the next section, the Way of the Cross represents a communal act of traditioning. In Sr. Josephine's words, "We can't have just history of two thousand years ago without having the history of yesterday."[37]

4.4.2 Singing, Washing, Kissing, Walking: Embodying Liturgical Solidarity During Holy Week

While the Good Friday Way of the Cross marks the public, aesthetic high point of Holy Week at SMA, the ritual is best understood within the full arc of the community's bilingual Holy Week liturgical practices. In addition to the Neighborhood Way of the Cross devotion, the community gathers liturgically six times between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday:

- Palm Sunday Mass (bilingual)
- Holy Thursday Mass (bilingual)
- Good Friday liturgy (bilingual)
- Easter Vigil (bilingual; sometimes trilingual)
- Easter Morning Masses (English and Spanish separate)

Each of the liturgies is planned by one or more lay "point people," whose responsibility it is to recruit lectors, Eucharistic ministers, ushers, decorators, and any other needed ministers and

[36] Interview, Sr. Josephine Beyard, April 2013.

[37] Interview, Sr. Josephine Beyard, April 2013.

volunteers from both the English and Spanish Mass communities. These lay liturgical coordinators work as bridge builders between the two Mass communities, between clergy and lay ministers, and between the choir and other ministers.[38] Many of them shared with me the central importance of Holy Week at SMA both spiritually and socially. Elizabeth Greer, a coordinator from the English community, explained the sense of solidarity fostered by shared involvement in planning the weeklong bilingual celebration: "You see people every day for several days. And you know, there's an intensity in the planning of it and the frenetic-ness of making it happen, and the satisfaction of it coming together. We're helping to create a space for people to experience the Passion, and that's pretty profound…. It's like we're in it together, you know."[39] During the announcements at the conclusion of the Easter Vigil Mass, the presider asks everyone who participated in planning or ministry throughout Holy Week to stand up and be recognized. In a crowd of several hundred, dozens of people rise to their feet. Holy Week marks the point in the year where lay participation in highest and intercultural collaboration happens most intentionally.[40] (Indeed, in the highly participatory community, it can be difficult to *avoid* participation. A year after moving away from Boston, I returned to visit SMA for a Holy Week

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[38] My use of "bridge builders" is based on the notion of *gente puente* in Hispanic ministry. In *Encuentro and Mission*, the U.S. Bishops call for the formation of lay leaders equipped with the sensitivity, flexibility, and commitment to solidarity necessary to minister interculturally in an increasingly diverse Church. See Committee on Hispanic Affairs, *Encuentro and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry* (Washington, D.C., United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002), 10.

[39] Interview, Elizabeth Greer, April 2013.

[40] The tone for the week is set by the parish's annual Lenten retreat. The weekend event, which is planned interculturally and held bilingually, attracts almost equal numbers of Spanish and English mass participants. The retreat is intentionally affordable, and it is not uncommon for parishioners who can afford it to pay more so that those who need it can be offered financial assistance. Much more could be said about the Lenten retreat, which is a site in which deep relationships are fostered.

visit. No sooner had I stepped foot inside the door than I was recruited to serve as a lector for the Easter Vigil.)

On Easter morning, individual English and Spanish Masses resume. Liturgically, parishioners settle back into their respective linguistic communities—at least until Pentecost—but they are animated by the spirit of liturgical solidarity that has permeated Holy Week. It is worth paying attention to the range of embodied ritual actions that parishioners partake in throughout the week's liturgies. Below, I focus on four: singing, washing, kissing, and walking.

Singing. Music during Holy Week is led by a joint choir of Spanish and English singers under the collaborative leadership of the Spanish and English music directors. Repertoire ranges from traditional Gospel hymns ("Wade in the Water" and "Go Down, Moses") to the pulsating chords of Kiko Argüello's "Resucitó."[41] Not everyone in the choir is bilingual, but as one singer remarked, "After so many years, we just know each other's stuff." Many of the songs used during Holy Week liturgies remain consistent from year to year, giving choir members and parishioners the opportunity to develop a common repertoire. The annual consistency also helps to mitigate the element of unfamiliarity that can detract from the appeal of bilingual masses.

[41] I would distinguish the phenomenon described here, in which the two particular choirs contribute a sampling of their best-loved and most widely singable repertoire to the gradual cultivation of a commonly held bilingual repertoire, with what Gerardo Martí terms the "Musical Buffet Theory." In his study of the relationship between sacred music and racial diversity in American Protestant congregations, Martí critiques the "Musical Buffet" approach, wherein a church offers "something for everyone" based on assumptions about what kinds of music are preferred by different ethnic groups. While often implemented in a well-intentioned spirit of inclusivity or a desire to attract more diverse members, the "musical buffet" approach ends up falling victim to tokenistic or essentialized understandings of culture. Where the intercultural musical approach at SMA differs from this problematic practice is in the participatory nature of the choir and the selection of this repertoire. "Resucitó" is not selected because it might appeal to hypothetical Latinos; it is selected because the Spanish speakers (and many of the English speakers) at the parish already sing the song. See Martí, *Worship Across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation,* 34-38.

Washing. On Holy Thursday, the presider washes the feet of twelve parishioners. Every year, the coordinators choose twelve people "who come from very different experiences"[42]—babies on their mothers' laps and elderly parishioners, Spanish-speaking and English-speaking, African American, Caribbean, Latinx and Euro-American. What makes it powerful, explains Gail McInerny, a lay leader from the English community, is that "we're small enough, we often know people's stories. And we know people's stories across not just language but culture." She recalled one year when the brother of a friend in the Spanish community was among the twelve whose feet were washed. The man was severely physically disabled and, when the time for came, stood and very slowly walked down the aisle to have his feet washed. "These are all the people who Jesus would have washed their feet," Gail said. "I was moved to tears by her brother. And [my friend] said how important it was to her brother to be included."[43] One recent year, after the foot washing, a bucket, pitcher, and towel were set on a small table before the altar. After the twelve had their feet washed, all parishioners were invited to come forward in a line to have their hands washed, and then to wash the hands of the next person in line. The reach of the highly embodied ritual is made accessible to everyone.

Kissing. As noted, parishioners from both Mass communities express affection for one another in highly embodied ways. Such embraces of friendship also appear in several ritual moments during Holy Week. During the sign of peace, particularly during Palm Sunday and the Easter Vigil, parishioners often spill into the aisles of the church to exchange hugs and kiss the cheeks of those both near and far away. The ritual takes so long that the choir completes an entire hymn waiting for everyone to make their way back to their seats. On Holy Thursday, the

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[42] Interview, Gail McInerny, October 2014.

[43] Interview, Gail McInerny, October 2014.

pastor not only washes but also kisses the feet of the twelve, bending low to communicate the humility of the ritual. The act feels scandalously vulnerable, even as a witness.

The Way of the Cross is not the only ritual of Good Friday. In preparation for the evening's liturgy, organizers have set a long table shrouded in a purple cloth in the center aisle of the church; on it, they have carefully arranged objects representing the tools of the crucifixion: large nails, a crown of thorns, a rope whip. As parishioners arrive in the dimly lit church and file into the pews, they instinctively touch the objects, evoking a tactile connection with Christ's passion. After the Homily, parishioners are invited forward to venerate the crucifix. With eyes closed, they kiss Jesus' feet, his hands, the wood of the cross. This ritual is a regular part of the Good Friday liturgy, but in this bare, darkened basement space with its empty altar and open tabernacle, the act feels dangerously intimate. The liturgy concludes with a Eucharistic procession, which winds up and down all three aisles before finally reaching the back of the church, which members of the Spanish community have decorated lavishly with silk flowers. Eucharistic adoration follows until late into the night, with members of the Spanish community keeping vigil the longest.

Walking. During Holy Week, parishioners actually walk the streets around the parish not once but three times. The same streets and sidewalks and intersections are traversed and crossed multiple times throughout the week, blessed again and again by praying feet. On Palm Sunday, mass begins at the playground a block away from the parish. Parishioners wave palms as they slowly process the block to the parish. Evoking the sense of chaotic frenzy that surrounded Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, the crowd enters the church to a feverish refrain—"*Hosanna Hey! Hosanna Ha! Hosanna Hey, Hosanna Hey, Hosanna Ha!*"—led by an ebullient, joint Spanish and English choir, each person dressed in red. Six and a half days later, the Easter Vigil

mass begins around the bonfire in the parish's small parking lot. As dusk falls around them, the crowd follows the single, small light of the Easter candle once again out onto the streets, where they traverse the blocks around the parish once more before descending, finally, into the darkened basement church. Parishioners spill down the stairs and fumble in the basement darkness for a pew, cocooned by the tiny light of the Easter candle.

In interviews, several parishioners reflected on the way in which these processions during the liturgy had the effect of mixing everyone up. Michelle Archer, an African American member of the English mass community, explained how the procession during the Liturgy of the Word during the Palm Sunday celebration—her favorite part of Holy Week—in some way demands that she move out of her comfort zone in a basic and physical way. Unlike the Good Friday walk, which is typically accompanied by a police escort, on Palm Sunday parishioners have to stay on the sidewalk as they process from the park to the church. When the procession begins, the palm-waving crowd bottlenecks onto the skinny city sidewalk. Carried by the movement of the procession, walkers surrender a degree of control over whom they walk next to and, in turn, who they end up sitting near once they enter the sanctuary. Explained Michelle,

> People don't worry. They get into the line wherever they get into the line and, you know, they work their way into the church. A lot of times people seem to have the attitude that "this is my pew." But on Palm Sunday, because of the way the procession goes, and the fact that some of the elderly and sick may already *be* in the church in the pews, people often just end up processing into a pew, and whoever's in line together behind one another gets to be in that pews. Which is, I think, maybe the perfect way it should be.[44]

A longtime parishioner, Michelle usually sits in the same place each Sunday and admits that she feels a degree of territorialism when she arrives at mass to find someone in "her" pew. So does Elizabeth, another English mass parishioner, who described her experience of the Way of the Cross in a way that echoed Michelle's experience:

[44] Interview, Michelle Archer, April 2017.

> You know how the walk kind of flows, and people kind of move around and see different people? I never have the feeling that I have to walk with "so and so." There's people that come past you, or say hello to you, you just rub up against all different people, you know. And I love that about it. And it's not like you have to make small talk or anything. You can just kind of nod or whatever, acknowledge [them]. And there's just so many different kinds of people, people I'd never seen before. Different ages. So there's something about just kind of coexisting with all those people. And you all have a singular purpose, you're all kind of looking forward, in a way. You're doing it together, and not having to… I don't know how to describe it. There's a kind of meditative quality about it.[45]

These rituals cultivate in their practitioners a willingness to be displaced, even temporarily. In shared parishes, one of the most difficult things to overcome is the normative, "host" status of the Euro-American/English-speaking community. As Matovina notes, even expressions of welcome and hospitality, while well-intentioned, can communicate an implicit territorialism: to claim the power to welcome is to claim ownership of the space and the authority to open (or shut) its doors. Ritually relinquishing ownership of the space marks a renegotiation of power, cultivating within parishioners deeper dispositions of power-sharing.

Within the liturgical ritual, these everyday shared actions—singing, washing kissing, and walking—take on a sacramental quality. None of these actions are unique to liturgical practice at SMA. With a few exceptions, they are regular parts of the liturgical rites. What gives these actions their power within the particular context of SMA? The parish's mission imbues these practices with a sense of intentionality, revealing the integration between liturgy and life, church and neighborhood, ritual and social advocacy, private devotion and public witness, personal and communal suffering and redemption. Liturgical participation becomes an act of solidarity.

4.5 Community in the Subjunctive: Creating Borderland Space in Shared Parishes

SMA is a place of borders and on borders. In a real sense, it is a borderland, a space in which communities of difference intersect and negotiate both formally and informally the most

[45] Interview, Elizabeth Greer, April 2013.

fruitful way of being with one another. Unlike in a congregational model, parishioners have not chosen this arrangement. Even if some have elected to join SMA for reasons other than territorial locality, the arrangement of the parish itself is not decided by a polity. The arrangement is a feature of the place itself, a result of the parish's territorial nature. Thus, in some sense, the shared parish is a place where different people simply find themselves, and are then faced with the task of doing ecclesial life together. As in a geographical borderland, two main options appear: remaining or border-crossing. In either case, differences among parishioners are not subsumed or integrated into singular, supra-cultural identity. Religio-cultural, racial, and linguistic particularity persists even as rituals of community create in-between spaces where new, shared ecclesial identities emerge. How does ritual facilitate the crossing of these borders? Asked another way, at least as it has been asked by other scholars, how does ritual produce social solidarity? Rituals on their own do not result in solidarity *ex opere operato*, like an algebra equation or magic trick. If they did, then the problem of community in shared parishes would be an easy one to solve. Luckily, no one who has ever attended a bilingual mass at his or her local parish is under any such delusion. Yet research suggests that ritual does play a critical role in cultivating and strengthening social bonds. Research linking participation in longstanding rituals to intergroup cooperation (a small Catholic faith-sharing community reciting the Lord's Prayer, for example) is well established.[46] However, a recent study suggests that new rituals in newly

[46] See, for example, Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1915); Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Routledge, 1996 [1969]); Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988); Richard Sosis and Bradley J. Ruffle, "Religious Ritual and Cooperation: Testing for a Relationship on Israeli Religious and Secular Kibbutzim," *Current Anthropology* 44 (2003): 713-722; Dimitrios Xygalatas, Panagiotis Mitkidis, Ronald Fishcer, Paul Reddish, Joshua Skewes, Amin W. Geertz, Andreas Roepstorff, and Joseph Bulbulia, "Extreme Rituals Promote Prosociality," *Psychological Science* 24, no. 8

formed groups can, when repeated, also promote intergroup bonding.[47] If this is the case, then we have reason to look to emergent ritual[48]—new rituals, or old rituals done in new ways in response to new circumstances—as one vital dimension in the overall cultivation of new community in contexts of difference.

Scholars of diverse congregations have also pointed to the role of ritual practice in cultivating community in such contexts. Mary McClintock Fulkerson's *Places of Redemption* examines the role of practice at Good Samaritan, a small United Methodist church in North Carolina taking a mission-oriented approach to the formation of community across lines of race and disability. She contends that it is the embodied practices of formation, worship, homemaking, and interpretation that "make the place" of Good Samaritan.[49] Sociologist of religion R. Stephen Warner, similarly, reflecting on his far-ranging body of studies of particular religious communities, emphasizes "the crucial role of *embodied ritual* as a key to the capacity

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(2014): 1602–1605; Richard Sosis and Eric R. Bressler, "Cooperation and Commune Longevity: A Test of the Costly Signaling Theory of Religion," *Cross-Cultural Research* 37 (2003): 211-239; and Donald Tuzin, *Social Complexity in the Making: A Case Study Among the Arapesh of New Guinea* (London: Routledge, 2001).

[47] Nicholas M. Hobson, Francesca Gino, Michael I. Norton, and Michael Inzlicht, "When Novel Rituals Impact Intergroup Bias: Evidence From Economic Games and Neurophysiology," *Psychological Science* 28, no. 6 (June 2017): 733-750.

[48] Nathan Mitchell defines emergent ritual as "improvisational practices arising from the search for self-understanding by a marginalized group." Yet this definition tends somewhat toward an outdated understanding of ritual as seeking or revealing a coherent and commonly held set of meanings. See Mitchell, *Liturgy and the Social Sciences* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 39. See also Jack Santino, "Performative Commemoratives, the Personal, and the Public: Spontaneous Shrines, Emergent Ritual, and the Field of Folklore," *The Journal of American Folklore* 117, no. 466 (2004): 363-372.

[49] Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 55ff.

religion has to bridge boundaries, both between communities and individuals."[50] Christopher Tirres argues that the spiritual and moral power of popular religious rituals is related to the capacity of these rituals to become sites of integration and boundary transgressions. Ritual performance, he argues, renders ambiguous boundaries between past and present, living and dead, private and public, sacred and profane, personal story and communal narrative, participant and observer. When distinctions between "us" and "them" are ritually transgressed, people are moved at the moral level through feelings of deep solidarity and empathy.[51]

Practical wisdom also affirms this connection between ritual and community. In shared parishes, bilingual liturgies often represent best attempts to build bridges between members of distinct linguistic communities. Bilingual liturgies can be onerous and imperfect, but the significance of such efforts should not be overlooked. Indeed, such attempts at fostering community through shared, linguistically inclusive liturgical participation evince an instinct similar to those elaborated above by scholars: we sense that we become community by doing community. Catholic parishes, as ritual-rich environments, are in a unique position to cultivate solidarity across difference. The question, then, is how? What do we mean by ritual? What sort of ritual "works" to cultivate community across boundaries, and why?

4.5.1 Ritual as Embodied, Communal Action

As Catherine Bell suggests, the difficulty anthropologists and sociologists have encountered in defining "ritual," much less coming to a functional consensus on the parameters of what ritual is and does in a society, suggests that scholars have been approaching ritual with

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[50] R. Stephen Warner, "Religion, Boundaries, and Bridges," *Sociology of Religion* 58, no. 3 (1997), 217; emphasis in the original.

[51] Tirres, *The Aesthetics and Ethics of Faith*, 6.

too narrow a lens. In an effort to discover how ritual functions and what it means, scholars have overlooked what is most fundamental about ritual. That is, before ritual points to, exemplifies, communicates, or consolidates shared cultural values—if it does so at all—ritual is a practice, an efficacious act in its own right. That is to say, ritual does not merely represent or symbolize extrinsic social processes or values. As practice, ritual is itself the enactment of and negotiation of power, relationships, and meanings. Bell, relying heavily on a Bourdieusian notion of practice as collective strategization, thus contends that ritual is better understood as "ritualization," which more adequately captures its active, ongoing sense, as well as the agentic capacity of its practitioners.[52]

Following Bell, Adam Seligman and Robert Weller define ritual as "those acts that are formalized through social convention and are repeated over and over in ways that people recognize as somehow the same as before."[53] Like Bell, Seligman, Weller, and their collaborators suggest that ritual should be understood as a way of framing actions—a specific orientation to action—rather than as the performance of a commonly held set of meanings or values. Ritual is about "doing something" more than it is about "saying something;" it is the "doing itself" that lends ritual its power and meaning.[54] This should not be taken to suggest that ritual is meaningless. What it does means is that a ritual should not be understood as communicating a singular meaning or set of meanings; even if that appears to be a ritual's purpose, participants carry into the ritual space myriad individual experiences, meanings, motivations, and interpretive frameworks. Thus, it is impossible to contend, and even more

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[52] Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice.*

[53] Adam B. Seligman and Robert P. Weller, *Rethinking Pluralism: Ritual, Experience, and Ambiguity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7.

[54] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 4.

impossible to mandate, that a ritual mean the same thing to everyone who participates in it. Instead of scrutinizing the words of a ritual in a search for its "true meaning," a more adequate way of approaching ritual is to pay attention to what people do—their embodied, communal experience of ritualization.

This also means that ritual, far from consolidating group identity and values in an exclusive way, should instead be understood as disclosing a unique capacity to encompass and mediate difference without seeking to resolve or dissolve it.[55] This is to say, shared participation in ritual does not require that participants all hold an identical set of symbolic meanings or identities in order to participate.[56] Ritual derives much of its solidaristic power from the surplus of meanings that arise from the interplay of the concrete and the numinous. In contexts of

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[55] This should be understood in contrast to the notion, prevalent in classical anthropological treatments of ritual, that ritual functions to create social cohesion or concord (the work of Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown is commonly cited as exemplary of this view) or to resolve ambiguity (as in the work of Robert Merton). This difference-centric understanding of ritual should also be understood as staging a critique of the notion that ritual, as "meaning-bearing action," expresses of a coherent set of beliefs or functions according to its place in cultural system of meaning; ritual meaning-bearing action. The ritual theory of Clifford Geertz can be understood as taking for granted the coherence of belief. See Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973); *Local Knowledge* (1983). See also Talal Asad's critique of Geertz in the aforementioned respect, and particularly on Geertz' alleged neglect of power: Asad, "Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz," *Man* 18, no. 2 (1983): 237-259.

[56] See Kimberly Hope Belcher, *Efficacious Engagement: Sacramental Participation in the Trinitarian Mystery* (Collegeville, MN: Michal Glazier, 2011), 46. This is not to suggest that markers of identity and belonging should be disregarded, or that all are equally welcome in every ritual. As an example, in the Catholic mass, only baptized Catholics partake of the Eucharist. To say that a ritual—like the Liturgy of the Eucharist—is encompassing of difference is not to suggest that such boundaries of belonging and membership are unjustified or meaningless. Rather, it is to draw attention to the constellation of meanings that those who receive communion carry with them into the act. Though guidelines for receiving communion exist, community is cultivated not by verbally assuring one another that "we're all on the same page" before receiving communion but instead in and through the shared, embodied acts of kneeling, singing, standing, and responding, of shuffling slowly forward in a line to receive communion, of taking, eating, and drinking, of returning and praying.

profound diversity—which is to say, in the absence of shared meanings, beliefs, or even symbols—rituals can be efficacious precisely because they inaugurate participants extralingually and holistically, through embodied participation, into a shared subjunctive reality. Ritual teaches us to dwell in ambiguity rather than to "fix" or resolve (or even merely "tolerate") it. In this way, embodied engagement has the capacity to cultivate solidarity without consensus.[57] As David Kertzer argues, "Solidarity is produced by people acting together, not by people thinking together."[58]

Seligman and Weller propose a three-part model of understanding how communities characterized by plurality and ambiguity handle boundaries: *notation*, *ritual*, and *shared experience.*[59] Naming and defining difference—what they term *notation*—is critical for upholding the integrity of distinct cultural communities within a space. But merely defining difference doesn't help us to live with it. They argue that the latter, practice-oriented categories—ritual and shared experience—function as both notational (or boundary-defining), and ambiguous (or boundary-transgressing). Following pragmatist philosopher and educational theorist John Dewey, Seligman and Weller argue that "the work of ritual," when understood as a kind of shared experience, allows us to take practical action and "teaches us how to live within and between different boundaries rather than seeking to absolutize them."[60]

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[57] Warner states, "The more symbols are ambiguous, the more they can produce solidarity in the absence of consensus" ("Religion, Boundaries, and Bridges," 225).

[58] Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power*, 76; cited on Warner, "Religion, Boundaries, and Bridges," 225.

[59] Seligman and Weller, *Rethinking Pluralism*, 8.

[60] Seligman, et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 7. The authors contrast ritual with deritualized, "sincere" frames of action, which are more concerned with boundary maintenance than boundary negotiation. This distinction will be explored in the next section. R. Stephen Warner echoes the point: "Bridges are constructed. But so is difference. And we can learn better

To understand the significance of this understanding of ritual practice, let us recall Tillard's suggestion, examined in Chapter 2, that "the sacrament [of Eucharist] shows that communion with Christ renders null and void any distinction of race, dignity, or social status."[61] Within the communion paradigm, difference is portrayed as a tragic feature of the historical condition that should be affirmed for the sake of catholicity and yet also lamented; at the same time, our eschatological imagination is formed according to the hope that one day such difference will be "rendered null and void." Allowing ourselves to believe that shared liturgical participation renders difference inconsequential and even nonexistent only facilitates our tendency to imagine "unity" as the proliferation of dominant frameworks of conceiving human existence. In a U.S. context, these are frameworks that norm white, Euro-American religious expression, bodily existence, authority, and ownership of space. A ritual understanding of sacramental unity suggests, by contrast, that the purpose of participation is not to overcome difference or to render it momentarily nonexistent, but rather to dwell in difference, to make our ecclesial home on the borderland between cultures, races, classes, generations, genders, and other forms of experiences and identities.

Thus, in shared parishes, practices that emerge at the borders of distinct cultural communities have the capacity to express the unfolding social, spiritual, and ecclesial experience of the parish community by creating space for the sharing of stories both individual and collective (aesthetic) and evoking an empathic moral response (ethical). In so doing, ritual allows us to construct and operate out of a sense of what Seligman calls "life in the

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how to construct difference in less alienating ways. The point is that our constructions of difference are too categorical, and this under the influence of theorists who, while they themselves may not be religious, operate under US Protestant notions of purity and difference." See Warner, "Religion, Boundaries, and Bridges," 234.

[61] Tillard, *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ*, 68.

subjunctive"—the collision of the "was" of memory and the "is" of present reality into the imaginative "as if" of possibility.

As action, ritual is a kind of work, a shared project. This resonates with original meaning of the Greek term *leitourgia* (λειτουργία), alternately translated as "work of the people" or "work on behalf of the people." If we recall the contention, explicated in Chapter 2, that communion must be both gift and task, then ritual can be understood as the work of communion—its concrete, creative, often "wrenching" task.[62] As Seligman and Weller argue,

> Only through a reengagement with ritual as a constitutive aspect of the human project will it be possible to negotiate the emergent realities of our present century. The reaction to the cultural and economic forces of globalization, the reemergence of religious commitments and the ethnic identities throughout the world, and the currently posited opposition of 'the West and the rest' all suggest the failure of our existing cultural resources to deal with ambiguity, ambivalences, and the gentle play of boundaries that require both their existence and their transcendence."[63]

In the U.S. Catholic context, the emergent reality of the present century is marked by profound demographic transition, changing models and dynamics of parish life, and increasing calls for pastoral solidarity in situations of woundedness. To be adequate to this context, ecclesiology and practical/pastoral theology must, too, evince an ability to deal with ambiguity, ambivalences, and the interplay of boundaries.

4.6 Making Subjunctive Space: Community, Ambiguity, and Imagination

Ritual action is space-creating action. Seligman et al. propose an understanding of ritual as a communal, subjunctive act, "the creation of an order *as if* it were truly the case."[64]

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[62] Copeland, "Toward a Critical Christian Feminist Theology of Solidarity," 29.

[63] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences,* 10.

[64] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences,* 20.

> It is this very creative act that makes our shared social world possible. Creating a shared subjunctive… recognizes the inherent ambiguity built into social life and its relationships—including our relations with the natural world. The formality, reiteration, and constraint of ritual are… all necessary aspects of this shared creation."[65]

Embedded in the everyday and yet also in tension with it, ritual does not necessarily reveal a society's values. Often, it inaugurates practitioners into a world with a very different set of meanings than those practiced by "real" life and either explicitly or implicitly magnifies the incongruity between the "could be" of the subjunctive and the "as is" of the present tense. Ritual forms communal imaginations by existing on the borderlines of reality.[66]

The authors contrast ritual modes of behavior ("as if") with what they term "sincere" modes of behavior ("as is"). Sincerity, they argue, is a postmodern trope, evidenced in the present preoccupation with authenticity. The unspoken assumption about authenticity, they explain, seems to be that something is "authentic" only when it is personally and individually chosen. If you don't choose it, the logic goes, it can't truly be meaningful to you.[67] But ritual does not require, and is not necessarily concerned with, sincerity. It is important approach this distinction with nuance. To illustrate the point, Seligman et al. offer a helpful example drawn from everyday life: imagine a family of five, two parents and three children. While their home is generally loving, stable, and happy, their day-to-day is filled with the typical quibbling, pushing,

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[65] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 7.

[66] There is fruitful conversation to be had between the notion of ritual as subjunctive action and the literary genre of magical realism. This is an idea that will be explored in future work.

[67] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences,* 9. Sincerity, they argue, associated with fundamentalism, which sees religious participation and the religious act as totalizing, self-efficacious, and self-fulfilling: "It is less God's work that is being realized in the world than one's own projection of selfhood" (10). As the work of Kimberly Belcher will suggest, infant baptism serves as a fitting case study in testing the limits of sincerity/authenticity, choice, and ritual. This will be discussed in the next section.

whining, and yelling of ordinary life. The parents decide that family members need to start treating one another with a little more respect: more please and thank you, more sharing of toys, more helping with the dishes. What the parents are asking is not that family members love each other more. They already love one another—and even if they don't, even if there exists some deep and consequential rift between them, simply demanding that their children *feel* more love for one another is ineffective. What the parents are asking is that family members start *acting as if* they love each other, which they do. "What was missing was the behavior that would create a shared subjunctive—ritual. Erich Segal was wrong—love does not mean never having to say you're sorry. That is precisely what love does mean—at least if you want to share a life with the person you love."[68] Love does not grow by telling other people that we love them; love grows by acting as if we love them. Love, as the saying goes, is a verb. So, I suggest, is communion. "Getting it right is not a matter of making outer acts conform to inner beliefs. Getting right is doing it again and again and again—it is an act of world construction."[69]

Still, the notion that ritual is not a "sincere" form of action can strike us as disconcerting, even offensive. After all, when we receive the Eucharist or exchange a sign of peace during mass or walk the Way of the Cross, we want to believe that we are being "sincere"—that we *really mean it*. However, as was demonstrated in Chapter 2, research on the way that people "really feel," particularly about worshipping with and living among people who are racially and ethnically different from themselves, paints a rather unflattering picture of our "authentic" attitudes about racial and ethnic others. In fact, it can be argued that the segregation that characterizes both residential patterns and religious congregations in the United States is a

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[68] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 25.

[69] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences,* 24.

"sincere" performance of our desires, fears, and prejudices. To understand ritual as subjunctive kind of action rather than a sincere one is to recognize the capacity of shared participation to relieve us from the burden of individualism. Ritual is solidaristic action through which we collectively subordinate individual goods and desires to the common good, which has been rendered compelling through beauty, through the aesthetic power of communal, embodied action. It is important to note that this act of imagining does not erase differences, including differences of power, either hypothetically or actually.[70] Ritual action does not create utopic space. Rather, it draws attention to the ambiguity and accompanying ambivalences, contradictions, and confusions of reality and offers aesthetic resources for renegotiating power. At best, ritual effects an imaginative reworking of power relationships though the cultivation of empathy—a shared sense of what could be—and through the raising of prophetic consciousness—a conviction in what should and should not be.

Ritual action reveals that ambiguity is not an aberration but inherent to the human condition. Patiently entering into this ambiguity, ritual allows flourishing of relational imaginations.[71] As Seligman et al. state, "When it is effective, that effectiveness in part arises from the sense that one never creates a full unity, but one can, through ritual, develop more productive ways connecting with other people and with the larger world."[72] The Good Friday Way of the Cross at SMA offers a vivid example of this dynamic. In walking and pausing in the places of near and distant neighbors, walkers enter in an embodied way into a shared subjunctive universe: Participants are invited, implicitly, through the language of walking together, to

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[70] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 51, citing psychoanalyst Arnold Modell, who is summarizing Donald Winnicott.

[71] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences,* 45.

[72] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences,* 42.

imagine themselves in the place of the other: *This could have happened to you; what if it did happen to you? Where were you when it happened? That could be your son; what if it were? What if all the sons were all of our sons?* They are invited to imagine the streets of Jerusalem in the third decade A.D.: *Where would I have stood? With whom? What of my own discipleship?* They are invited to imagine their childhoods and pasts and homelands: *What if my family all were here? What if I still lived in this neighborhood?* They are invited, perhaps most palpably, to imagine forward: *What if we can build another future? What if I learned your language? What if our children could be friends?*

Theologically, Seligman and Weller's understanding of ritual as subjunctive action finds an analogy in Christian notions of eschatology. The subjunctive, "as if" world created by ritual practice exists in the tension between the already of the incarnation—the sanctification of the particular—and the painful not yet of the Kingdom of God.[73] Roberto Goizueta and Virgilio Elizondo both point to the act of *fiesta*, the communal celebration of and response to life as gift, as a subjunctive liturgical/ritual act.[74] For Goizueta, celebration is subversive insofar as it points to life and resurrection even within the context of suffering; it is a form of joyful protest against the finality of death. As Goizueta states,

> The *fiesta* represents precisely that attitude of trust in the ultimate goodness of life, both as a reality in the present and as an unrealized future that challenges and subverts the status quo. If religious worship does this explicitly, *fiesta* does it implicitly—sometimes

[73] One might also note an analogy between the subjunctive world of ritual and the vision of the Beloved Community, a term coined by Josiah Royce and elaborated compellingly by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. See Kipton Jensen, "The Growing Edges of Beloved Community: From Royce to Thurman and King," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 52, no. 2 (Spring 2016), 239-258; and Gary Herstein, "The Roycean Roots of the Beloved Community," *The Pluralist* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2009), 91-107.

[74] Roberto Goizueta, "*Fiesta*: Life in the Subjunctive," in *From the Heart of Our People: Latino/a Explorations in Catholic Systematic Theology*, ed. Orlando Espín and Miguel H. Diaz, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 199), 91.

> explicitly as well. To celebrate life itself as good, even when we cannot control it, is to acknowledge life as gift, as being in the control of Someone else; it is to acknowledge and affirm a Giver, even if only implicitly. Insofar as the *fiesta* celebrates the ultimate goodness of life (even in the midst of suffering and, indeed, as the "subjunctive" denial of the ultimacy of death), it celebrates life as a gratuitous gift that cannot be destroyed by a dominant culture that, objectifying life, would destroy it.[75]

Ritual, in this sense, can be compared to play—the creative, joyful imagining of the kind of community that could be, that might be. In celebration, including ritual celebration, we act like community. And when we do it over and over and over again, we become community. Whatever we mean by community is cultivated in and emerges from that shared space of joining together in joyful and defiant celebration. Such joining does not require the relinquishing of particular identities, nor does it naively suggest that such joining either requires or results in perfect harmony. It simply means that people practice doing life together. And that kind of practice can be transformative. As Elizondo writes, through shared celebration, we begin to experience a "new common 'we,'" a new kind of belonging. It is an experience of community that emerges in practice before it is emerges in theory; it is lived before it is understood.[76] It is nondiscursive, embodied, in between, and imperfect.

Elizondo's emphasis on emergence also raises the question of the tension between tradition and creativity in ritual practice. What do we do when new realities render old ritual forms or practices inadequate? It can be argued that this how the SMA Way of the Cross emerged during its initial years. There was a sense that social reality demanded from the parish a new kind of ritual practice that would renegotiate the boundaries between church and streets. For Seligman et al., ritual emerges and develops in the tension between "creativity and tradition, acceptance and obligation. Ritual practice becomes the arena where the dynamic of that third

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[75] Goizueta, "*Fiesta*: Life in the Subjunctive," 96.

[76] Elizondo, *Galilean Journey*, 124.

space, the potential space within which cultural creativity takes place, is worked out."[77] Ritual, in other words, cultivates a kind of borderland space, a space where the interaction of cultures and social forces leads to the emergence of new ways of being. Within such contexts, they argue, the greatest danger is to confine ritual to mere repetition, allowing tradition to calcify in an attempt to keep the complexity of the world at bay. In order for ritual to be efficacious, the people must be empowered to creatively tradition.[78] On the other extreme, too is so much innovation risks losing sight of the canon and severing the thread that binds the tradition together. The Way of the Cross exists between these two extremes, at the incarnational meeting point of the Gospel and the particular.

4.6.1 Ritual Space as Borderland Space

Understanding ritual as subjunctive action points us to the consequential role of borders and boundaries that exist among and within communities that engage in ritual. Studies of ritual space have tended to focus on (and typically complicate or contest) the idea of the border or

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[77] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 37.

[78] Goizueta is among a number of scholars who have noted that the post-Vatican II emphasis on the Eucharist as source and summit of liturgical practice was accompanied by an intellectualizing impulse with respect to the Eucharist itself. Heightened rational participation in the Mass, Goizueta contends, brought with it a concomitant decrease in affective, aesthetic participation. In an effort to re-center the Eucharist at the heart of Catholic devotional life, the reforms of Vatican II had the unintended consequence of de-emphasizing non-Eucharistic, lay-led, popular devotions. What is needed is a reclamation of emergent ritual and of a community's capacity to tradition, to exercise creativity within the framework of tradition and to negotiate the borders of the frame itself. See Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesús*, 136. See also Nancy Pineda-Madrid, "Traditioning: The Formation of Community, the Transmission of Faith," in *Futuring Our Past: Explorations in the Theology of Tradition*, eds. Orlando Espín and Gary Macy (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006). As Pineda-Madrid argues, drawing primarily on Josiah Royce and Latinx popular devotion to Guadalupe, "A tradition is only a tradition to the extent that it has been received and internalized through some practice" (p. 205).

distinction between the sacred and the profane.[79] Here, my focus is on with the way in which ritual practice in contexts of cultural, racial, or ethnic pluralism makes space for the negotiation of differences not between humans and the divine but between and among participants in the ritual. (Within this ritual context, God is revealed not in a realm apart but rather in this in-between space between persons and communities—the sort of space that, the Christian theological tradition attests, God has continually revealed Godself to dwell.)

How do we understand the kind of space that ritual creates? As Seligman et al. suggest, the "subjunctively shared area" created by ritual practice marks "a space in between."[80] It marks, in other words, a borderland space. Martin Heidegger's oft-cited definition of boundary space is a helpful starting point: "A space is something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely within a boundary, Greek *peras.* A boundary is not that at which something stops, but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its *presencing*."[81] In the context of shared parishes, what is needed is a way of being together as Church that exists neither at one extreme of cultural encapsulation ("you do you; I'll do me") nor at the other extreme of assimilation (the inability to imagine intercultural sharing

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[79] For classic treatments of the sacred-profane distinction in religion, see Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (New York: Free Press, 1965 [1912]), 52-56; and Mircea Éliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1959). For a comparative typology of sacred spaces across several religious traditions, see Shampa Mazumdar and Sanjoy Mazumdar, "Sacred Space and Place Attachment," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 13, no. 2 (1993), 231-242. For a contemporary study of ritual as sacred space-making, see, for example, Elaine A. Peña, *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe* (University of California Press, 2011).

[80] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences,* 26.

[81] Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Colophon, 1971), I; cited in Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences,* 84, emphasis in the original.

that does not either require or culminate in uniformity). Ritual offers a third way of being with one another. Argue Seligman et al.,

> Rather than trying to eliminate boundaries or to make them into unbreachable walls—the two approaches that so typified the twentieth century—ritual continually renegotiates boundaries, living with their instability and labile nature. Only by paying closer attention to the play of ritual—to its formal elements, even when those formal rhythms may overwhelm content—can we find the way to negotiate the emergent demands of our contemporary world.[82]

Boundaries mark a meeting-point between self and other. Though defined in relation to the center, borders lie beyond the full control of the center. Because of their proximity to otherness, we encounter there a certain openness and vulnerability and also the need, both practically and epistemologically, to tolerate what is on the other side. But this tolerance proves difficult and risky: "It is not the totally or far-off other who challenges me, my way of life, values, and goals. Instead it is the one who is similar but yet different—whose very difference thus constitutes a continuing critique of my way of being. These others are not so far removed from me as to preclude interaction and dialogue, but far enough distant to provide the crux of that definition and critique of self by other."[83] The near presence of the other feels like a threat, because it challenges my illusion of control over the space and the normativity of my own way of life.

The shared parish—as a community of communities, which is to say, a community made up of many intersecting boundary lines—exemplifies this dynamic. Within such spaces, all share in a common baptism and thus a common membership in the Roman Catholic Church. However, your way of being Catholic differs just enough from my way of being Catholic that your way begins to feel like a threat to or judgment upon my way. Though similar in many respects, the

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[82] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences,* 11.

[83] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 85.

gap between communities often feels unbridgeable; rather than brothers and sisters, the others feel like strangers. Yet the solution is not, as one might expect, simply to focus on what all share in common and set aside the things that divide us. This is the temptation, slyly disguised in good intentions, to erase the otherness of the other. To meet and join with the other in their otherness is the work of ritual. Through ritual, "boundaries are reframed,"—not erased— "limits are broached, constraints are torn down, clichés are unpacked, and new meanings emerge."[84] Ritual thus allows for a deeper kind of knowing and shared belonging, because it is predicated on a recognition that one does not need to be just like me in order for me to affirm, value, and love them. Empathy—the decentering of the self—"emerges from the very particular interpolation of boundaries that ritual affords."[85] It rests on the dual ability to both respect and cross boundaries; to understand boundaries as porous, more like the walls of a human cell than of a prison cell.

In parishes shared by multiple cultural, ethnic, or linguistic communities, intercultural participation in ritual has the capacity to create borderland space. Philosopher Raúl Fornet-Betancourt defines interculturality as mutual translation, *traducción recíproca*. In conversation with Fornet-Betancourt and Gloria Anzaldúa, feminist theologian Nancy Elizabeth Bedford suggests understanding interculturality vis-à-vis the embodiedness of those who themselves exist on the border. She references Anzaldúa: "*Hay muchas razas* running in my veins, *mezcladas dentro de mí, otras culturas* that my body lives in and out of…. Along with other border *gente*, it is at this site and time, *en este tiempo y lugar* where and when, I create my identity *con mi arte*."[86] In intercultural pastoral contexts, people who exist on the border between cultural sub-

[84] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences,* 86.

[85] Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 85.

[86] Gloria Anzaldúa, "Chicana Artists," 43, cited in Nancy Elizabeth Bedford, "Making Spaces: Latin American and Latina Feminist Theologies on the Cusp of Interculturality," in

communities a parish are known as *gente puente*, bridge builders.[87] In a similar way, the boundary-negotiating capacity of ritual has to do with of its embodied nature.

As Seligman et al. note, ritual should be understood non-discursively. While language is important to ritual, the "real meaning" of ritual is not uncovered by analyzing ritual texts for the meaning they disclose but instead by focusing primary attention to what people do in ways that include and surpass the linguistic. In order to examine more closely the importance of embodied ritual, particularly in the context of liturgical and ecclesial practice, I turn to the work of liturgical theologian Kimberly Belcher. Belcher's study of the sacramental practice of infant baptism offers insight into the importance of the body in ritual activity. Belcher seeks to move from a symbolic foundation for sacramental theology (cf. Karl Rahner, Louis-Marie Chauvet) to a ritual one.[88] The practice of infant baptism poses an implicit challenge to understandings of sacraments as language acts. A symbolic-linguistic understanding of sacramentality "privileges the word or form, the intelligible part of the sacramental ritual, above the embodied material and

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María Pilar Aquino and María José Rosado Nunez, eds., *Feminist Intercultural Theology: Latina Explorations for a Just World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 55. Bedford explains, "In Anzaldúa one sees an awareness of interculturality within her own body and biography ('many races running in my veins') and in her interactions with others ('along with other border people'). Her body is within and without other cultures: interculturality. Furthermore, as Walter Mignolo puts it, interculturality it is [sic] not a matter only of 'being together' in the sense of the Spanish verb *estar* (That would be a simple multiculturalism), but rather accepting also the diversity of being in the sense of *ser*; there are many ways of needing, thinking, desiring and knowing" (p. 55).

[87] Here, too, Heidegger is helpful. A bridge, he explains, does not simply unite two preexisting locations. In a fuller sense, building a bridge creates the two locations that it then unites. Along a stream, for example, there are many places a bridge might be built. Only after the bridge is constructed do these two opposite one another become locations, real places to be. Transposing Heidegger into a practical/pastoral theological key, it could be argued that constructing a bridge (or, more accurately, *being* a bridge) between communities in a shared parish does not threaten individual group identities but in fact has the capacity to strengthen them, even as a space for shared gathering is established betwixt and between them. See Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," II.

[88] Belcher, *Efficacious Engagement*, 36.

behavioral parts. Sacramental 'meaning' then seems intellectual and obscure, accessible only to the knowledgeable elite. The model tends to suppress the exterior, material, and bodily parts of the rite in favor of a sacramental reading based solely on the text."[89] In what sense, then, do infants, being both pre-linguistic and incapable of offering an intelligible response to the gift of God's grace, participate in the sacrament of baptism? Merely as passive recipients? Certainly not. Appreciating the whole personhood of the infant requires that we understand them as "subjects of grace."[90] Baptism doesn't just "happen to" them as though they are objects. To overcome the problems posed by an excessively cognitive understanding of sacramental participation, Belcher proposes that, by virtue of their significance as embodied and culturally situated acts, sacraments mark "efficacious engagement" in the life of God. Explains Belcher, "Since humans are embodied creatures, not beings in a body or with a body, sacraments can form identity in part by shaping the bodies of participants."[91] Through sacramental participation, both individual and community are formed in an embodied, nondiscursive, and developmentally evolving way in the Trinitarian image of self-giving love; we become, perform, and embody the grace that we receive in ways that are culturally and developmentally mediated.

The shift in focus from a symbolic to ritual/embodied understanding of sacramental efficacy is significant in part because it underscores the fact that sacramental participation is not dependent upon uniformly shared symbolic or linguistic understandings. One can draw an analogy from Belcher's interpretation of infant baptism to intercultural and multilingual

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[89] Belcher, *Efficacious Engagement*, 43.

[90] Belcher, *Efficacious Engagement,* 44. The issue is also relevant for persons with disabilities, for whom "full, conscious, and active" participation in the liturgical life of the church means something different than what we have come to expect.

[91] Belcher, *Efficacious Engagement*, 46.

liturgical participation, insofar as both are situations in which complete linguistic or intellectual understanding of what is happening in the liturgy is not possible for everyone at the same time. In planning intercultural liturgies, the primary preoccupation tends to be with the bilingual nature of the liturgical texts and music. Yet an enlarged understanding of sacramentality, one that places greater emphasis on the embodied experience of ritual, expands our liturgical imagination and opens up creative possibilities for inclusive liturgical participation and, in turn, the cultivation of borderland space. Holy Thursday at SMA offers an example. Though most everyone gathered will be at least nominally familiar with the Gospel narrative in which Jesus washes the feet of his disciples, at that mass, at least half of the congregation will have heard the Gospel read aloud in a language he or she does not understand. Similarly, not everyone can see, hear, or participate equally in the foot washing ritual. Following the foot washing ritual with the communal washing of hands offered the opportunity for all gathered to participate bodily in the liturgy. The hand washing ritual is an embodied translation of the Gospel, an act both creative and familiar (perhaps instinctively, everyone filed up to have their hands washed in the same manner that they would have to receive communion). This tactile participation—water poured over fingertips, the soft cotton of the towel, the impromptu embrace many participants shared at the end—becomes a transformative encounter, an intimate and vulnerable moment of border crossing. In one moment, everyone is ministered to; a moment later, each person in turn becomes the minister.

The Way of the Cross, similarly, includes the reading of texts both traditional and new. The text is always powerfully and prayerfully composed. But what is most powerful about the ritual, what makes it what it is, is the wordless act of walking together. Occasionally, the walk has to be moved inside the church due to extreme weather. Leaders read the text just as they would if they were outdoors, while another volunteer and altar servers walk the cross from

station to station around the nave of the church. Though the textual meaning of the ritual remains unchanged, the attenuation of the bodily dimension of the ritual ultimately alters its meaning fundamentally. As both Bell and Seligman et al. argue, ritual is about "doing something" much more than it is about "saying something;" it is the "doing itself" that power is negotiated and meaning is created. The most important language of the Way of the Cross is neither English nor Spanish but rather the shared vernacular of the sound that footsteps make on the city street.[92] It is through these footsteps, through the act of accompaniment, that community members cultivate embodied communion.

4.7 Conclusion

Highly embodied and both improvisational and intentional, ritual practice at SMA discloses a sense of the "impure" [93] and emergent, constructed at the intersection of social reality and social imagination. It is in and through the liturgical-aesthetic dimensions of ritual life at SMA—full and active participation, shared movement, sensory engagement—that grace, the fruit of the border-transgressing Holy Spirit, is communicated. What makes borderland space distinctive is the potential for the emergence over time of something new, unpredictable, creative, and hopeful in the ambiguous in-between space between cultures—something based on the significance of the interactions between people.[94] The benefit of ritual in shares parishes—

[92] This is, of course, not to trivialize the role of language or the importance of linguistic inclusivity in multilingual liturgical contexts. What I am arguing, along with Bell, Seligman et al., and Belcher, is that an understanding of meaning vis-à-vis ritual practice that both includes and surpasses the linguistic calls attention to the critical role of the body in ritual participation and thus in the shared creation of meaning. In drawing attention to the significance of accompaniment embodied in the act of walking the Way of the Cross, I also recall Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesús*.

[93] Pappas, "Dewey and Latina Lesbians on the Quest for Purity," 268.

[94] Pappas, "Dewey and Latina Lesbians on the Quest for Purity," 269-270.

and here I mean not only or even primarily Eucharistic ritual, but also other creative and emergent forms of ritualization, like SMA's Neighborhood Way of the Cross—is that it provides a template and script for being together meaningfully. As subjunctive activity, ritual allows diverse members of shared parishes to overcome fear and suspicion of the other, the immigrant, the newcomer; to engage with one another in bodily and affective ways; to cultivate empathy; to imagine a shared community.

In ecclesial contexts of difference, ritual has the capacity to cultivate borderland space, wherein shared ecclesial belonging emerges through embodied practice. As subjunctive action, ritual invites participants to live into an imaginative, "as if" community. In so doing, they are invited to imagine themselves out of the inert logics of segregation and xenophobia by which our residential and ecclesial existences have been conditioned. Understanding communion as solidaristic task, the act of ritually negotiating and transgressing racial and social boundaries serves to strengthen a vision of shared ecclesial life together. By walking together, sharing stories, publically lamenting injustice and suffering, and reaching across aisles to share embraces of peace, people participate in the work of joining in joyful hope for communion. People become borderland communities by doing borderland community. In the next chapter, I examine more closely how we understand the borderland space that ritual creates and, on this basis, offer a constructive proposal for shared parishes looking into the future.

Chapter 5: Becoming Borderland Communities:

Toward a Borderland Practical Ecclesiology

"I think anytime you mix groups, it requires more work. People sometimes have to be consciously active in the role of mixing and getting along…. Sometimes, it's a cultural thing. And sometimes, It's a communication thing that until you realize it's an issue, you don't even realize that there should be a conversation about it. Sometimes, you have to know what you don't know, or have conversations—get to really *know* one another—before you can meld well. And I think sometimes the melding doesn't happen because of fear. Oftentimes, one community either feels they're going to be overshadowed by the other, or their customs are going to be changed, dropped, whatever, if they become truly part of this bigger community. And they're afraid. They don't want to lose their identity."
—Michelle Archer (English mass)

I feel like I can write a book about how beautiful it was to work with the Anglos."
—Ana Díaz (Spanish mass)

"If I could describe SMA in one word, I would say 'union.' Because there's so much diversity. Things have happened, and there's always that same unity. We fight, we make up, but at the same time there's the same union, the same peace. And even with so many things that have happened, the union doesn't disappear. It feels like a family. A unit."
—Leticia Álvarez (Spanish mass)

"There's reasons why you live in a neighborhood and get comfortable in a community, and even when a community has changed some, there's a resistance to leave this community that felt so much a part of *you*. So it's like, which is easier? To move, or to adapt *a little*?"
—Michelle Archer (English mass)

"We have to work hard at figuring out how we hear one another's voices."
—Gayle Doyle (English mass)

"May we do work that matters. *Vale la pena*, it's worth the pain."
—Gloria Anzaldúa, "Let Us Be the Healing of the Wound," 102.

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I suggested that community in shared parishes should be understood ritually. That is to say, in order to understand shared parishes ecclesiologically, we should look at the kind of practices that parishioners there do. Envisioning and building community in such contexts means constructing ritual practices of solidarity across difference. It is the central contention of this chapter that looking at the shared parish as a kind of borderland allows us to draw practical, pastoral and pedagogical conclusions about how best to navigate this complex ecclesial space. Doing so also allows us to see the ways the Holy Spirit is moving in the church today. In this chapter, I propose an understanding of the borderland as *locus ecclesiologicus*—as a space for deep reflection about the meaning and identity of the local Church in a changing world. I identify seven pastoral imperatives that a borderland understanding of shared parish life calls forth, returning occasionally to the experience of SMA to illustrate the practical dimensions of borderland community. In the final part of the chapter, I look to the future of the parish in the U.S., proposing liturgical solidarity as a way forward as diversity continues to shape ecclesial life.

5.2 The Borderland as *Locus Theologicus*

"*Soy un amasamiento*, I am an act of kneading, of unity and joining."

—Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*[1]

[1] Anzaldúa, Borderlands/*La Frontera*, 81. One could raise the question of whether making theological use of Anzaldúa constitutes a misappropriation of her work, given her ambivalent relationship with Catholicism. This concern is valid, and I have taken pains to use Anzaldúa's work judiciously. At the same time, Anzaldúa's work, particularly her later writing, is suffused with spiritual dynamism, and she critically engages central popular-Catholic and indigenous symbols, such as Guadalupe. On a more fundamental level, it is impossible to engage border identity in a U.S. context without paying tribute to Anzaldúa's contribution to this theoretical trajectory. See Alma Rosa Alvarez, *Liberation Theology in Chicana/o Literature:*

In the context of the shared parish, recovering the theological significance of difference requires that we center theological reflection precisely at the site of difference, in the interstices between races, cultures, genders, classes, and generations. It requires, in other words, a theological option for the borderlands within these communities, for the in-between, mixed-up spaces where again and again God has revealed Godself to dwell.[2]

In a U.S. context, the social and geographical location of theological discourse about borders and borderland identity is most often the U.S.-Mexico border. Yet as many scholars argue, the borderland as an epistemological and embodied space extends beyond the geographical locality of the Southwest to all of the spaces in which different identities meet. As Anzaldúa explains, "Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where lower, middle, and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy."[3] She and others

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Manifestations of Feminist and Gay Identities (New York: Routledge, 2007), especially chapter 2, "Gloria Anzaldúa's Coatlicue State: A Postmodern Rupture into Liberation Theology," 51-64.

[2] This notion of a theological option for the borderlands recalls Pope Francis' image of the Church as field hospital. In a September 2013 interview originally published by Italian Jesuit journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Pope Francis, at the time just six months into his pontificate, stated, "I see clearly that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds.... And you have to start from the ground up." The evocative image was reemphasized eight months into his papacy with the November 2013 the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. In the document, Francis re-articulated his hope for a church that eschews pious, hermetic isolation, instead making an option for continuous encounter with the poor: a "Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets." See Pope Francis and Antonio Spadaro, S.J., "A Big Heart Open to God," *America* (September 13, 2013), Web: http://americamagazine.org/pope-interview. See also Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (November 24, 2013), 49.

[3] Gloria Anzaldúa, Borderlands/*La Frontera*, Preface to the First Edition (no pagination). Daisy L. Machado echoes the point with attention to the U.S.-Latinx context: "The twenty-first-century Latino borderlands are understood as those places where culture, race, identity, politics,

argue for the broad applicability of borderland discourse beyond the Southwest, particularly as Latinos continue to transform Catholicism and society in the U.S. As Julia Alvarez notes, these population dynamics foreshadow the increased and unavoidable relevance of the borderland and of *mestiza* consciousness.[4] However, as Alvarez also notes, the experience of migration is not exclusive to Latinos:

> Globalization brings the 'immigrant experience' beyond our borders and makes the collision of cultures a reality everywhere. And so when we wonder how to deal with these confusions and contradictions, we are really addressing how to evolve a new kind of world consciousness that is transformative and synthesizing. Anzaldúa was right. The question is no less than how to be a new kind of human being![5]

Shared parishes, similarly, mark the locus of the possible creation of a new people, a new local ecclesial body. The borderland-like character of the shared parish invites us to view the present moment as a *kairos* for the Church in the U.S., "a moment of grace and opportunity experienced in the decisive action to act as bridge people."[6]

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and religion intersect in complicated and even violent ways whether in El Paso, in the South Texas Valley, in the mushroom farms of southern New Jersey, in the desert of Arizona, or in the meat packing plants in Iowa, East Los Angeles, the Bronx, and New York." See Machado, "Borderlife in the Religious Imagination," in *Religion and Politics in America's Borderlands*, ed. Sarah Azaransky (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 81.

[4] Julia Alvarez, "Gloria Anzaldúa, *Que En Paz Descanse*," in "Gloria Anzaldúa ¡Presente! An Introduction in Ten Voices," in Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*: The New Mestiza, 3rd edition (San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books, 2007 [1987]), no pagination.

[5] Alvarez, "Gloria Anzaldúa, *Que En Paz Descanse*," no pagination.

[6] Arturo Bañuelas, "U.S. Hispanic Theology," *Missiology: An International Review* 20, no. 2 (April 1992), 294; cited in Carmen M. Nanko-Fernández, "Alternately Documented Theologies: Mapping Border, Exile, and Diaspora," in *Religion and Politics in America's Borderlands*," ed. Sarah Azaransky (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 37-38. See also Hosffman Ospino, "Latino Immigrants and the Redefinition of the U.S. Catholic Experience in the Twenty-First Century," in *Migration, Transnationalism, and Catholicism: Global Perspectives*, eds. Dominic Pasura and Marta Bivand Erdal (Springer, 2017), 202.

The borderland for Goizueta is "not merely a geographical but, more profoundly, a theological category, a place that makes present the glory of God."[7] This to say, the borderland should be understood as *locus theologicus*:

> "When a border thus conceived functions as a privileged *locus theologicus* for Christian theology, the Way, the Truth, and the Life revealed therein will be intrinsically practical and intersubjective. The borderland reveals a truth that is normative and universal precisely *because* it is intersubjective and particular." This is because "the universal truth revealed in Jesus Christ is, paradoxically, the truth of the intrinsically intersubjective foundation of all reality. It is in the borderland particularity of *this* person, Jesus of Nazareth, that we encounter the universal truth revealed in the person of Jesus Christ: God is love."[8]

Understanding the border in this way—not as a syncretistic burden to be shed in pursuit of "good theology" or "good liturgy" but rather as a space where the search for God in time and memory finds its epicenter—requires a Christological "transvaluation of the border."[9] Recalling Virgil Elizondo's portrayal of Galilee as the organizing principle for understanding the historical particularity of Jesus Christ, the borderland comes into focus as a vital theological and soteriological category.[10] Far from the geographical, political, and religious center of Jerusalem, Galilee marks in ways both historical and theological a neglected outskirt, an unimportant periphery. As Goizueta states, "the Galilean borderland frames Jesus' life, death, and

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[7] Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion,* 129.

[8] Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion,* 156.

[9] Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion*, 129.

[10] Elizondo, *Galilean Journey*. Jesus' Galilean identity is a theologically rich and capacious notion that, for that very reason, risks oversimplification and uncritical overextension. Scholars such as Néstor Medina and Jean-Pierre Ruiz have critiqued Elizondo's treatment of Galilee as too great a departure from the historical place of Galilee. While acknowledging the validity of these critiques, Roberto Goizueta responds by citing liberation theologian Michael Lee, who argues that Elizondo's purpose is, first and foremost, pastoral. To this end, historical accuracy is important but not an end in itself. See Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion,* 140.

resurrection; it is from whence he came and where he is going."[11] Incarnate on the border, in Jesus the glory of God is revealed in "that godforsaken place from which nothing good has ever come."[12] That God would choose to reveal Godself as one from this unsophisticated, marginal place is evidence that "God chooses what the world rejects."[13] From his birth through adulthood, from his public ministry to his death and resurrection, Jesus comes first to people on the margins of society. Thus, theologically, to stand on borderlands is to stand on holy ground, in the kind of place where God has become incarnate.

Advocating for a methodological, theoretical, and practical commitment to a community's borderlands is not an easy argument to make. In the U.S.-American social and political imagination, the specter of the border looms both as a dam, holding back oncoming tides of the undesired other, and as a frontier to be conquered militarily, economically, or culturally.[14] Borderlands are transmogrified into checkpoints; they become stopping-places of identity and desire, spaces of danger beyond which we dare venture only as missionaries or tourists—never as equals, lest we, too, become undesirable. They are spaces from which, like Nazareth, those formed to fear them come to believe that nothing good can come. In the American political imagination, then, the architectural form proper to the borderland is not the bridge but rather the iron fence or the concrete wall. Taught to fear our geographical borderlands,

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[11] Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion,* 129.

[12] Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion,* 129.

[13] Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion,* 137.

[14] See Roberto S. Goizueta, "'There You Will See Him:' Christianity Beyond the Frontier Myth," in *The Church as Counterculture*, eds. Michael L. Budde and Robert W. Brimlow (New York: SUNY Press, 2000), 171-194.

we imbibe, too, a fear of the borderlands that exist within our own communities and institutions—the spaces where races, cultures, and classes touch.

Such fear must be rejected. This rejection invites a concomitant transformation in our theoretical and historical understanding of the borderlands. Recognizing borderlands as spaces not where identities diverge but where they meet, we are able to see them spaces infused with the possibility of the emergence of solidarity and hope. This opens the way for the adoption of a vision of the borderland as *locus theologicus*—as the site of expression of the *sensus fidelium*, the ongoing, lay-led theological "traditioning" guided by the Holy Spirit.[15]

The theological transvaluation of the border of which Goizueta writes is not merely the replacement of this negative myth with an idealized one. Rather, it is the replacement of a false image with a real one, the border as it is: a space where the unifying Spirit of God is breathing new life into the church. The peoples and practices born in the ecclesial borderland are not half-and-half but whole, greater than the sum of their parts and replete with ancient meanings lived in new ways. This joining marks the creation of something new, something not governed by the dualistic logic of needing to be either *this* or *that*. Borderland space foils both monochromatic and dualistic understandings of identity and culture.[16] In seeing space of the border as it really is,

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[15] Orlando Espín defines *sensus fidelium* as the "'faith-full' intuition of the people of God through which "infallibly transmits the contents of Tradition." See Espín, *The Faith of the People: Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 66. See also Pineda-Madrid, "Traditioning: The Formation of Community, the Transmission of Faith," 204-226.

[16] Pragmatist philosopher Gregory Fernando Pappas, contemporary interlocutor of Anzaldúa and other Latina scholars of the border, argues that Anzaldúa's relational, holistic understanding of identity and experience discloses a borderland character, insofar as it has a capacity to deal conceptually with the impure, ambiguous, and in-between. He positions this nondualistic metaphysics of experience in contrast to an "atomistic metaphysics" that views entities (such as cultures) as discrete and monolithic wholes. Within such a system, existence and belonging can only be conceived of in singular terms – one must be either *this* or *that*. In a dualistic metaphysical framework, "ontologically speaking, the existence of the kind of single

we see one another as we really are: joined in dignity and belonging, worthy of inclusion not because of national origin, legal status, race, ethnicity, or language, but because of a joined humanity.[17] This vision of joined humanity is one in which differences are not subsumed or dissolved but rather understood as image and likeness of a trinitarian God of love. Solidarity across borders, what Willie Jennings terms "joining and communion," becomes, then, a real possibility—not as an act of service or begrudging welcome but as a subjunctive act of anticipation of the Kingdom of God.

Applying a borderland hermeneutic to the analysis of contemporary shared parishes must be carefully qualified. Like any rich metaphor, theoretical use of the border is subject to overuse,

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but dual identity claimed by border people seems to make no sense…. It is a philosophical tradition that regards ambiguity, vagueness, and continuities as not part of reality" (267-168). Such an understanding, which by design guards against the possibility of impurity, may succeed in "saving border people from illegitimacy," Pappas argues, but only by "[denying] features that are essential to their border-culture experience" (268). In the ontological landscape of the borderland, by contrast, "what is primary is the ongoing interactions of cultures with all of their raggedness and impurities" (268). With this acknowledgement of and appreciation for continuities and indeterminate boundaries, being "in between" is, ontologically speaking, "a real place to be" (269). This cultural framework of hybridity acknowledges not only the continuity of experience, but also the possibility of emergence. Thus, what makes borderland spaces distinctive, he argues, is the gradual and dynamic emergence over time of something new, vital, creative, and hopeful in the ambiguous in-between space between cultures – something based on the significance of the interactions between people (269-270). See Pappas, "Dewey and Latina Lesbians and the Quest for Purity," 262-273.

[17] Matovina contrasts the reality of common *belonging* with the well-intentioned but often problematic notion of *welcome*/*hospitality*. Commitments to "welcome others" continue to cast inclusion as something that can be offered (and, thus, also something that can be denied or rescinded) by the powerful, those already on the inside. The reality of *belonging*, by contrast, is an ontological status that cannot be altered by the whims and sins of human beings. Ecclesial belonging is endowed not by human decision-making to include or exclude, to "reach out" or not, but rather by the waters of Baptism. This requires a relinquishment of the logic of what Jennings terms "inverted hospitality." White people who have no historical or real claim to the spaces they inhabit—and in fact inhabit lands once stolen from their indigenous inhabitants and later claimed as white through the machinations of segregation—have nevertheless made themselves the arbiters of hospitality within them. See also Jennings, *The Christian Imagination;* and J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

robbing it of precision of meaning and dulling its prophetic edge.[18] More critically, borders must not be romanticized, spiritualized, or idealized as utopic. As Carmen Nanko-Fernández notes, certain theological and ethical treatments of U.S.-Mexico immigration have tended toward this overly spiritualized analysis of immigrants and their journeys.[19] Geographically, borderlands are spaces of confusion, tension, and often violence.[20] Historically, the condition of *mestizaje* originated in conquest and rape. Those who have claimed or reclaimed the border condition most fruitfully have done so not by ignoring or disguising this ugliness, but by engaging the deep ambivalence of the borderland with honesty and nuance. It is the ambivalence and ambiguousness of the borderland that makes it an appropriate optic through which to approach shared parish life. Conceptualizing community in difference as the task of communion across very real borderlines invites a consideration of this task as liturgical and ritual solidarity.

5.3 The Shared Parish as *Locus Ecclesiologicus*: Practical Ecclesiology from a Place

In the context of the shared parish, borderlands constitute not only *locus theologicus* but also *locus ecclesiologicus*—the space in which a new understanding of local church is emerging through the practice of ritual solidarity. As Hoover notes, theologians have been surprisingly (and curiously) hesitant to assign ecclesiological significance to the parish.[21] Ecclesiologically,

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[18] Nanko-Fernández provides a helpful disambiguation of this term by mapping U.S. Latinx theologians' use of three key concepts: the border, exile, and diaspora. See Nanko Fernández, "Alternately Documented Theologies," 36-48.

[19] Nanko-Fernández, "Alternately Documented Theologies," 38-39.

[20] Nancy Pineda-Madrid calls attention to the reality of violence in the borderland context of Ciudad Juárez, particularly the way in which dynamics of migration, political and economic injustice, and the drug trade have contributed to the epidemic of feminicide—the exceptionally brutal and widespread murder of women and girls with impunity.

[21] Hoover, "A Place for Communion: Reflections on an Ecclesiology of Parish Life," 825-849.

"local church" is typically understood as referring to the diocese; within a diocese, parishes are not so much theologically-ordained partitions as they are practical subdivision to facilitate the task of ministry to an expansive geographical area. Yet, as Rahner argues, the parish can properly be understood as an object of theology, particularly of practical and pastoral theology.[22] Transposing Goizueta's understanding of the borderland as *locus theologicus* into an ecclesiological key invites a consideration of the borderlines that exist within ecclesial communities, and on which ecclesial communities exist. These in-between spaces, properly understood as the growing edges of parish communities and in turn of the Church more broadly, represent a *locus ecclesiologicus*—a space for deep reflection about the meaning and identity of the local Church in a changing world. These ecclesial borderlands—understood both as sacred space and as the space of religio-cultural production[23]—offer an imaginative theoretical lens through which to analyze the meaning of community in shared parishes characterized by migration, displacement, and complex cultural identities. St. Mary of the Angels provides an example of the challenges and possibilities inherent in the border condition of many contemporary U.S. parishes. At SMA, both neighborhood and parish have been transformed again and again by waves of social and cultural change: transportation-driven urbanization, neighborhood coalescence around religious congregations, African American northward migration, Latinx immigration, white flight, and more recently, the creeping threat of gentrification. Throughout the parish's history, its parishioners have had to become a community

[22] Karl Rahner, SJ, "Theology of the Parish," 34. Rahner explains, "The practical implications of this must be made by the various disciplines of practical theology, especially canon law and pastoral theology." The present project is a contribution to this task.

[23] See Bhabha, *The Location of Culture.*

of negotiation,[24] continually retrieving and traditioning old practices in new ways to meet the pastoral, liturgical, and socio-cultural needs of a changing religio-cultural landscape.

Understanding the hybrid, porous character of SMA and other shared parishes reveals difference not as a problem to be solved in pursuit of theological purity or cultural uniformity but rather as a vital source of new life. To make this argument is to contend that the question of community in the shared parish—the question with which this dissertation began—must be asked from the borders and in-between spaces that exist within a parish. Prevailing understandings of ecclesial unity make us hesitant to name borders for fear of fomenting division. Yet we should not be afraid to name reality. Reading shared parishes through a borderland lens is not only fitting because the racial, cultural, linguistic, economic, generational, and ideological borderlines that exist there render such places borderlands in a real sense. It also invites us to recognize the task of community as solidarity across these borderlines. Jon Sobrino, recalling Paul's frequent invocation in the New Testament, defines solidarity as "bearing with one another in faith."[25] Bearing with those who are different requires patience, love, and humility; often, it requires an uncomfortable conversion of heart. It is difficult for the people who, having figuratively and/or literally built a parish, suddenly find themselves an aging minority; it is difficult for newly arrived families who find themselves treated as guests in the

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[24] See Bhabha, *The Location of Culture.* Community, like culture, is not a given but an ongoing project. Communities of negotiation "attempt to articulate antagonistic and oppositional elements without the redemptive rationality of sublation or transcendence" (38). That is to say, though the social practice of negotiation, communities become able to recognize and hold in tension difference and contradiction without forcing a resolution or synthesis which, in contexts defined by asymmetrical power relationships would almost inevitably take the form of the perpetuation of the *status quo* which favors dominant parties. Negotiation is the practical, dispositional corollary of the fact of cultural hybridity.

[25] Jon Sobrino, "Bearing with One Another in Faith," *Theological Analysis of Christian Solidarity*, eds. Jon Sobrino and Juan Hernández Pico, trans. Philip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1985), 1-41.

parish that should be their home, too. Within the oft-contested space of the shared parish, encounter across difference can be, at best, prohibitively awkward. This is as true in the ostensibly conservative Midwestern parish as it is in the progressive, inclusion-minded Boston parish. Cultural encapsulation is rarely malicious; it is an instinctive practice of self-preservation in the midst of instability. This is why ritual must play a central role in this work of solidarity. Ritual offers a template for being together in meaningful ways. Praying, singing, embracing, and walking together ritually rescues us from our instinctive, "authentic" impulse toward homophily and creates space within which we can begin to imagine and even perform the kind of community we are too timid to desire. Ultimately, this practice is animated by the Holy Spirit, whose sign is the revolutionary expansion of boundaries.

5.4 Seven Pastoral Imperatives of a Borderland Community

While SMA's intentional and ostensibly successful approach to cultivating intercultural community suggests that it is an outlier among Catholic parishes—and in many ways, it is—I utilize it as a case study in this project in order to demonstrate that in *any* parish, the question of what it means to be a community of difference must be understood as a fundamentally practical question. In the contemporary context, the parish itself is most appropriately understood through the ritual theoretical framework established in the previous chapter. Understood ritually, ecclesial community is about "doing something" more than it is about "saying something;" it is the "doing itself" that lends the community its meaning and identity and through which its mission—both *ad intra* and *ad extra*—is lived. The following seven imperatives illuminate dimensions of the pastoral task of cultivating community in shared parishes.

1) Locating the Borderlines. Borderland space is not only a geographical reality, yet how we imagine and project meaning onto national and geographical borders influences the way

in which we approach the borderlines in our own communities. Shared parishes should approach the task of community by first inviting parishioners to map the borderlines that exist within the parish. As previously noted, instinctive approaches to community building tend to stress a focus on commonalities, as though failing to acknowledge difference will eventually render it inconsequential. Yet, recalling Seligman and Weller, boundary notation is a vital first step in the eventual work of meaningfully and fruitfully negotiating difference.

Mapping the borders within a parish can be revelatory. SMA, for example, offers two masses on ordinary Sundays (one English, one Spanish), and most parishioners attend either one or the other. Thus, it is often taken for granted that the cultural-linguistic divide represents the most salient form of difference at SMA. Yet probing more deeply into the ways in which parishioners spoke about SMA revealed that linguistic divide symbolized by the Sundays masses represents one of numerous, intersecting forms of difference in the parish. Both English- and Spanish-speaking parishioners described the challenge of negotiating differences of generation, class, nationality, race, political ideology, spirituality, and education, among others. Such differences, many noted, existed not only between the two Mass communities but also within them. Many English Mass parishioners conceptualized the difference between the English and Spanish communities in terms of spiritual practice, which they tended to frame through a "progressive"/"traditional" binary. Spanish Mass parishioners, by contrast, tended to characterize the differences between the two Mass communities in terms differences in power and authority.

Mapping the terrain of different at SMA also reveals the error in viewing Latinos (or any sub-group) in the parish as a culturally homogenous community. Though the majority of Spanish Mass attendees are Dominican or Puerto Rican, SMA is home to first- and second-generation immigrants from throughout the Caribbean, Latin America, and Spain. Spanish Mass lay leader

Ana Solano, who is from the Dominican Republic, drew attention to the extensive diversity among the Spanish-speakers at SMA. "I am Spanish, but that doesn't mean that I know my culture," she remarked. "And that doesn't mean that I know the culture from Mexico or Puerto Rico. So I can't say, 'I know you because you are Spanish.' Oh no, no, no. That's not true." From this boundary notation emerged ritual practices of boundary crossing, which preserved particular identities while also constructed creative ways of strengthening bonds across borders. To build intercultural community within the Spanish mass, a previous pastor had initiated the celebration of the feast days of the patron saints of the countries represented by Spanish mass parishioners. Groups of parishioners from a given country would meet to research its patron saint and prepare a short drama or presentation for the entire congregation. "*That* was good," Ana recalled. "The Virgin of Guadalupe, that's the one we know the most. But in my own country, there's a patron that I didn't know: *La Virgen de Regla*. And I had never heard of it. And we celebrated mass for that. And in Puerto Rico, Santa Barbara I guess? I had no idea! So every time we celebrated one, we learned a lot."

2) Building bridges and becoming *gente puente.* Borders at once affirm difference and allow for mutual interaction.[26] Thus, the purpose of intercultural encounter is not to erase the

[26] Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion,* 137, 157. Goizueta's critique of both modernity and postmodernity come down to a critique of the notion that context and identities are so determinative that we become incommunicable to one another. This critique, which forms an important undercurrent of Goizueta's work, is evinced in his forward to Orlando Espín's *The Faith of the People.* Goizueta asks, "Can a white, male Euro-American have *any* understanding of the experience of a Latina, and vice versa? Or is the particular sociohistorical experience of each so radically different from the other, so absolutely incommensurable, that *any* mutual understanding is impossible?" For Goizueta, the answer to the latter question is no. While context forms a vital epistemological category, the theological significance of shared aesthetic practice preserves the possibility of dialogue, encounter, and mutual understanding emerging in a lived way even among those who are very different. To admit a complete incommensurability of identity and experience discloses, by contrast, an atomistic, hyper-individualized, and thus

boundaries between people but rather, in some sense, to bring the boundaries more fully into view in a way that makes clear the potential for bridge-building. It is helpful to recall Heidegger's observation that the act of building a bridge does not only unite the two sides in a middle place; in a real sense, it helps to create the places on each side as well. A bridge gathers people together even as it invites them to cross over. Paradoxically, in the act of joining together, each side is also created. In providing a *via* for solidarity, bridges bring the distinct identities of each side more clearly into view. In a similar way, imaginatively utilizing ritual practice to build bridges among sub-communities in a parish, far from destroying or dissolving particular identities, ultimately brings the particularity of each side more properly into view. Ana's recollection, recounted above, of the celebration of the patrons of the various countries represented in the Spanish Mass offers an example.

In order for this potential solidarity to become a reality requires identifying and empowering *gente puente*, people in the parish who have a foot in both worlds and, for that reason possess the lived experience, practical competencies, and empathy to identify potential spaces for joining among different groups and to accompany communities in this complicated process. The pastoral notion of *gente puente* finds analogy in Anzaldúa's notion of the *nepantlera,* a term she derived from the Nahuatl word *Nepantla* meaning "torn between ways."[27] *Nepantleras*, she writes, "are the supreme border crossers. They act as intermediaries between cultures and their various versions of reality…. They serve as agents of awakening, inspire and challenge others to deeper awareness, greater *conocimiento*, serve as reminders of each other's

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theologically indefensible understanding of the human being. See Goizueta's Forward to Espín, *The Faith of the People*, xii.

[27] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera,* 100.

search for wholeness of being."[28] The place of the bridge builder, the *nepantlera*, the *mestiza*, is not an easy place to stand. Those who live and move between two cultures have often experienced rejection by both. Yet, as Matovina notes, "it is precisely those who know multiple cultures and have borne the pain of conquest and rejection who can lead the way to build a society in which the divisive barriers between peoples are broken."[29]

3) Dwelling patiently in ambiguity and complexity. Positioned at a crossroads, the borderlands are suffused with ambiguity and complexity. Though it is common to hear borderland identity expressed as disclosing or requiring a "tolerance for ambiguity," mere tolerance should be, at most, a baseline from which to begin, not an end to which to aspire. Faced with uncertainty and ambiguity, the human instinct is to resolve it. Understanding shared parish life through a borderland lens helps us to view ambiguity as an unavoidable sign of new life, a growing edge. The task is not to simplify or resolve this complexity but rather to make it the site of our gathering as community. Ritually negotiating these borders does not resolve them. Instead,

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[28] Anzaldúa, "Speaking Across the Divide," 20, cited in Keating, "From Borderlands and New Mestizas to Nepantlas and Nepantleras," 9. Having grown up in the Rio Grande Valley and openly lesbian, Anzaldúa's life embodies *nepantla.* Because they have their feet in two or more worlds, because of this multiplicity of belonging, live and minister interculturally. It can be tempting to regard the *nepantlera*, and the notion of the borderland more generally, in an idealistic way, but this would be a mistake. The *nepantlera* is forever "caught between *los intersticios*, the spaces between the different world she inhabits" (30). Subsequent to the initial publication of *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa later clarified that her understanding of borderlands is tied to the notion of *Nepantla*, which in some way renders the term both more rooted and expansive and also denotes its spiritual horizons. See AnaLouise Keating, "From Borderlands and New Mestizas to Nepantlas and Nepantleras: Anzaldúan Theories for Social Change," in *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 4, no. 3, *Re-Membering Anzaldúa. Human Rights, Borderlands, and the Poetics of Applied Social Theory: Engaging with Gloria Anzaldúa in Self and Global Transformations* (2006), 8. Keating is referencing Anzaldúa, Interviews/*Entrevistas*, 176.

[29] Timothy Matovina, "Introduction," in *Beyond Borders: Writings of Virgilio Elizondo and Friends,* ed. Timothy Matovina (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), 6; see also Elizondo, *Galilean Journey.*

gathering in the space of complexity, uncertainty, and tension helps to enlarge our ecclesiological imagination. Despite the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, the parish is—perhaps ironically—a community that emerges largely organically, "from below." While planning committees and parish councils help to set an agenda for the parish's mission and ministry, there is another way in which the parish's territorial structure and localized orbit confirms James Joyce's famous definition of the Catholic Church as "Here comes everybody."[30] The shared parish is thus not an ideal model of Church but a real one, an image of the Church as historically situated, embodied, human, and hybrid. Ecclesiologically, the Church is no longer understood as a self-contained, self-sufficient *societas perfecta* but rather as missionary and dialogical in nature and structure.[31] When we recognize more fully and intimately the porous, hybrid, and changing nature of our own local ecclesial communities, we experience the Church as the *mestizo* body of Christ, the community formed in the image of God incarnate on margins.

4) Encountering the other as an act of conversion. Border-crossing crossing, what Anzaldúa terms *travesía*,[32] occurs through greater knowing—conscious knowing (*saber*), human encounter (*conocer*), and embodied knowing-through-being (*ser)*. Encounters across borders, when approached with openness and love, can be compelling, even transformative. They have the capacity to disrupt too-limited frames of reference and displace prejudices. As Jennings suggests, there is something of *eros* in the desire to communicate across difference, a deep human desire for joining.[33] For Michelle Archer, an older African American member of the

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[30] James Joyce, *Finnegan's Wake* (Wordsworth Classics, 2012 [1939]).

[31] Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 295.

[32] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 70.

[33] Jennings, *Acts: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*, 10-12, 58-59.

English Mass community at SMA, one of the most profound practical results of her belonging to SMA was her decision to learn Spanish so that she could better collaborate with Spanish-speaking parishioners there. She explained,

> I speak as much Spanish as I do because of the St. Mary's community…. It wasn't until I was here where people started insisting that I speak Spanish. Because usually, I was having a conversation with a few people – not just one person – who spoke Spanish. And they were less inclined to speak [English], especially if it was only me. Like, *why should we change our language for you when there's three or four us that speak Spanish?* Obviously, it wasn't *said* that way, but it was understood that obviously, *we can understand one another in Spanish, so why do we have to go out of our way and think harder to speak to you in English? You should be speaking to us in our language.* So I started trying to do that and I've improved since then with my Spanish.

Lest Michelle's Bostonian frankness be misinterpreted, it should be noted that she recounted this point with a smile and obvious goodwill. Additionally, the magnitude of her willingness to learn Spanish should not be understated. Even though she was highly involved in the liturgical life of SMA, Michelle learned Spanish late in life because she recognized herself not as host but as guest. The way in which she described her very practical decision to learn Spanish is a stark contrast to common anti-immigrant rhetorics such as, "This is America—they should learn English!" Learning Spanish, for Michelle, represents both the recognition of reality—Spanish speakers have become a significant majority at SMA, and learning Spanish would facilitate the intercultural aspects of her ministry as liturgical coordinator—and the conscious decision to respond by placing herself at the service of that reality, rather than clinging to a presumption of linguistic normativity.

It also represents something more: a kind of falling in love. Michelle learned Spanish because she fell in love with a place and its people, her people. (Indeed, as she noted later, learning a language is easiest when you are in love). Ultimately, encounter draws us in to a desire for greater knowing, the result of a transformed relational imagination. Anzaldúa argues,

"Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads."[34] This is not just a tolerance for another's difference or an appreciation for abstract diversity, but rather a deep desire for friendship, for communion—a desire that propels concrete action. Thus, as argued in Chapter 1, solidarity and intimacy—intentional decision-making to stand with the other and the organic joy of friendship—are inseparable dimensions of what it means to call a parish a community.

5) Denouncing white supremacy. A theological transvaluation of the border, and thus of the shared parish as ecclesial borderland, requires a displacement of the "fiction of white supremacy"[35] and its accompanying wounds of racism, nationalism, and militarism. Costly solidarity requires truth-telling, repentance, and conversion. In parishes, this means ensuring equal representation in leadership and decision-making structures and processes, with the expectation that making leadership structures more inclusive has the potential to shift the balance of power in the parish in a fundamental (and, for those in power, potentially uncomfortable) way. Theologically, it means rejecting deceptively idealized understandings of ecclesial community in favor of a vision of community in which the margins and borderlines are recognized as the epicenter of the Spirit's work.

6) Recognizing the wound as the seed. As Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrated, the U.S. Catholic parish has functioned throughout history both as a stabilizing and redemptive local force and also as a structure complicit in racial segregation and other forms of social and cultural exclusion. Catholics today inherit, and must confront, this ambivalence. Similarly, writers and theorists of the border, *mestizaje* is not just a historical or social category but also a symbol of

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[34] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 109.

[35] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera,* 109.

how this wounded world might also become the very place "where the possibility of uniting all that is separate occurs."[36] Thus, Goizueta writes, "The border is not only a cemetery but a seedbed; not only a Calvary but a manger…. Ambiguity can be the seedbed of new life, the border can be the birthplace of a new human community."[37] Borderlands disclose both the dangerous memory of conquest yet also a "map of hope."[38]

7) Practicing ritual solidarity through lay participation. The distance between past and future, memory and hope, is bridged through and expressed in ritual, particularly through aesthetic practices that emerge from the everyday lived experience of the people. Ritual is compelling because it is beautiful. It creates space for embodied encounters that push the boundaries of comfort zones, playfully renegotiate power dynamics, and form relational imaginations. Whenever possible, leaders seeking to cultivate community in shared parishes should look to ritual, both traditional and emergent, as making possible the sort of conversion to the other that the work of solidarity demands.

The experience of SMA suggests that intercultural ritual—whether an ordinary bilingual Sunday Mass or a creative community expression like the Neighborhood Way of the Cross—becomes beautiful not by being technically perfect but rather by being highly participatory, both in the planning process and in implementation. Indeed, in interviews, Spanish-speakers and English-speakers alike had no shortage of often-humorous descriptors for the imperfect, sometimes disjointed nature of even the most well planned bilingual liturgies. Yet parishioners

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[36] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera,* 103, as cited by Alvarez, "Gloria Anzaldúa, *Que En Paz Descanse*," no pagination.

[37] Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion,* 137.

[38] T. Jackie Cuevas, "Tejana Writing, Scholarship, and Activism: Living in the Borderlands with—and without—Gloria Anzaldúa," in "Gloria Anzaldúa ¡Presente! An Introduction in Ten Voices," in Gloria Anzaldúa, Borderlands/*La Frontera*, no pagination.

generally appreciated them. One member of the Spanish Mass community, not a liturgical leader and thus perhaps less self-critical of the process, expressed satisfaction with bilingual Masses:

> It's good when the Mass is bilingual. When it's bilingual, you feel identified with the community. You look into the future and say, "Well, everything will be okay in the future. Everyone will be together, and we won't be separated by language or race or anything else. The Word brings us together, to feel like brothers and sisters. Like a community." See, they'll say this part in English, but then they're going to say that part in Spanish. So it brings us together, because we're all in the same boat. All of us are trying to find out what's in the Word. And maybe we all understand it in different ways, but in the end, it has the same meaning.[39]

Her words suggest that shared liturgical practice, even when not technically perfect or completely understandable for all involved, has the capacity to form relational imaginations. Her remarks are striking because they evince the sort of eschatological consciousness that implicitly characterizes Seligman et al.'s understanding of ritual as subjunctive, "as if" action. Her understanding of participation in liturgical ritual as a shared, active search for meaning, both literally and figuratively, also recalls the contention that ritual encompasses ambiguity and complexity precisely because participation does not require that everyone already (or ever) share identical meanings, understandings, and identities. Indeed, solidarity does not require synthesis. What participants in bilingual liturgy do hold in common are the ritual actions themselves: for example, the embodied movements of the Mass—gathering, sitting, standing, kneeling, holding hands, exchanging signs of peace, processing forward, eating and drinking, departing. Critics might contend that they are merely "going through the motions." On some level, that is precisely what they are doing. Ritual is the language of community. By creating space within this commonly held repertoire of movement for the negotiation of boundaries and differences, ritual invites participants into an embodied kind of communion that foregrounds and strengthens other practices of dialogue and justice.

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[39] Interview, Yamaris Rodríguez, April 2017 (translated from Spanish).

5.5 Conclusion: The Borderland as Soteriological Horizon for Parish Life

Solidarity is ultimately a soteriological claim. What propels solidarity, and what differentiates solidarity from mere service or allyship, is the conviction that salvation is social—that we are saved in and through communion with one another. Christian notions of salvation point us to our local communities as the loci of salvation in history, the places where we practice life together in light of the reign of God. In communities of difference, solidarity is a grace-filled practice. The space where differences meet is a sacramental space, a space marked by wounds yet charged with grace and hope. Building community in these interstices, these borderlands, is an eschatological and soteriological action.

As Elizabeth Johnson notes, in Scripture, the notion of holiness or sanctity is not generally used to describe the moral status of an individual exemplar but rather represents "a consecration of [the people's] very being."[40] In her analysis of Hebrew roots of the notion of the *communio sanctorum*—the communion of the saints—Johnson traces the language of communion to its roots in Jewish covenantal relationship. In the New Testament, similarly, Paul uses the term "the saints" most frequently to speak of the Christian community as a whole, not of morally exemplary individuals. Patriarchally conditioned notions of Christian sanctity too often position it as a reward-designation for individual piety, placing the holy one in a position of superiority over or separation from the community at large. The Second Vatican Council, she notes, in many ways restored this early companionship model in its brief but substantive treatment of the communion of saints in *Lumen Gentium*. She illuminates how the Council's portrayal of the "friends and fellow heirs of Jesus Christ" (LG 50) broadens and deepens its communal ecclesiological vision of the "people of God." The capacious sort of holiness

[40] Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets*, 58.

described in LG is one cultivated in the ordinary situations of life and poured out in equal measure to "all who are moved by the Spirit of God."[41] A church of communion, then, is not a collection of superbly holy individuals but rather a holy community; they are holy to the extent that they are a community.

In Chapter 1, I noted that whenever I speak to people who belong to or minister at a shared parish, nearly everyone expresses some degree of discomfort with the cultural and ethnic separation that they say exists there. No one seems to know what to do about it or where to begin, but something about the separation seems to them like a violation of the Christian imperative. Solidarity gives this instinctive yearning for communion a praxic direction. It tells us what to do about separation: to overcome it through intentional practices of joining. In shared parishes, liturgical and devotional practice that bridges boundaries becomes a critical site of solidarity in difference. Because of ritual's aesthetic power and embodied nature, ritual itself can become a common language for people otherwise divided. Ritual joining becomes a foretaste of the reign of God, the eschatological performance of an "as if" community, not in spite of people's differences but because of them.

[41] Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets*, 117.

Conclusion: The Borderland Future of the Parish

The parish is traditionally defined as a stable community of the faithful. In an age in which parish belonging is destabilized, the meaning of stability, and thus the meaning of community life within the context of the parish, must be reconsidered. In so doing, however, perhaps the greatest challenge is the question of how to reconcile the recognition of cultural fluidity, destabilized identities, and displaced belongings on a theoretical level while also giving priority to the unassailable desire for stability on a practical level. In other words, in a postmodern context characterized by what Bhabha terms cultural "unhomeliness"—displacement, confusion, disorientation—how do we understand, and satisfy, the human desire for home?[1]

Michael Nausner, drawing on Bhabha, proposes "reimagining [the] homeland *as* a dynamic borderland, that is, not necessarily in opposition to those I cannot yet imagine as belonging to this land."[2] The goal of this reimagining is not the glorification of uprootedness. The loss, either actual or metaphorical, of homeland is a deeply painful condition; globally, a majority of those who experience such uprooting (including many of those recently arrived the U.S.) do not do so by choice. We can understand shared parishes as analogous to a border-space not out of a desire to take a good thing and destabilize it but rather because parishes are already unstable places. In the present context, the parish should be understood not as an already realized project with a fixed identity into which newcomers are welcomed (or not), but rather as the local gathering of a pilgrim church, an unfinished task.

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[1] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 13.

[2] Michael Nausner, "Homeland as Borderland: Territories of Christian Subjectivity," in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, eds. Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera (Chalice Press, 2004), 129; emphasis in the original.

The notion of parochial stability seems to conflict with the incarnational invitation to ground ecclesiological reflection in the complexity and ambiguity that characterizes contemporary parish life. Yet I contend that there is not a contradiction between stability and complexity. Rather, the parish's stability gives it the framework to bear complexity. In the case of SMA, the fixedness of the parish's territorial boundaries are what allowed it—perhaps required it—to become a cultural and racial borderland in order to survive. If the parish, like the Jewish congregations by which it was once surrounded, could have uprooted itself and followed its early Irish parishioners to the suburbs, perhaps it would have. But the vocation of the parish is to remain. So SMA remained in the neighborhood, basement-level doors open, and eventually recognized its call to remain with the neighborhood in risky solidarity. Its pastor and parishioners practiced this solidarity in difference of race, culture, and language, of gang affiliation and family and neighborhood, through ordinary actions of love and accompaniment throughout the year. Each Good Friday, parishioners take to the streets to perform this solidarity, proclaiming it as intimately related to Jesus' own dying and rising.

Over the course of decades, SMA has become a community by doing community. It has become a space of joining and communion, where very different people have come searching for home and somehow encountered it. In one conversation, a recent immigrant from the Dominican Republic explained to me that she came to SMA because it was most similar to her church in the hometown she left behind:

> I would say that if you are looking for a place that looks a lot like the home where you grew up, you could come to Santa Maria. They give you a very warm welcome. You feel as though you are in community, and you feel that you are together with all your family, that although they are not blood relatives, well, you feel that way. It's one of the parishes with the most human warmth that I have ever been to.[3]

[3] Interview, Yamaris Rodríguez, April 2017 (translated from Spanish).

Later that day, an older African woman also described SMA as the parish most like the one she used to attend in Atlanta. SMA is a community born of overlapping migrations, a terrain of memory. Even the frequent return visits of former parishioners who have moved away are described in such language. During announcements at end of both masses, the speaker recognizes not only new parishioners but also "those who have been away for a while." Through shared practice, the theological notion of exile and return is built into the very fabric of the community's self-understanding. Indeed, the parish is a geographically fixed place with a dynamic identity, a place of crossing and dwelling.[4] As Nanko-Fernández rightly notes, borders are rarely the final destination.[5] Accordingly, an understanding of shared parish as borderland directs our attention to the pilgrim character of the Church on earth. In its original Greek, the word parish denotes both sojourner and neighbor. A borderland practical ecclesiology is, in some way, a return to this original paradox: the parish is a space for both intimacy and transition, both journey and home. The parish is a fixed set of territorial boundaries that exist among other kinds boundaries, and its walls, as Justo González argues, are like skin: porous, soft, wounded, human:

> A border is the place at which two realities, two worldviews, two cultures, meet and interact…. At the border growth takes place by encounter, by mutual enrichment. A true border, a true place of encounter, is by nature permeable. It is not like medieval armor, but rather like skin. Our skin does set a limit to where our body begins and where it ends. Our skin also sets certain limits to our give-and-take with our environment, keeping out certain germs, helping us to select that in our environment which we are ready to absorb. But if we ever close up our skin, we die.[6]

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[4] See Thomas Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[5] Nanko-Fernández, "Alternately Documented Theologies," 39.

[6] Justo González, *Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes* (Nashville, Abingdon, 1996), 86-87; cited in Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion*, 137. González' notion of borders as skin-like echoes Seligman et al.'s distinction between conceiving of borders as "cell walls" rather than "brick walls," noted in Chapter 4.

In the context of the parish, González's final point is no mere hypothetical. A growing chorus of voices have suggested that the parish as we know it is approaching the end of its viability as a model of ecclesial community.[7] The reality of the shared parish reveals that the future of the Church depends in no small part on the capacity of parishes to grow walls of flesh rather than concrete, to become communities of difference in ways that reveal the presence of God. For the parish, as Anzaldúa writes, "*No hay más que cambiar*" —there is nothing to do but change.

This dissertation has proposed a re-conception of the dividing lines that exist between cultural, racial, linguistic, and other communities in shared parishes. Postmodern and postcolonial conceptions of culture suggest that culture is formed not only, or even primarily, between borders but rather at them. The "location of culture," to use the title of Homi Bhabha's classic, is not the lands on either side of the border but the borderlands themselves. Such an understanding necessitates a movement away from what Goizueta calls the frontier myth—a Christianity of "unbreachable borders"—toward an understanding of Christianity in which communities dwell on the borderlands themselves, make their home in the space where cultures, races, languages, generations, classes, genders, ideologies, and histories meet.

Why focus on borders at all? Why concentrate on difference rather than the myriad universals that unite Catholics across difference? If Hoover's ethnographic study of a shared parish that is in many ways more typical than SMA is any indication, focusing on commonalities does little to convince parishioners of the value of fostering community across cultural, ethnic, and linguistic difference. If anything, it implicitly encourages the human impulse toward

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[7] Walter Kasper's reimagining of the parish structure conveys the precarious status of the parish model in a Western European context. See *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission*, 279-281. Matovina notes, also in a European context, that the increasing prevalence of new ecclesial movements (e.g. Cursillo, Neocatechumenal Way, Communion and Liberation) in Spain currently threatens to make the parish obsolete there. See Matovina, *Latino Catholicism*, 119.

homophily, making the other's similarity to myself a condition of my joining them. In a parish context characterized by rapid change and destabilized identities, what is needed is an understanding of ecclesial community that has the capacity not merely to tolerate difference, but to recognize the revelatory role of difference in the life and identity of a community. Where the communion paradigm goes right, to this end, is in affirming difference as a gift and dialogue across difference as the fruit of loving encounter, led by the communicating and unifying Spirit of God. Where the communion paradigm does not go far enough is that, in its attempting to affirm difference, too often it elides complexity, "baptizes the mess," and fails to account for the ways in which difference interacts in consequential ways with systems of power and exclusion as well as structural sin. Consequently, even as it seeks to elevate the theological significance of unity in diversity, it risks reinscribing ambivalence, suspicion, and even disdain with respect to actual difference—particularly racial and cultural difference—both theologically and pastorally.

By evincing patience with the kind of ambiguity, hybridity, and change that characterize shared parish life, a borderland practical ecclesiology seeks to offer a corrective to overly romanticized accounts of ecclesial community, while at the same time inviting a focus on the liturgical and ritual practices that have emerged as ways of cultivating solidarity across borders within and around a parish community. Negotiating these borders, cultivating a community of difference through liturgical and social solidarity, is hard work—a "wrenching task," in Copeland's words, "something to be dared." As Gayle Doyle of SMA explained, "We have to work hard at figuring out how we hear one another's voices." And yet, if the experience of SMA offers any indication, this difficult work has the capacity to become something beautiful and joyful, something that matters deeply to the people who belong there. It is a joy that has the capacity to compel people to place a vision of the Reign of God over their own personal comfort,

as in Gayle's decision to join SMA rather than a comfortably progressive but mostly-white church, or the decision of both Michelle and Martin to forego membership in Boston's lauded black Catholic personal parish in order to remain in the sometimes culturally disjointed space of SMA. The work of communion is practiced not only in rituals like those of Holy Week, but also in the more mundane gatherings—the parish council, the finance committee, over coffee and donuts after ordinary Sunday Mass. As one lay leader put explained, even after years serving on the parish council, "I still go to parish council and go, 'Oh, I love all these people!' It's the same tired issues, but I still love all these people."[8] It is the ritual aspect of even these everyday activities that discloses the capacity to reveal the divine.

The borderland practical ecclesiology I have offered in this project is relevant beyond parishes that are multicultural or multiethnic. The way in which all parishes name and negotiate their borders within shapes how pastoral ministry is envisioned in such contexts. We can think, for example, of the need for the cultivation of community in parishes that have been clustered or merged, particularly throughout the urban Midwest and Northeast: the working-class parish merged with the upper-middle class parish, the historically Italian parish merged with the historically Irish parish, the social justice-oriented parish merged with the traditionalist parish. Indeed, anytime two or more groups find themselves faced with the task of negotiating a shared sense of belonging, there arises the challenge of speaking meaningfully about community in difference. In a U.S. ecclesial context characterized by profound ideological polarization, exacerbated by political instability and the rise of social media, ideological divides feel in some ways more fraught and unbreachable than linguistic, cultural, and ethnic ones. There is an urgent need for ecclesiological language than can help us to approach difference within our

[8] Elizabeth Greer, Interview, April 2013.

communities not as a threat but as a gift. Dialogue is typically proposed as a solution to conditions of polarization or division. Yet dialogue alone risks failure, because the multiplicity of meanings, symbols, and values that people hold can lead participants to feel as though they are talking past one another. This project invites communities wounded by contempt and division to consider how ritual participation, alongside other practices of dialogue, offers participants a common lexicon of embodied participation that opens hearts and minds, moving us gently toward compassion.

Appendix A: Case Study Methodology

Lived Theology and Practical Ecclesiology: Emerging Trajectories in the Study of Parish Life

The robust use of ethnography and case study as tools for theological research is still in its relative infancy and for this reason is a largely constructive endeavor. The study of what is often termed lived religion relies methodologically on, and has much in common with, the social sciences. The notion of *lived theology*, on the other hand, surfaces a number of methodological and conceptual tensions. For example, how does the theological notion of revelation complicate the empirical integrity of sociological methodologies? How does one discern the correlation between academic theology and the faith as it is lived? Are case studies merely examples of theories already arrived at and truths already revealed—in which case, is the researcher's process of analysis ultimately the imposition of a systematic framework upon the messiness of reality? Or can theology be truly inductive? How does approaching ecclesiology from a lived perspective complicate the often overly dichotomous distinction between "theology from above" and "theology from below"? By what norms should lived practice be analyzed and critiqued? How do we account for the voices of outliers within the community in focus? Charles Marsh describes the difference between lived religion and lived theology thus:

> Lived religion examines practices, beliefs, and objects to understand more clearly the human phenomenon of religion, while lived theology examines practices, objects, and beliefs in order to understand God's presence in the human experience…. Lived theology is an apt expression for the *foregrounding of embodied particularity in theological narrative*. Lived theology then pursues *both a descriptive and an edifying purpose*: namely, that of keeping narrative space open to the actions of God in experience, and understanding the social consequences of theological ideas.[1]

[1] Charles Marsh, "Introduction: Lived Theology: Method, Style, and Pedagogy," in *Lived Theology: New Perspectives on Method, Style, and Pedagogy,* eds. Charles Marsh, Peter Slade, and Sarah Azaransky (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 7.

The notion that communities and practices can be read as living texts is a common maxim in the social sciences. Marsh suggests that Christian congregations and communities can be read as *theological* texts,[2] as embodied narratives of God's redemption at work in the wisdom of communities. Following Marsh's suggestion that the study of faith communities enables us to examine the social consequences of theological ideas, in this project I have drawn on the experience of SMA as a way of illustrating the limits, growing edges, and new possibilities of ecclesiological language about unity in diversity.

I have classified this project as "practical ecclesiology." At the heart of this term is what Clare Watkins identifies as "the frustrations felt when what has been learned in the ecclesiological textbooks and courses seems an impossible mismatch with the realities of pastoral work."[3] Like Watkins, driving my work is the persistent question of "how actual practices are given their proper place within the theological discourse of church."[4] Practical ecclesiology proposes an alternative starting point for theological reflection about the church, shifting the primary locus of reflection from abstract frameworks about the nature and identity of the church to the concrete ecclesial practices of a particular community. Following Watkins, my work relies on a conviction that faith communities should be understood as "bearers of theology."[5] What these communities do—the practices they develop, the questions they ask, the mission statements they formulate—are in real ways acts of "faith seeking understanding;" they

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[2] Marsh, "Lived Theology," 12.

[3] Clare Watkins with Deborah Bhatti, Helen Cameron, Catherine Duce, and James Sweeney, "Practical Ecclesiology: What Counts as Theology in Studying the Church?" in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, Pete Ward, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 168.

[4] Watkins et al., "Practical Ecclesiology," 169.

[5] Watkins et al., "Practical Ecclesiology," 169.

are the practice of theology. Taking seriously the parish community as what I have called a *locus ecclesiologicus* also entails a fundamental shift in audience and accountability. The experiences of communities must not become merely "source material" to be mined, extracted and carried away by and for academic theologians in ways that reinscribe the colonial process. Doing practical ecclesiology implicitly calls for a reimagining of the theological process itself—one grounded in collaboration, mutuality, and justice, as in the U.S.-Latinx theological praxis of *teología de conjunto.*

Case Study versus Ethnography

In this project, SMA serves as a case study that sheds light on the question of whether (and how) shared participation in ritual fosters intercultural and interracial solidarity in shared parishes. In the social sciences, the purpose of a case study is to "seek to understand a larger phenomenon through intensive examination of one instance."[6] Case studies are generally understood as bounded and specific examples that shed light on the broader class or category of phenomenon of which they are a part.[7] Because case studies are singular instances of a broader phenomenon—in this case, SMA is one particular shared parish in a rapidly diversifying Church—the purpose of such studies is not to draw generalizable conclusions, nor to suggest that such cases are representative of the whole. Rather, they offer thorough description in a way that "illustrates the complexities of a situation, depicts how the passage of time has shaped events,

[6] Gretchen B. Rossman and Sharon F. Rallis, *Learning in the Field*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2012), 103. See also Arie Cohen and Deborah Court, "Ethnography and Case Study: A Comparative Analysis," *Academic Exchange Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (Fall 2003), 283.

[7] See Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995).

provides vivid material, and presents differing perspectives or opinions."[8] At the same time, recognizing the limited generalizability of individual case studies, I have also utilized the experience of SMA as an illustrative basis from which to offer broader prescriptive recommendations for shared parishes in Chapter 5.

As detailed below, this study employed a number of ethnographic methods, including participant-observation, interviews. Nevertheless, it should still be understood a case study, not an ethnography. Case studies differ from ethnographies in both intent and scope. Cohen and Court argue that the former are "outward looking," aiming at extrapolation to other cases and the phenomenon in question more broadly, while the latter are "inward looking," aiming at thick description and analysis of the beliefs, practices, behaviors, and tacit knowledge of a particular culture or group.[9] In this dissertation, I have limited my analysis to SMA's liturgical and ritual practices, and primarily those of Holy Week, for the purpose of shedding light on ritual practice in shared parishes more broadly.

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[8] Rossman and Rallis, *Learning in the Field,* 103; referencing Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), 25.

[9] See David Fetterman, *Ethnography Step by Step*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998); Harry F. Wolcott, *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing*, 2nd ed. (AltaMira Press, 2008); and Wolcott, "On Ethnographic Intent," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 21 (1985), 187-203. At the same time, as researchers have observed, the boundary between ethnography and case study is a somewhat imprecise one. This blurriness is due at least in part to broad overuse of the term "ethnography" by researchers to describe any community-based qualitative study—an overuse that can similarly be observed in contemporary discussions of ethnography within theology. See J.U. Ogbu, N.E. Sato, and E.Y. Kim, "Anthropological Inquiry," in J.P. Keeves, ed., *Educational Research, Methodology, and Measurement: An Intentional Handbook,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Pergamon Press, 1997). Marie Parker-Jenkins suggests a middle way between the two approaches, which she terms "ethno-case study." See Parker-Jenkins, "Problematising Ethnography and Case Study: Reflections on Using Ethnographic Techniques and Researcher Positioning," *Ethnography and Education* 13 (2018), 18-33.

Methods

I approached parish life at SMA as a participant-observer. From its origins in the field of cultural anthropology, DeWalt and DeWalt define participant observation as "a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture."[10] Applying this anthropological method to practical ecclesiology centers the parish as the locus of the researcher's participation; it is the "life routines and culture" of the parish itself that the researcher seeks to discern through participation. Yet, as noted in Chapter 5, to speak of the "culture" of a shared parish like SMA is really to speak of cultural plurality and hybridity. Thus, over the course of the five years I spent as a participant-researcher at SMA, I increasingly found that observing the culture of SMA meant turning attention to the parish's internal borderlands, the places of intercultural negotiation, tension, and encounter created by the interaction of members of different cultures and ethnicities.

I lived in the SMA parish house for nine months from September 2011 through May 2012. Like many Boston parishes, there was no priest in residence; along with another graduate student, I taught catechesis, cleaned the church, compiled the parish bulletin, and did other administrative tasks in exchange for my room in the parish house. As a researcher and lay woman, living in the SMA parish house afforded me the highly unique opportunity to experience the inner life of a Catholic parish. After my time in the parish house was over, I continued to belong to SMA as a parishioner/researcher until I moved away from Boston in 2016. Over the course of my five years at SMA, I took part in English- and Spanish-language Sunday Masses at

[10] Kathleen M. DeWalk and Billie R. DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers,* 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: AltaMira, 2011), 1. See also Paul Atkinson and Martyn Hammersley, "Ethnography and Participant Observation," in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), 248-261.

SMA, as well as other community celebrations, liturgies, meetings, and activities. For a time, I belonged to the Parish Council and also assisted with liturgical coordination. For this project, focusing my attention on the liturgies and rituals of Holy Week, I observed not only the liturgies themselves but also the planning meetings that led up to them and evaluative meetings that followed them, detailing my observations in notes, memos, and journal entries. I returned to SMA during Holy Week in 2017 for a final round of participant-observations and interviews.

I conducted two rounds of English- and Spanish-language interviews, seeking to speak both with lay leaders as well as with parishioners who were less involved in leadership and planning. (See Appendix C for list of interviews.) Efforts were made to obtain a representative sample of participants from the English and Spanish Mass communities and of African American, Afro-Caribbean, Latinx, and Euro-American participants. Because SMA serves in this project as an illustrative case study and not a comprehensive ethnography, priority was placed on obtaining a representative sample of quality interviews rather than quantity of interviews. Interviews were semi-structured in form. (See Appendices B.1 and B.2 for interview protocols.) Most interviews lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. Most took place at the SMA parish house; others were conducted in participants' homes or, in a few cases, their places of business. Most interviews were conducted individually; in some cases, married couples opted to interview jointly. I interviewed more women than men, both because more women than men volunteered to speak with me and because, in a real way, women comprise the backbone of lay leadership at SMA. Two focus groups were attempted, but most participants opted for individual interviews, either for ease of scheduling or because they wished to speak more candidly than they felt a focus group would allow. Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the interview process. All interview participants were informed of and consented to the nature and goals of the

study. All were aware of the voluntary nature of their participation and were told that they could end the interview at any time or refrain from responding to any question. No one was compensated for participation.

All interviews were audio-recorded, from which transcripts were made. Spanish-language interviews were transcribed in Spanish and subsequently translated to English. Following the model of Anfara, Brown, and Mangione, I engaged in surface content analysis through initial open coding.[11] After this initial iteration, I then engaged in axial coding. During this phase, I applied concepts from my research questions to emerging themes in a dialectical fashion. Themes emerged that were common to both interviews, including various conceptualizations of difference, differences as boundaries, liturgical practices of boundary-crossing, non-liturgical practices of boundary crossing, and bilingual liturgies as performing boundary crossing. I then utilized these themes as heuristic devices to interpret and analyze interview data.[12] I ensured rigor in the case study by triangulating multiple data sources, including parishioner interviews, historical and social scientific studies of the archdiocese and local neighborhood, census data, city and archdiocesan newspaper articles, and my own participant-observations.

Positionality

As noted, I lived at SMA for almost a year and, after leaving, remained an active member of the community. For five years, I was simultaneously a researcher and parishioner at SMA. My oldest daughter was baptized at the Easter Vigil Mass one year. For several years, my husband

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[11] Vincent A. Anfara, Kathleen M. Brown, and Terri L. Mangione, "Qualitative Analysis on Stage: Making the Research Process More Public," *Educational Researcher* (October 2002), 28-38.

[12] Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson. "Concepts and Coding," in *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996), 26-53.

served as the director of the small English Mass choir. I dined around more kitchen tables and attended more cookouts and celebrations than I can count. Some of my closest friendships emerged from my years at SMA. For this reason, I have made no attempt to portray myself as a disinterested observer of the SMA community. To do so would be disingenuous, and it would also overshadow what I believe to be the real advantages of deep embeddedness in, local knowledge of, and genuine and heartfelt commitment to a faith community for the work of practical ecclesiology. All researchers, "insiders" and "outsiders" alike, have biases; what is vital is to name and critically interrogate these biases, as I did throughout the data collection phase of the study in my memos and notes.

Yet despite my ostensible insider status at SMA, elements of critical distance remained. As a young, white, female graduate student researching race and culture in a highly diverse parish, I was constantly attuned to power dynamics at work, particularly in interviews. My racial and economic privilege invariably conditioned the way in which I approached and interpreted the parish, neighborhood, and people of SMA. Language was sometimes an obstacle. Though I am a relatively fluent Spanish-speaker, I constantly struggled to understand the Dominican accent; even transcribing certain interviews was a challenge.

In some cases, I found that Spanish-speaking participants had less to say than English-speakers about the challenges of working and worshipping cross-culturally. There are several potential explanations for this. It is possible that some Spanish-speaking participants were implicitly telling me what they believed I wanted to hear; perhaps they did not want to offend me, an English-speaking SMA parishioner. Perhaps my affiliation with Boston College gave the interview process a certain formality that inhibited such openness. Recent émigrés expressed gratitude for the welcome they felt they had received at SMA from Spanish- and English-

speakers alike. Longtime lay leaders in the Spanish Mass community had more to say about the kind of everyday tensions that had arisen between Spanish- and English-speaking parishioners over the years, but these long-timers also tended to place much more emphasis on the positive. They tended to speak in glowing and somewhat nostalgic terms about their decades of collaboration with the English-speaking community. Even the Latina parishioners with whom I was very close, those who spoke candidly and bluntly with me about the good, the bad, and the ugly of their experiences at the parish, had little to say critically about their cross-cultural interactions. Members of the Spanish Mass community often described English/Spanish tensions in the ultimately positive language of family. As one woman put it, "We fight. We make up…. It's like a family." It is also possible that members of the Spanish Mass community had simply spent less time than had members of the English community turning over the intricacies of SMA's mission of multiculturalism. To the English Mass community's largely progressive, social justice-oriented crowd, SMA's diversity is part of what made it an attractive parish. The Spanish Mass community, by contrast, is larger and more ideologically diverse. Besides, for Latinos in the Northeast, belonging to a parish where Mass is offered in Spanish almost invariably means belonging to a shared parish; multiculturalism is less a progressive selling point and more a fact of ecclesial existence.

The deep friendships I cultivated over the years with both English- and Spanish-speakers at SMA afforded me multidimensional and appreciative insight into the life of the parish and its people. At the same time, after moving away from Boston (and thus ending my membership at SMA), I spent a year and a half I spent working on the analysis phase of the project, supplementing intimacy with distance to constructive ends.

Appendix B.1: English Interview Protocol and Questions

WELCOME

Thank you so much for taking time to participate in this [interview/focus group]. We'll be sure to keep our conversation to about an hour. I'm interested in learning about the experiences of Catholics who belong to parishes that are multicultural and who participate in multicultural liturgies and practices.

You were invited because you are parishioners at St. Mary's and you tend to be involved in the life of the parish.

I really appreciate your willingness to share your insights and experiences. There are no right or wrong answers. [Focus Group: Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what other people have said.

I will help to guide the conversation, but as much as possible I would like our discussion to be driven by you all. Instead of talking to me, please talk to one another, as though this were a small group on a retreat.]

I'll be recording our conversation today because I want to be sure not to miss anything. This recording will be kept confidential. What is said here stays here. In the final report all names will be changed. You don't have to answer any question you don't want to answer, and you are free to leave the [group/interview] at any time for any reason.

[Does anyone/Do you] have any questions before we begin?

I. INTRODUCTIONS (focus group only):

1) Let's begin with some introductions. We'll go around in a circle. Tell us your name and the main things you're involved with here at St. Mary's.

II. ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS

2) When did you first start coming to SMA? What brought you here?

3) In what ways is it similar to/different from other parishes you have attended?

   a. *Probe for connections to parish multicultural identity*

4) Do you live within the territorial boundary of SMA? Or how did you find your way here?

5) If you were to describe SMA to a friend who has never been to the parish, what would you say?

   a. *Probe: mission/identity of the parish*

b. OR, if you could describe St. Mary's in one word, what would it be?

6) How, if at all, have you seen the parish change during your time here? What has that been like for you?

   a. *Probe: Demographically… culturally… racially… socially… spiritually/theologically… leadership-wise…*

III. EXPLORATION QUESTIONS

7) The SMA mission statement describes St. Mary's as a "multicultural and multilingual" community. When, if at all, do you tend to interact most with people from the [opposite community – English/Spanish] at SMA?

   a. *Probe for specific examples*

8) What are those interactions like for you?

9) What tends to be positive for you about these experiences? What is challenging?

10) In your experience, what are things that promote multicultural collaboration at SMA?

   a. *Probe/examples: events, practices, liturgies, attitudes, mission statements, etc*.

11) What do you see as barriers to intercultural collaboration at SMA?

   a. *Probe: If you could change or improve one thing with respect to SMA's approach to multicultural community, what would it be?*

12) For you personally, what's your favorite part of Holy Week at SMA? Why?

   a. *Probe for specific examples, memories, and descriptions*

IV. EXIT QUESTION

13) Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix B.2: Spanish Interview Protocol and Questions

BIENVENIDOS

Muchas gracias por participar en este grupo de enfoque. Esta conversación tardará más o menos una hora. Me interesa saber más de las experiencias de Católicos que son feligreses en parroquias multiculturales y que participen en liturgias y prácticas multiculturales.

Usted/es fue/ron invitado/s porque es/son feligres/es en Sta. María de los Angeles y porque usted/es participa/n en la vida de la parroquia.

Yo le/s agradezco mucho por compartir su/s ideas y experiencias. No hay respuestas correctas ni incorrectas. [Grupo de Enfoque: Por favor, siéntase libre de compartir su punto de vista, incluso si difiere de lo que otras personas han dicho.

Voy a ayudar a guiar la conversación, pero si es posible me gustaría que nuestra discusión sea dirigida por todos ustedes. Cuando compartes tus ideas, por favor hablen entre ustedes y no hablan a mi. Espero que esta discusión puede ser similar a un pequeño grupo en un retiro.]

Voy a grabar nuestra conversación hoy porque quiero estar seguro de no perder ni olvidar nada. Esta grabación se mantendrá confidencial. Lo que se dice aquí se queda aquí. En el informe o reporte final, se cambiarán todos los nombres. No tiene que responder a ninguna pregunta que no quiera responder, y puede dejar [el grupo/la entrevista] en cualquier momento por cualquier motivo.

¿Hay dudos – o alguien tiene alguna pregunta antes de comenzar?

I. Introducciones (Grupo de enfoque)

1) Empezamos con algunas presentaciones. Vamos a dar la vuelta en un círculo – por favor, díganos su nombre y las principales cosas que está involucrado aquí en St. Mary's.

II. PREGUNTAS DE LA VIDA PARROQUIAL DE STA. MARIA

2) ¿Cuándo comenzó a venir a SMA? ¿Por qué decidiste venir a este parroquia?

    a. De qué manera es similar o diferente a otras parroquias a las que has asistido?
    b. *Probe: Identidad multicultural*
    c. *Probes: ¿Usted vive dentro del límite territorial de SMA? ¿O cómo encontraste tu camino aquí?*

3) Si usted describiera a SMA a un amigo que nunca ha estado en la parroquia, ¿qué diría usted?

a. *Probe:* misión / identidad de la parroquia
b. O, si pudieras describir a St. Mary's en una palabra, ¿cuál sería?

4) ¿En tú opinión, cómo ha cambiado la parroquia a lo largo de su tiempo aquí?

   a. *Probe: Demográficamente ... culturalmente ... racialmente ... socialmente ... espiritualmente / teológicamente ... en terminos de liderazgo...*
   b. *¿Qué le ha parecido?*

III. PREGUNTAS DE EXPLORACIÓN

5) La declaración de misión de la SMA describe a Santa María como una comunidad "multicultural y multilingüe." ¿Cuándo, en todo caso, suele a interactuar más con personas de la [comunidad opuesta - inglés / español] en SMA?

   a. *Probe: Ejemplos específicos?*
   b. *¿Cómo son esas momentos de interacción para usted?*
   c. *¿Qué son algunas cosas positivas para usted acerca de estas experiencias? ¿Qué es un desafío?*

6) En su experiencia, ¿cuáles son las cosas que promueven la colaboración multicultural en SMA?

   a. *Probe: Ejemplos, e.g. eventos, prácticas, liturgias, las actitudes, las declaraciones de misión, etc.*

7) ¿Qué ve usted como barreras para la colaboración intercultural en SMA?

   a. *Probe: Si pudiera cambiar o mejorar una cosa con respecto al enfoque de la comunidad multicultural de SMA, ¿cuál sería?*

8) Para ustedes, hablando personalmente, ¿Cuál es su parte favorita de la Semana Santa en SMA? ¿Por qué?

   a. *Probe: ejemplos específicos, memorias y descripciones*

IV. PREGUNTA FINAL

9) ¿Hay algo más que quiere usted decir?

Appendix C: List of Interviews

Pseudonym	Date
Ernesto Hernández	3/29/13
William Morales*	4/2/13
Elizabeth Greer	4/3/13
Tom Nixon	4/3/13
Sr. Josephine Beyard	4/4/13
Martin Williams	4/4/13
Sarah O'Reilly	4/7/13
Megan Lehmann	4/7/13
Valeria Montes	4/7/13
Ximena Rojas	4/9/13
Bernadette Silver	4/9/13
Pablo Echevarría, SJ	4/18/13
Sr. Margaret Francis Miles	4/21/13
Ramón Cardoso	4/23/13
Ana Solano	12/8/15
Gayle McInerny	4/14/17
Bob Potter	4/14/17
Yamaris Rodríguez	4/14/17
Michelle Archer	4/14/17
Patricia Klein	4/14/17
Leticia Álvarez	4/14/17
Marielena García	4/14/17
Victoria Thompson	4/14/17
Alma Cisneros	4/15/17

*A public figure, this is Morales' real name.

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