Exploring the Ecclesial Identity of the Catechist
Through the Hermeneutic of “Full, Conscious, and Active Participation”

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore questions of belonging and participation in the Catholic Church in the context of a particular catechetical ministry. As the Director of the Catechesis Office for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton, Ontario, the researcher oversees training and ongoing formation for catechists. The General Directory for Catechesis claims that catechists must receive formation that goes beyond simply communicating the content of the faith or the methodology of catechesis and emphasizes that catechists must understand their ecclesial identity.

Four areas of study are addressed. First, the question of belonging is looked at through the fields of faith development, group dynamics, and citizenship theory. Since ecclesial identity refers to one’s identity in and to the Church, the thesis also addresses what is meant by ‘the Church’. Third, the hermeneutic of “full, conscious, and active participation” is argued to possess rich theological potential to further the understanding of the participation of lay people beyond the context of liturgy. Finally, this thesis explores the consequences and implications of the participation of catechists in particular. Theologian Bernard Lonergan is influential in terms of understanding the Church as process, understanding the role of catechesis in that process, understanding the importance of
everyday valuing, choosing and deciding, and in understanding participation as more than external activity.

The Action-in-Ministry for this thesis is a case study of five lay volunteer catechists who are interviewed regarding their work, and the connection of their work to the broader mission of the Church. Participants are asked to respond to the description of full, conscious, and active participation by means of a reflective homework activity.

From the analysis of responses, seven insights are proposed that speak to the self-understanding of catechists regarding the meaning of their participation, the importance of the feeling of belonging and the ways in which communication in the parish enhances that feeling, their need for common language to describe their work, and their understanding of ecclesial identity. The results of this study suggest improvements in both content and form in the formation of catechists and may have resonance with others training lay volunteers in the church.
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Chapter 1
Introduction of the Ministry, the Concern and the Research Question

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore questions of belonging and participation in the Catholic Church in the context of my catechetical ministry regarding those catechists for whom I am responsible. The questions of belonging and participation are, of course, not solely the domain of ministers or catechetical personnel in the church; they are not merely theological or theoretical concerns. One’s understanding of belonging and participation is lived out in everyday moments and decisions. They are very fundamental questions that find their origins, for me, in the formative and concrete experiences of my life growing up Catholic.

This thesis allows me to name these early experiences and to see both the genesis and development of these concerns of belonging and participation as they have been carried into my current ministry context as Director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Hamilton, in Ontario, Canada. Having situated the origins of these concerns, the question that drives this study regarding the ecclesial identity of the catechist will be named.

The research question will be examined from a multi-faceted theoretical framework drawing from the fields of faith development, sociology, and education along with Church teaching regarding belonging and participation generally and the particular case of participation in catechesis. The Action-in-Ministry component of the thesis will then allow the voices of current lay catechists to speak to their own experience of their participation as a way of exploring their ecclesial identity – that is, their identity in and to the Church.
1.2 Description of Personal and Vocational Background

I have been Catholic all my life. From early life experiences in my family to marriage and raising my children in the Church to my work experiences in Catholic institutions, I have been deeply affected by my own belonging. Reflecting on the meaning of my participation has been part of a lifelong journey.

1.2.1 Growing up Catholic

I grew up in a happy, religious, practising Irish Catholic family. Faith, family, Church, pursuit of education, and Christian duty and service were the foundational values of my family. That body of values, belief, and tradition provided a very stable place for my formative years. I was grounded in an understanding that I was loved and called by God. My parents reinforced the belief that, in being called, we are responsible to love and care for others for the good of the world and the good of the Church. That stable foundation began to be shaken as I grew older and observed many friends and even family leave the practise of their faith. I found myself confronted with painful questions, such as: Why is it reasonable for me to believe when others do not? And, what does my belonging mean? Part of my interest in the study of belonging and participation has been my desire to be able to answer these questions.

1.2.2 Life as an Adult Catholic – Marriage and Parenting

I married in the Catholic Church and baptized my four children in the Church. I have volunteered in many parish ministries, such as youth group and extraordinary Eucharistic minister as a young adult, and lector and baptismal preparation team member as a parent. I have served as a sponsor for an RCIA candidate. My husband is also an active parish
volunteer and our whole family serves in the hospitality ministry of coffee socials. As our children grow up in the Church, I delight in watching them find their own ministries as greeters, altar servers, choir members, and lectors. At the same time, I continue to meet many more Catholics who no longer identify with the Church, who do not attend Mass, and who have drifted away from any practise of their faith. And so the question of belonging continues to haunt me. Why do I find it important to belong and to participate when so many others around me do not?

Although participation in parish life is an important value for my family, the living out of that value is complicated by the fact that my husband is a practising Presbyterian. This has raised logistical challenges about where we attend and how often, but also theological challenges regarding the open communion table at the Presbyterian church and the Eucharist offered only to baptized Catholics in the Catholic Church. I have spent considerable time trying to work out for myself, for example, what my participation at Presbyterian church means. And so, over twenty-two years of married life, I have asked questions like: What does it mean to participate in a church? How do other members of a congregation understand our family’s participation in their church services? How does my participation affect others?

What has become apparent the longer I discern and the more I study is that there is a meaning to one’s participation in any congregation that matters beyond just how one might feel about it or how one’s family might feel. Participation has a meaning to and in that congregation, that parish, and the greater world-wide Church.

1.2.3 Studying and Working in Catholic Circles
I have spent most of my life living, studying and working in Catholic circles. I attended Catholic elementary and secondary school, did my undergraduate studies at the University of St. Michael’s College, and studied at St. Jerome’s University in Waterloo for my graduate degree of Master of Catholic Thought. I have worked in Catholic institutions beginning as an elementary teacher in the Catholic school system and then in the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Hamilton as a program coordinator. I now serve as the Director of Catechesis of the diocese.

In my studies at St. Jerome’s, I was first introduced to and became interested in the work of theologian Bernard Lonergan. In particular, I have become interested in his ideas about the importance of authentic and intentional participation in the schemes or systems in which we function. Lonergan asserts that acts of meaning – that is our everyday choosing, deciding, and valuing – have the important function of constituting our institutions such that one is more likely to change a nation, for example, by changing the way people think about it than by rewriting its constitution.¹ This has affirmed for me that paying attention to the way one thinks about one’s belonging and participation in the Church is vital because it affects the very making of the Church.

I have sought to be reflective and intentional in the ways in which I live out my responsibilities as a member of the Church in terms of my roles as a mother, a wife, a teacher, a parish volunteer in a variety of ministries, and now in my work at the diocese.

1.3 Description of My Current Ministry Context

¹ Bernard Lonergan, Method in Theology (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 78.
As the Director of Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton, I oversee programs for children’s catechesis with particular emphasis on sacramental preparation for the Sacraments of initiation (i.e. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist). I provide support for over 125 parishes in terms of recommendations of resources, program planning, and volunteer training. I am the liaison with our seven Catholic school boards – six English-speaking and one French – to promote collaboration between the parish, home and school in the catechesis of children. I provide supports to other parish-based catechetical ministries such as Vacation Bible School teams and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. I also teach several classes of the diocesan “Foundations for Ministry” course, which prepares lay parish volunteers to take on a variety of leadership roles in their parishes. In addition, I provide consultation, workshops and retreats for Catholic teachers, catechists, and staffs of other Catholic agencies. On any given day, my ministry is to serve any one of the half million Catholics in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton who request my assistance with catechetical issues. The mission statement of my office, as one of the Pastoral Offices of the diocese, is “Together we serve, by providing essential pastoral resources, to inform, nurture and empower our Catholic Community to witness confidently to Christ.”

One particular area of responsibility for me in the diocese is in the administration of the Catechetical Correspondence Courses (CCC). This program supports parishes in assisting families who require religious instruction for their school-aged children. The CCC, with the help of 100 volunteers, serves approximately 1,000 families with children who are not in the diocese of Hamilton, “Pastoral Offices Mission Statement,” 2011. This mission statement is published on the diocesan website at www.hamiltondiocese.com/pastoraloffices (accessed August 26, 2012).

Throughout this paper, the Catechetical Correspondence Courses will be referred to simply as the CCC, not to be confused with the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which is sometimes abbreviated as CCC.
Catholic school system. Families register either directly through their parish or with the diocesan office and are sent books, worksheets and other materials to support them in teaching their children. Every family is assigned a catechist who reviews and corrects lessons, answers questions and acts as companion on the faith journey for the whole family. For over 80 years, this work was carried out in the Diocese of Hamilton by Religious Sisters – first by the Loretto Sisters and then the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND).

In 2008, the SSND advised then bishop, Bishop Anthony Tonnos, that they could no longer administer the program themselves. I was appointed by Bishop Tonnos as the administrator of that program. Not only did this represent a shift in the administration of the program, it also represented a major shift in the makeup of the catechists themselves. The program moved from a majority of catechists being Religious Sisters from a single religious community to almost exclusively lay catechists who were scattered throughout the various parishes of the diocese. Of the four Religious Sisters who remained as catechists at the time of the transfer of administration, only two still serve today. The program now runs thanks to the efforts of 100 lay catechists – 98 women and 2 men; some are retired teachers and principals, some parish secretaries, and some are parents whose children have been enrolled in the program. Many of these catechists are based in their own parish and use drop boxes to swap lessons with families; others serve a variety of parishes by communicating with families via Canada Post.

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4 There are a variety of reasons these children are not in the Catholic school system: some are home-schooled or educated in private schools; and some are enrolled in the public school system due to geographical convenience (often the case, for example, in northern and rural areas of the diocese) or because of programming such as French Immersion that may not be offered by the local Catholic school board. Children immigrating from other countries where religious education may not have been available sometimes need some catechetical assistance in order to ease their transition into religious education in the Catholic school system. The CCC is often used for this purpose as well.
I support parishes by providing the initial orientation to catechists in the CCC and administering the ongoing training and formation of these volunteers. Catechists of the CCC send reports to our office two or three times a year to update us on the progress of students. They consult with me when they have concerns or questions. While many of my dealings with people in my ministry are often fleeting – responding to a parent’s request regarding sacramental preparation, for example, and referring them to the local parish, or advising a pastor about resources – I enjoy a much more ongoing relationship with the catechists of the CCC. Beyond the ongoing phone and email contact with many of them, we offer one or two diocesan gatherings a year for ongoing formation.

1.4 Working Out My Theology of Ministry

In my day-to-day contact with parish catechists, teachers, volunteers, priests, and parents, I field questions and hear concerns that fall into three main areas:

1) concerns and questions around what is or can be required in order to belong to a parish, or to ‘get’ a Sacrament,

2) questions of duties and responsibilities between parish, home and school, and

3) questions around an individual’s or a parish’s connection to the diocese.

Priests want to understand diocesan policy or find materials that will meet the catechetical needs in their parish. They worry about the lack of participation of families in parish preparation programs and the lack of volunteers to assist them. Concerned parents, and more often now grandparents, call to inquire about Church teaching and diocesan policy with regard to Sacraments; they want to know what it means to register with a parish, whether Confirmation retreats are mandatory, and how their children not attending Catholic school
can prepare for first Communion. My contact with many of the people I deal with is often brief. People look to me to answer their questions and allay their fears.

The bishop of a Catholic diocese is the chief catechist of the diocese.\(^5\) As the Director of the Catechesis Office, I am very much aware that I work not just to support the vision of our chief catechist but to bring that vision to practice. As the Ordinary, he sets the broad criteria for sacramental preparation, for example, but I decide how those criteria can be met in practical terms. The Bishop looks to me to be informed about catechetical materials and effective training principles. He counts on me to care for our parish catechists. He seeks my advice when there are conflicts over programming in parishes. He expects me to monitor the catechetical needs and concerns in the diocese, to keep him aware of important issues, and to make recommendations for action. I enjoy a great deal of independence in my work and feel his trust in me. I am able to make my own decisions, set the priorities of the office, and, for the most part, implement the solutions to problems that I believe most effective.

1.4.1 The Impact of Isaiah 44

Long before I ever entered my current ministry, Isaiah 44: 24-28\(^6\) was my favourite piece of Scripture. These few verses have such a beautiful balance and such a clear articulation of who God is and how God works. This chapter in Isaiah includes a series of assurances to Israel – I am your God; you will not be forgotten. Towards the end of the chapter, we hear God announce himself, “Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb:

\(^5\) The Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, in Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Document, new revised edition, Ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing, 1996), 12. All further references in this paper to the documents of Vatican II are taken from this edition and will be referenced by title and paragraph number only.

\(^6\) All quotes from Scripture throughout this thesis will be taken from the NRSV and are noted by chapter and verse in the body of the text.
I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who by myself spread out the earth” (44: 24). In his own words, God is the Lord of the Universe, creator of all that is, God Almighty and, at the same time, God is the one who formed me in the womb. From a literary point of view, I appreciate the beauty of the juxtaposition of these two realities – God as universal and deeply personal, both cosmic and intimate. From a theological point of view, however, it perfectly describes for me the overwhelmingly humbling truth of who it is who loves me and created me. It also points beautifully to my relationship to everything else in creation. In my unique and personal existence, I am related to all that is created because everything has its origin in God.

The chapter concludes with two important insights into how God works in the world. We hear him say, I am the Lord “who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be inhabited,’ and of the cities of Judah, ‘They shall be rebuilt’” (44: 26) and then, “who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose’” (44: 28). These verses show how God works in very concrete places, times, and people. God is not stuck in heaven, far away; he is active in the world. He is at work healing our history, and working against injustice. He is also actively choosing shepherds and ministers, sometimes unlikely ones, to work with him. It is an assurance that our work – communally and individually – is a participation in God’s work.

God has a purpose – both a ‘grand scheme’ purpose, in which we are all called to participate, and a personal purpose, for each individual.

This Scripture is important to me in my current ministry where I find myself an unlikely shepherd. My ministry is not that of a pastor. I do not have the care of souls or the responsibility for one particular congregation. In some ways, I have a strange ministry in that I rarely get to know the people to whom I minister to any great extent. We chat on the phone
and I refer them back to their parish for the appropriate forms and sessions. I have an hour-long meeting with a priest and send him off with a new DVD for his baptismal preparation program. I offer a half-day workshop to give strategies to parishes for improving parent participation in sacramental preparation programs. These are, I believe, important tasks. And yet, in my own ministry, I feel confronted by the statement of John Paul II on catechesis:

The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.  

In my fleeting dealings, how can I contribute to putting people into intimacy with Jesus Christ?

1.4.2 Leading Others to Intimacy with Jesus Christ

In the past, I have worked as an elementary Catholic school teacher and been a volunteer in my own parish in youth ministry and baptismal preparation programs. In each of those contexts, I worked from the standpoint that my relationship to those whom I served was an essential aspect of leading people to relationship with Jesus Christ. I believed that my witness to knowing the love of God was far more important than any content of theological knowledge I could pass on. This is the kind of teaching Pope Paul VI envisions in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* when he says that evangelization and catechesis are the Church’s “deepest identity”, and call forth a love from the one evangelizing that is the “love that the Lord expects from every preacher of the Gospel, from every builder of the Church.” As a teacher

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7 John Paul II, apostolic exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979), 5.


9 Ibid., 79.
and catechist, I certainly would see my work as a preacher of the Gospel and a builder of the Church filled with love.

Gordon Lathrop describes the work of catechists as companions more than builders. Catechists “lead catechumens through the bath to the table.” I certainly identify with his grounding of the catechetical task in Baptism. Baptism has two important implications in the work of catechesis for me. First, Baptism marks the Christian’s entrance into the Church. Sacramentally, Baptism is that first moment in the intimate relationship with Christ. The reality of that relationship begun in Baptism is expressed by St. Paul in his letter to the Romans:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6: 3-4)

Our first participation in that relationship of intimacy with Jesus Christ is literally a life and death moment. It so marks us that it is an unrepeatable event. The second implication of Baptism is that by virtue of that experience of intimacy we become responsible – that is, having to respond. As Lathrop describes, catechists do not just bring someone to that moment, they bring them through it and onward into the life of the church. Baptism, therefore, is not an end in itself. It leads us to the table where we are sent back out to the world. We return over and over again to that table to be nourished and, in this way, our Christian lives become a pattern of movement into the relationship with God at the table so we can live the relationships out in the world leading us and others back to the table. Catechists lead others towards the relationship and continue to journey with them as that relationship grows.

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1.4.3 The Importance of Baptism

As we have seen, the importance of Baptism is twofold. It is the gateway to belonging but also the catalyst for participation. The teaching of the Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council emphasizes the implications of Baptism. *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* asserts that the faithful are “incorporated into the Church by Baptism” and receive gifts to be used for the good of the world and the good of the Church.\(^{11}\) It was here that the Council embraced the “common priesthood of the faithful” through Baptism.\(^{12}\) In the years following the Council, the consistent teaching around the laity has been to reaffirm that the responsibility of the laity to use their gifts needs to be taken seriously. In the words of John Paul II:

> It is no exaggeration to say that the entire existence of the lay faithful has as its purpose to lead a person to a knowledge of the radical newness of the Christian life that comes from Baptism, the sacrament of faith, so that this knowledge can help that person live the responsibilities which arise from that vocation received from God.\(^{13}\)

Baptism is foundational to all vocation. Through Baptism, we are called to be sharers in the Church’s mission.\(^{14}\) Margaret Lavin says, “If we accept our baptism, dying and rising with Jesus Christ, then there are consequences and responsibilities.”\(^{15}\) Pope Benedict XVI, in an address in his own diocese, says that more emphasis needs to be put on the responsibility of the laity for the Church. He begins by rooting one’s responsibility

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\(^{11}\) *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 12.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 10.


\(^{14}\) Ibid., 15.

\(^{15}\) Margaret Lavin, *Theology for Ministry* (Ottawa: Novalis, St. Paul University, 2004), 115.
in one’s Baptism, “‘People of God’ therefore means ‘all’, from the Pope to the most recently
baptized child.”16 He then speaks of the task of empowering the baptized:

[It] is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted … They must no longer be viewed as “collaborators” of the clergy but truly recognized as “co-responsible”, for the Church’s being and action.17

Pope Francis echoes the desire for a robust sense of co-responsibility and, indeed, of the mutual dependency of all in the Church. In his recent catechesis “On Belonging to the Church” he says:

We can live this journey [of faith] not only thanks to other persons but together with other persons. “Do it yourself” does not exist in the Church; “free builders” do not exist. How many times Pope Benedict described the Church as an ecclesial “we”! How many times have we heard this?18

This co-responsibility for the Church speaks to the need for a deep appreciation of each person’s participation. In this way, we see the basis for belonging is Baptism and the significance of the responsibilities that flow from belonging – that is, one’s actions or one’s participation – contribute to the very being of the Church.

This gives great dignity and importance to the work of lay people and signals that all the baptized have a profound responsibility as they have been gifted by the Spirit to bring people into relationship with God through Jesus Christ. As an understanding of the relationship between baptismal responsibility and the ministry of catechesis, this is clear to me. In my current ministry, however, I work in an office where I answer inquiries, order books, and deliver training sessions. These tasks seem more about administration than relationship. I

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17 Ibid.

wonder about my role in training and forming the catechists of the diocese. How effective is my work with them? Do they understand the importance of their participation? Again, Lavin speaks about the responsibility to participate in the mission of the Christ:

Knowing about it is not enough. There can be no such thing as an “inactive” disciple. ... Christian commitment is very particular and unfolds, not in the abstract, but in the actual situations in which it finds itself. We cannot heal and liberate in general; we heal and liberate the people we come in contact with.\(^\text{19}\)

There are questions about my own responsibility – not to act generally but to deal effectively in the particular situation – alongside questions of the understanding of the catechists about their responsibility and participation in the ministry. For all of us, “knowing about it” is not enough.

1.4.4 Encounter with Catechists – Encounter in the Gospels

I believe that the volunteer catechists of the diocese are really very good and caring men and women with good intentions to assist children and their families. Many of my day-to-day experiences with catechists, however, leave me wondering about how they view their work. The following four scenarios are typical encounters with catechists:

Scenario A

I refer to a catechist as a ‘catechist’ and she responds, “I’m not really a catechist. I just mark the kids’ papers.”

Scenario B

A catechist contacts me as she wants the cut-off date for accepting lessons before first reconciliation. She is confused when I say that we really do not approach these

\(^{19}\) Lavin, 117.
programs in terms of cut-off dates – faith development is more of a process than a series of hard and fast dates.

*Scenario C*

I routinely have two-thirds of the one hundred volunteers in the diocese decline to attend diocesan workshops and training sessions. Most decline on the basis that they “only do this because Father asked me to”. They do not seem to see a need to connect with the diocese. Even when invited to meet our new bishop at a training session, the response was “That’s ok. I just work at St. such and such parish.”

*Scenario D*

A catechist calls to voice frustration that a particular student or group of them has failed to hand in any lessons. When I ask her how she has responded to this lack of lessons, she responds that she feels the families are just not committed and hopes ‘Father’ will speak to them.

These experiences raise two concerns for me: first, that the catechist is seeing his or her work solely as external activity – i.e. this catechist marks lesson pages; that one sets deadlines; and second, that these catechists are failing to see a connection of their work in their own parish to the mission and the constitution of the broader Church. It seems that they do not see a connection between their work in parish A with the catechetical work being done in parish B. They do not seem to see that the diocese has a vested interest in their work or that their work affects anyone other than the families registered to their care. They seem not to see their participation as a contribution to the *being* of the Church.

Reflecting on my experiences with catechists leaves me conflicted. On the one hand, I am sympathetic to the need for concrete guidelines by which one can work. There is comfort in
knowing “I am a marker” or “Lessons are due on such and such a date.” On the other hand, I am concerned that they misunderstand the fundamental meaning of their work and its importance.

My interactions with catechists remind me of the gospel story of the rich young man who asks Jesus, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 18: 18)²⁰. When I see the catechists’ search for definitive answers, I am drawn to the protagonist in this gospel encounter. This young man is a person looking for a very concrete answer. The gospel tells us that this man knows the law and has always been faithful to it. He has followed the clear rules as he has understood them. Jesus invites him to a deeper understanding of what discipleship means. “There is still one thing lacking,” says Jesus. “Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me” (Luke 18: 22). But the rich man becomes sad and leaves because it is too much for him to give up.

Jesus uses the encounter to teach his disciples about how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven but I am left to wonder how devastated Jesus must have felt? Did he wonder why he had not been able to convince the man? After all, he had invited others to drop everything and follow him and they had. Did he wonder why this man could not? Why was the young man drawn to the letter of the law but not the invitation of relationship? In some ways, this story echoes my own frustrations with catechists who seem overly focused on the letter of the law or the rules. However, as I searched the synoptic gospels for a hint of what Jesus must have felt, something else caught my attention. I realized the placement of

this passage in all three accounts is directly following the passage where Jesus blesses the little children. As I re-read that story, I was struck that maybe this was the better parallel to my experience with catechists in particular, and to my ministry context in general.

As I have said, it is a concern for me that in my own ministry, there is little time to develop relationships. The gospel story of Jesus blessing the little children is a story of a fleeting encounter. A crowd of parents have come to have their children touched and blessed by Jesus, despite long lines and presumably a long wait in a hot sun. There are, of course, other stories in Scripture of people seeking the touch of Jesus for miraculous healings for their children, their parents, or their servants. The children in this story, however, are apparently healthy and normal. The parents feel, for some reason, that to be touched by Jesus is important. And even though the disciples speak sternly to them and try to stop them, these parents persevere and are rewarded by Jesus’ command, “Let the little children come to me” (Luke 18:16). I wonder what motivates these parents. What do they think they are receiving for their children? Why do they think their children need this? How are they responding to something already at work in themselves in bringing their children here?

These same questions haunt me as I consider what I am doing for a parent or a priest or a catechist who wants to know what we ‘have to do’ to get a child baptized or to first Communion. I wonder if we are focused too much on the externals. Are the catechists in the crowd alongside these parents or are they the disciples, creating obstacles by their lack of understanding? Is the catechist going to be successful in bringing them “through the bath to the table” or will the journey be halted? Pope Francis warns of the dangers of being too focused on the externals. He asks us to recognize the problem of “certain structures and the occasionally unwelcoming atmosphere of some of our parishes and communities, or to a
bureaucratic way of dealing with problems [where] an administrative approach prevails over a pastoral approach.”

This dichotomy of the administrative and pastoral functions of the Church is considered by John Dadosky in his study of von Balthasar’s proposal of the two ecclesiologies he sees represented by the persons of John and Peter in the Gospel of John. Balthasar equates Peter with the official church and John with the church of love. He sees these two ecclesiological realities expressed and defined in two episodes of the gospel in particular. The first scene is at the empty tomb when both disciples arrive and John gives precedence to Peter by allowing him to enter first. The second scene is the account of the resurrected Jesus on the shore where the disciples were fishing. In his sustained reflection on these encounters, Balthasar argues that the tension between the two ecclesiologies in this second scene comes to a point where the unity of both is sealed in Peter who declares his love for Jesus and is commissioned to lead the flock.

Dadosky, however, clarifies that once one has distinguished between the two churches, “there is the recognition that the official church is not the church of love or at least is not always the church of love.” These two aspects of the church need each other, according to Dadosky; they function best when they function together. Without the church of love, the official church may be so focused on structure and preservation of power that it becomes

21 Francis, apostolic exhortation, Evangelii Gaudium (2013), 63.


23 Ibid.
cold, brutish or prone to abuse of power and without structure and power, the church of love is too vulnerable to attack and victimization.  

In the gospel story of the blessing of the children, Scripture is silent on what happens afterwards to the children and their families. Do they go away changed? What is the encounter with God’s grace? To whom do they return? What is the reaction of their community? In the same way that these questions remain unanswered in Scripture, they remain unanswered in my own ministry. For example, I rarely see what becomes of the people served by the CCC. The catechists send me only brief reports with comments such as “program completed” or “no lessons returned, no contact with parents.” I am left to wonder which ecclesiology – the church of love or the official church – has prevailed and which have I encouraged. Have the administrative tasks won the day rather than a pastoral response to a person? What role has the catechist played? Enabler of encounter or obstacle?

1.4.5 How Contextual Theology Helps

According to Steven Bevans, all theology must be contextual if it is to be relevant; it must take “seriously human experience, social location, particular cultures, and social change in those cultures.” Clemens Sedmak envisions local theologies as recipes that are being cooked up in our own contexts. Sedmak says “doing local theology is like cooking with local ingredients.” One of the daunting realities of my ministry is that local ingredients can vary widely throughout the diocese. A parish in the north may have an historical self-

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24 Ibid., 464.


understanding about how removed it is from the diocese. A catechist at this parish may not be encouraged to see herself as part of a larger diocesan ministry as the Chancery Office has always been seen as out of touch with their parish needs – rightly or wrongly. Another catechist may be a parish secretary who takes on dozens of ministries in her parish as the priest’s sole assistant. This includes being a catechist to only a very few children over the last several years. Yet another catechist may be a retired teacher from the Catholic school system who routinely has 20-25 students a year and has taken it upon herself to recruit another two parish volunteers to assist her. Each situation requires what Sedmak calls the little theologies – that is, “theology for a particular situation.”

Sedmak remarks that “many followers of Jesus experience frustration. They do not encounter Jesus and his message; instead, they are confronted with the structure of the church and with a body of doctrines.” This is the experience of the official church divorced from the church of love. As a director of a diocesan office, I am part of the structure of the diocese and therefore, the official church. And certainly, there is a body of canons, doctrines, and diocesan policies to which I am accountable. Sedmak makes the point here, however, that whether or not the structure is necessary and the doctrines sound, these elements of church can seem harsh when they are not experienced as living forces. The structure and doctrine of the church can feel dry, static, perhaps even unforgiving for someone not used to them. Helping others towards intimate relationship with Jesus should feel like an encounter with a living God, not a bump into a brick wall. Sedmak reminds us that, “[a]ppropriating the

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27 Ibid., 119.

28 Ibid., 48.
tradition is a creative act that asks us to uncover its true concern rather than merely follow its external form.”

Helene Russell and K. Brynolf Lyon lean towards a contextual theology that takes the transcendental model as its starting point. They define what they called the “problem of practical theology” in this way, “Practical theology is theological reverie on our participating in and with the emergence and maintenance of communities of transformation and nurture in the world.” This definition is helpful because it names the concerns of transcendental theology. First, it focuses on what an individual in the context of his or her community is attending to and contributing to through his or her reverie, which is a sustained and creative type of reflection. Second, it takes seriously the dynamic aspect of our participation – that is, that our participation contributes to an emergence of transformation of both the individual and community. Lonergan, affirms this idea of transformation in that our participation serves to constitute both ourselves and our communities. This is why the choosing and deciding and acting of each individual are so significant; it is because in these daily acts of meaning, the Church itself is being constituted.

Transcendental theology encourages us to “focus not on a content to be articulated but on the subject who is articulating.” Lonergan says a subject who has fallen in love with God finds a “fulfilment [that] brings a radical peace ...[and] bears fruit in a love of one’s neighbor that

29 Ibid., 26.


31 This notion of how the church is constituted has been suggested here, in the introduction, in terms of a very cursory presentation of Lonergan’s assertion from *Method in Theology*, 78. A more sustained argument of this assertion, however, follows in Chapter Three of this thesis.

32 Bevans, 32.
strives mightily to bring about the kingdom of God on this earth.”\textsuperscript{33} This falling in love with God is religious conversion and this conversion causes a shift in our horizons which opens up new understanding. Finally, that understanding calls forth a response in the context of a person’s community which reaches towards transformation. This is a continual process, rather than an event. In terms of the study at hand, this means paying careful attention to what is happening, what is being valued and decided upon, and what might be challenging them, in the lives of actual individuals in the time and place and context in which they are found.

Russell and Brynolf speak to this importance of understanding one’s role within the community – a role that emerges as a result of their belonging:

> It is this participating in such a community that gives practical theology its most distinctive, concrete focus on the actual situations of life. One might be participating as a pastor or worship committee member. One might be participating as a clerk or psychotherapist or lawyer. One might be participating as a mother or father or child. One cannot participate in the emergence of a community without having some role within it. Indeed, the role itself is the dynamic vortex through which the intersubjective forces and meanings of the community’s coming-to-be most powerfully gather at the point of practical theological reflection.\textsuperscript{34}

The catechists I oversee have many other roles in their own lives, such as parent, soccer coach, employee, or son or daughter. But it is how they are participating as a catechist that is quite essential to understanding how I can best respond to them. By seeing the subject in the community to which he or she belongs, exercising a particular role, in a particular context, one sees the ways in which the community is affected by the individual and, in turn how the

\textsuperscript{33} Lonergan, \textit{Method in Theology}, 105.

\textsuperscript{34} Russell and Brynolf, 22-23.
individual affects the community. Allowing catechists to examine their role as catechists allows them to reflect on their identity in the ecclesial community in terms of this role.

1.4.6 Implications for My Theology of Ministry

Wondering about how catechists in the diocese understand their ministry is important because each one is engaging in acts of meaning in a community that also engages in these acts. In this way, they are both formed by and forming the Church in their work. I think how this may be multiplied thousands of times over in our diocese in encounters between catechists and families, catechists and priests, and catechists and children. The implications and consequences of their participation are substantial and, therefore, require further consideration.

1.5 The Ministry Concern

As I have noted, I observe many situations with lay volunteer catechists in the CCC that cause me to wonder what they understand about their participation in the Church as catechists with many of them seemingly focused only on the external tasks of the work. The concern is expressed in questions such as: Do catechists see their work as having a meaning beyond the surface reality of the tasks? Do they understand the importance of their participation as catechists? How do they see their work related to the work and mission of the broader Church? How effective is my work with them?

In speaking to Directors of Religious Education (DRE’s) in several American parishes, Dr. Jane Regan heard many of the same concerns. Asked to name the greatest challenges in adult formation, the DRE’s reported that one of the major problems in catechist formation was that the catechists themselves “seldom see themselves as part of a larger activity and certainly
don’t see themselves within the broader context [of the Church].”

The feeling among formation leaders was that catechists remain focused on tasks, methods, and sequences of activities. The catechists’ focus was said to be “quite limited just to the immediate content of the session” without attending to deeper issues and questions.

In terms of my experience in my role as the administrator of catechist formation, I return to the gospel encounter with the rich young man as it sheds light on two important aspects of the concern. First, the gospel speaks to my own frustrations in catechist formation. Are catechists, like the young man, overly focused on the law and rules? Is it true that the catechists see only the outward activity of their work? Are they walking away from an offer to enter more deeply into an understanding of their own participation? But second, the image also serves as a challenge to me. In this gospel story, I also identify with the rich man standing before Jesus asking about what further task or activity I might plan. There is a great temptation, having observed this apparent lack of understanding on the part of lay catechists as to their true ecclesial identity, simply to teach them or tell them what I think they need to know. Dr. Regan cautions, however, the “task of leadership is not to generate more programs but to contribute to an environment that supports the learning of all.”

She encourages leaders “not to do more but to take a perspective.” And so, rather than planning and doing more, I intend to speak to the catechists themselves to first hear their perspective.

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36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 187.

38 Ibid., 160.
The Research Question that Addresses the Concern

The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC)\(^{39}\) names three dimensions in the task of catechist formation: 1) the content of the faith, 2) the savoir-faire of methodology, and 3) the being of the catechist.\(^ {40}\) While there are a number of training resources that address issues of content and methodology,\(^ {41}\) the ‘being’ of the catechist seems to be a more nebulous concept.

The GDC itself says only this:

The deepest dimension refers to the very being of the catechist, to his [or her] human and Christian dimension. Formation, above all else, must help him [or her] to mature as a person, a believer and as an apostle.\(^ {42}\)

Maturing as a person and as a believer has to do with personal development. Development as apostles, however, refers to development within the Church as ones ‘who are sent’ by and for the Church.

The Guide for Catechists, published in the 1980’s by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples directed to catechists themselves, states, “It is important for the catechist candidate to recognize …the ecclesial significance of this call.”\(^ {43}\) The GDC echoes

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\(^{39}\) Congregation for the Clergy, General Directory for Catechesis (Vatican City, 1997). The GDC is the normative document of the Roman Catholic Church for all catechesis. It defines the tasks and aims and strategies as well as the broad requirements for catechist formation. It was published in 1997 as a revision of the previous Directory for Catechesis from 1972. The need for revision stemmed from the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, just five years earlier. The preface to the document traces its roots from Paul VI’s Evangelli Nuntiandi, through to John Paul II’s Catechesis Tradendae and states that “the threshold of the third millennium is without doubt most providential for the orientation and promotion of catechesis.”

\(^{40}\) GDC, 238.

\(^{41}\) Three examples of catechist training programs widely in use in the United States are: Into the Fields, by Bill Huebsch, published by Twenty-third Publications, 2007, Catechist Toolbox by Joe Paprocki, published by Loyola Press, 2010, Echoes of Faith, published by RCL Benziger and NCCL, 2004. Although each of these programs refers to a ‘spiritual dimension’ in catechist formation, none of them refers to the catechist’s ecclesial identity. The spiritual development proposed in all three is personal and individual.

\(^{42}\) GDC, 238.

the importance of the ecclesial identity of the catechist. It states, “[Catechesis] is a fundamental ecclesial service … it cannot be realized in the community on a private basis or by purely personal initiative.” In considering the formation of the catechists in the CCC, the issues of belonging and participating in the Church, being co-responsible for the being of the Church and being the ‘ecclesial we’ coalesce into a concern for me in terms of how I might best be able to assist these catechists in coming to a deep appreciation of their fundamental ecclesial identity.

The GDC is clear and emphatic regarding the fundamentally ecclesial identity of catechists and suggests that formation should promote the “constant fostering of the ecclesial vocation of catechists by keeping alive in them an awareness of being sent by the Church.” In order to better serve the catechists in the Diocese of Hamilton and the Church, it is important for me to know first what catechists do understand about their participation and how they see their work related to the work and mission of the broader Church. Therefore, my research question is:

**How do lay catechists see their participation in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses as informing their ecclesial identity?**

1.7 Unpacking the Issues of the Question at Hand – A Multi-Faceted Framework

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44 See *GDC*, 59, 78, and 105.

45 Ibid., 219 (b).

46 *GDC*, 247 a.
To come to an understanding of ecclesial identity, a number of issues must be addressed. First, there is a question of how one comes to belong or how one knows one belongs. Questions of belonging have important roots in the fields of sociology and psychology. Second, there arises the question of to whom or to what does one belong. Ecclesial identity refers to one’s identity in and to the Church therefore what is meant by “the Church” is consequential. Considerations of ecclesiology are therefore needed to address the question. Third, one must ask what is meant by participation. In the context of this thesis, the hermeneutic of “full, conscious, and active participation” is suggested as having rich theological potential to further the understanding of participation. Finally, one must ask what implications there are in addressing the research question to catechists; that is, what are the consequences and implications for catechists in particular? In the following sections, we will see how these issues will be explored in this thesis through these various fields of study.

1.7.1 Belonging and Participation

Chapter Two focuses on the complex notion of belonging and how one’s belonging profoundly affects one’s participation. The relationship of these two concepts is studied through faith development theory, group dynamics theory and citizenship theory in order to provide a variety of lenses through which to view the interaction of belonging and participation.

1.7.1.1 Faith Development and Group Dynamics Theory

We will look to authors such as James Fowler and Friedrich Schweitzer in terms of the frameworks they can provide for understanding development in relation to one’s faith group over a lifetime, how one knows or comes to know that one belongs, and how one behaves in
one’s group as a result of this belonging. The work of Ruthellen Josselson will assist us to consider the ways in which early experiences of belonging affect one’s later capacity to participate in groups, both positively and negatively.

1.7.1.2 Citizenship Theory

A further area of study in this chapter is a consideration of how citizenship theory explores how people understand and choose to participate in terms of their understanding of belonging. Authors such as Richard Bellamy and Michael Ignatieff will be looked at in terms of addressing the process or criteria by which one belongs and what benefits and responsibilities flow from that belonging. Thinking further about one’s participation through the lens of both citizenship theory and educational theory, we will consider how proponents of participatory democracy, such as Daniel Schurgerensky, further the understanding of what influences one’s participation.

1.7.2 Full, Conscious and Active Participation

In Chapter Three, the concept of participation will be looked at from a theological point of view in terms of how the Church has described the ideal of lay participation at the Second Vatican Council. In *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, the Council says, “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to … full, conscious, and active participation.”47 As this theology of full, conscious and active participation has developed since the Council – both within liturgical contexts and beyond – some observers worry that the emphasis has been on external tasks and activity rather than a deeper appreciation of the

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meaning of participation. We will examine how American liturgist Mark Searle and Pope Benedict XVI both lament superficial interpretations of this description of participation.

I will argue, along with authors such as Maria Patricia Utzerath and Richard Gaillardetz, that “full, conscious and active participation” do indeed apply to lay participation beyond the context of liturgy and, in fact, hold rich theological potential to describe the participation of lay persons.

1.7.3 The Particular Case of Catechesis

In Chapter Four, the particular case of catechesis and catechists will be explored. I will argue for the special relevance of the general issues of belonging and participation when applied to catechists in particular. We will see how the participation of catechists holds particular consequences for the constituting of the Church in terms of understanding catechesis as an integral part of the functional specialty of communications.

1.7.4 The Contribution of Bernard Lonergan

The contribution of the thought of Bernard Lonergan to this thesis will be seen throughout each of these chapters, which propose the various theoretical lenses through which the issue of ecclesial identity of the catechist may be studied. First, in Chapter Two, we will look at the implications of Lonergan’s assertions how shared meanings and common understandings contribute to the constituting of groups and communities. This will inform the study in terms of how common meaning is important for one’s belonging makes possible one’s participation in the community.
In Chapter Three, we will explore Lonergan’s assertion that the Church is a “process of self-constitution” and consider what implications it holds in terms of thinking about one’s participation in a process rather than in an institution. Second, following on the argument of this thesis that full, conscious, and active participation is an important theological hermeneutic for the reflection on one’s participation, we will look to Lonergan for assistance in unpacking these descriptors. Lonergan’s contribution to the reflection is a deepening of each of these descriptors of participation so that full can be something more than ‘not partial’, conscious can be more than ‘not asleep’ and active can be more than ‘external activity’. We will see how Lonergan’s thinking about the constitutive function of full acts of meaning helps to give dignity and makes consequential our choosing, deciding and valuing. We will also consider how his psychological analogy of the Trinity contributes particularly to the meaning of conscious participation. Finally, we will see why this notion of participation holds particular importance for catechists in terms of Lonergan’s description of the functional specialty of communications. In this way, Lonergan contributes widely throughout this exploration of ecclesial identity.

1.8 The Action-In-Ministry that Addresses the Research Question

The Ministry-in-Action for this research is a case study of five lay catechists in the CCC in the Diocese of Hamilton. The study intends to explore the catechists’ understanding of their own participation in this ministry and how they understand their role to be related to the broader mission and work of the Church. Following on the argument in Chapter Three for the

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usefulness of the hermeneutic of “full, conscious, and active participation”, participants will be given the opportunity to reflect on and respond to this approach to their work.

The rationale for the use of case study and the criteria for participant selection will be set forth in Chapter Five. The development of the study protocol and process will be shown in detail. In this way, the reasons for and the planning and implementation of the study will be clearly laid out so that the data gathered can be seen to be directly responding to the research question.

1.8.1 Reporting Results and Drawing Conclusions

The process for coding and analysis will also be outlined in detail in Chapter Six. Analysis of the data will follow the practises recommended by Tim Sensing in *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Accordingly, responses of study participants will be analysed through coding for common themes and areas of disagreement. The researcher’s pre-suppositions will also be explored in relation to the data received. The implications of the observations and analysis will be examined and, finally, seven insights flowing from the study data will be argued. It will be shown that there is commonality among respondents in terms of understanding of one’s responsibilities of belonging as well as in terms of reciprocity in participation in the CCC. It will also be argued that the hermeneutic of full, conscious, and active participation is useful for the reflection and consideration of one’s participation. Finally, the data will be shown to reveal the important perspectives emerging from the catechists themselves regarding their ecclesial identity.
1.9 Conclusion

The intention of this thesis is to explore questions of belonging and participation in the Catholic Church in the context of the particular catechetical ministry of the Catechetical Correspondence Courses (CCC) in order to improve the practise of that ministry. In each of the following three chapters, the various lenses of the multi-faceted framework will be presented. In view of these various contributions to the understanding of the belonging and participation of catechists, the rationale for the Action-in-Ministry will be proposed. Study results will be presented and analysed and the insights regarding the ecclesial identity of the catechist will be argued from the evidence. The potential contribution of this study to others involved in work with lay volunteers in the church will be suggested recognizing the study’s limitations due to its nature and scope. Finally, and most critically, the implications of the insights flowing from the evidence will be considered in terms of the practise of my own ministry as Director of Catechesis.
2.1 Introduction

Having identified the challenge of how and whether catechists understand the ecclesial aspect of their role, we will proceed in this chapter with an exploration of how the concept of belonging is related to ecclesial identity. Belonging is a complex notion that speaks of membership and how individuals and groups come to acknowledge membership and what implications come from one’s belonging. Looking at belonging from the viewpoints of faith development and group dynamics theory and citizenship theory, we will come to consider how these psychological and sociological approaches to belonging relate to the teaching of the Church regarding belonging. We will consider what the teaching of the Church says regarding belonging in terms of the gifts and responsibilities that flow from Baptism. In looking at belonging through each of these different lenses, we gain a greater appreciation of the fullness of what one’s belonging in the Church means. Having considered various voices on the subject of belonging, we will examine how these teachings contribute to the understanding of one’s ecclesial identity.

This need for understanding one’s ecclesial identity is addressed by Pope Francis’ recent catechesis on the Church. Speaking at two consecutive general audiences, Pope Francis said that speaking of the Church is “somewhat like a child speaking of his mother, of his family. To speak of the Church is to speak of our mother … not an institution oriented to herself or a private association, [or] an NGO.”\(^49\) He says that the Church is the People of God called and

gathered by God who seeks to save us and to have us cooperate in the salvation of the world.\textsuperscript{50} The Church, he says, “are men and women, we are people that bless.”\textsuperscript{51} His emphasis is on the Church as a community of persons who have a close and loving relationship to one another and who participate in God’s ongoing plan and work of salvation in the world. He goes on to say our calling and mission is never solitary. He says, “We are not isolated and we are not Christians as individuals, each one on his own. No. Our Christian identity is belonging. We are Christians because we belong to the Church.”\textsuperscript{52} We are called to enter into relationship with one another and with God because of the relationship that precedes us – that is, God’s love of us.

In these two weeks of teaching, we see three important aspects being raised: 1) the Church is not merely an institution; it is a community of persons, 2) we are all called to participate in the saving mission of the Church, and 3) this call to participate is never solely individual; our belonging in the Church community is an essential part of our relationship to God. We participate through our belonging and because of our belonging.

2.2 A Sense of Belonging in Groups

Attachment theory looks at how our earliest experiences in life of acceptance or rejection fundamentally affect our self-understanding and inform our ability to relate to others throughout our life. Ruthellen Josselson, a professor of clinical psychology whose work focuses mainly on human relationships in group dynamics, uses a model of relationships

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{52} Pope Francis, “On Belonging to the Church.”
based in attachment theory that explains how individuals understand their belonging in groups. She identifies eight stages of “interpersonal relatedness” through which one might develop.

Josselson’s initial stage is holding. According to Josselson, the experience of being held as an infant influences our ability to be in relationship, both with other people and with God, by providing us with a sense of trust in the other. We have little influence over our initial experience of belonging; it is primarily developed in the passive experience of being held. As we grow and mature, however, we take on an active involvement in our relationships.

Holding leads to attachment, which is the second stage. As people grow and develop in relationships with peers, friends and partners, they mature. This is where the dynamic of belonging shifts. Having been given a stable sense of belonging early on, one can then choose how to belong going forward.

Forming attachments to others leads to the next three stages that Josselson names as passionate experience, validation and idealization. First, we long for a connection to those to whom we are attached; this is the stage of passion. Then, we hope to be validated by those for whom we care. Eventually, we move towards idealization, where the individual who has learned to care for and to think of the needs of the other comes to admire and to seek to imitate the other. Positive early experiences of love and security lead a person to be able to be genuinely concerned for the other and to work for the good of the other as they grow. In

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54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., 209

56 Ibid., 212.
these middle stages, a stable sense of belonging helps us to form not only human relationships but also our relationship with God rooted in the understanding of the love that we have experienced.

In Josselson’s final three stages of mutuality, caring and embeddedness, we see a growing sense of what makes individuals act as a group for the common good. In mutuality and caring, the person moves from being able to love and relate to another on a personal level to being able to love others with a selfless love. In the final stage of embeddedness, one is able to love and work for the good of others who may never be known. This stage of embeddedness carries a broad and deep feeling of belonging, of being at home with a family, a community and a society. The same sense of safety created in holding that allows an individual to venture forth to love another now allows that individual to care deeply for many others and even unknown others simply because one recognizes one’s responsibility to the wider community – however that is defined.

Embeddedness would be an important stage for an individual trying to live out his or her belonging and participation in the Catholic Church because it would mean a maturity of the person that allows her to feel a belonging to a group she can never entirely know. This would allow for a robust ecclesial identity because the individual would not be limited to caring for only those in one’s circle of acquaintances or within one’s own parish but would hold a sense of belonging that could extend to the whole Church. When one comes to a sense of embeddedness, he or she can work for a shared vision for the sake of the good of the wider

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57 Ibid., 214.
group and for the sake of his or her relationship with God. This would mean embracing that vision of Church belonging offered to us by Pope Francis.

On the negative side of this development, Josselson notes that a failure to establish positive feelings of belonging in the early stages of holding and attachment can lead to loneliness, alienation and indifference. The corollary to this is that a lack of positive feelings about one’s belonging in the Church could interfere with one’s ability to participate well. Without a stable sense of belonging, one cannot care for others – known or not known. Here we see the importance of a stable sense of belonging as it has the potential to profoundly influence one’s participation in the group to which we belong.

2.3 Belonging from the Viewpoint of Faith Development

In *Stages of Faith*, James Fowler proposes a faith development model that is a helpful for considering the process of maturing in faith and of finding one’s identity and the relationships that inform these processes. Fowler believes that faith is relational. It is “a pattern of being in relation to others and to God.” One’s life in the Church must be influenced by one’s pattern of being in relation to others and to God. Therefore one’s understanding of one’s life in the Church is influenced by one’s understanding of faith. In describing Niebuhr’s view of faith, Fowler says faith is “the shared visions and values that hold human groups together … [It is] the search for an overarching, integrating and grounding trust in a centre of value and power sufficiently worthy to give our lives unity and

58 Ibid., 206.

meaning.” To consider how lay Catholics understand their belonging in the Church, we must consider what this search for shared visions and values looks like.

Fowler describes how our earliest efforts to make sense of the world are formed by our first relationships in our family. The schema we use to make meaning changes over a lifetime as previous meanings are shown to be lacking, new relationships are formed, and our own intellectual development allows for new possibilities. Fowler describes the life cycle in terms of seven stages of development from infancy to end of life. Although linear, in the sense that further stages are not accomplished before prior stages, the model allows for individual timing of development (that is, different people reach different stages at different ages) as well as individual achievement of development (that is, not all people reach all stages). This process of making sense of the world has to do with understanding oneself in relation to others and God. This is about understanding one’s belonging and the meaning and value of one’s place in relation to others.

The first two stages in Fowler’s schema generally relate to early childhood. Stage One, intuitive faith, rests strongly on the basic trust of the young child for the authority figures in the child’s life and the stories they tell. Stage Two, literal or mythic faith, acknowledges the growing ability of the child to tell his or her own stories as he or she continues to absorb the tradition from the trusted authority figures such as parents and teachers. These early stages describe a faith that is largely accepted according to its presentation to us by trusted authority figures. These stages of acceptance set the basis for the next stages where questioning of authority is first experienced. The extent to which the questioning produces crisis or results

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60 Ibid., 5.
in an inability to reconcile disparity varies depending on the stage in question. Certainly, the ability of the individual to come to terms with their questioning is an important factor in considering how lay people in general and catechists in particular understand their belonging and participating in the wider Church.

Fowler’s Stage Three, called synthetic or conventional faith, is usually associated with adolescence. This life stage is about forming identity. It is a time when people are forming relationships with others outside of the smaller sphere of family and close friends. At this stage, people are more open to the influences of others. Adolescence is generally a time of greater suspicion of authority and so, in terms of faith in this stage, people are forming their own image of God and reconsidering the values that have been presented to them. They are forming their own personal value systems. This stage is of particular interest in terms of the present study as Fowler notes that many adults finish their development in this stage. Catholics who remain in this stage may have difficulty understanding their place or their identity in the Church because the Catholic Church is so often identified solely with the hierarchical Church. Therefore, Catholics in this stage, where individuals are more susceptible to suspicion of authority, may have difficulty seeing themselves as being in relation to such a separate, authoritarian entity.

Fowler’s Stage Four and Five, called individuative and conjunctive faith, respectively, are generally associated with the maturing adult. Individuals move towards a critical reflection on their life and may see contradictions between belief and practice more clearly. People in these stages tend to be more open to nuance and may be more comfortable with a certain amount of paradox and complexity. There is greater potential in these stages that individuals can recognize that the hierarchical Church is not the totality of the Church. It is this
development that would assist individuals to hold a broader view of the Church and to develop a deeper sense of one’s being part of the Church. Individuals in these stages are more likely to respond to critical questions about their own identity in the Church without the sense of crisis or suspicion these may have caused in earlier stages of development.

For Fowler, the process of maturing that leads us through these stages is spurred on by new relationships. People in these stages may be more open to new shared visions and values and may be more able to contribute to these new visions that renew the understanding of how we can or should relate to God and others. This is, in part, because of new intellectual capacities that have been developed. Since the search for shared vision is both the task of faith and the constituting of the faith community, according to Fowler, it is mature individuals in these stages that are most likely able to participate well. This development of new capacities is an important area to consider as a consequence of this current study as I examine how the current formation of catechists may or may not be encouraging this kind of development towards understanding one’s ecclesial identity.

In his later work, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, Fowler looks at the process of maturing and growth in the post-modern world in terms of the impact on membership issues and responsibilities. He makes the point that in a post-modern world, the normative markers of adulthood long used in theories of human development (e.g. marriage, employment and children) are no longer necessarily relevant. This makes the maturing process more difficult as adults in this post-modern society are unsure how to define or measure growth. Fowler explains that in modern society the vocational ideals for adults had a moral/virtues basis. So it was that doctors or ministers or government officials had high vocational value (as did the state of being married and having children) in part because of the good that society gained
from these vocations. They had a usefulness. In the post-modern society, the notion of vocation becomes more secularized and moves away from a moral or virtues basis. There is a decrease in the value placed on marriage and children. The “value” in vocation is more literally the financial benefit to oneself or the fame of one’s position rather than the contribution to the common good.

In the study at hand, the exploration of the ecclesial identity of the catechist is challenged as the post-modern notion of “value” persists. How will catechists ever understand their participation as a contribution to the wider Church if, in a post-modern society, contributions to the group have no value or the value is difficult to determine?

To counteract this shallow view of vocation, Fowler offers two new concepts that, when held in tension and balance, tend to describe the goals of the process of maturing. These are the concepts of agency and communion. “Whether we approach our lives in terms of destiny or vocation, there must be some reciprocity between agency, the initiatives and interest of the self, and communion, the subordination of self-interest to the welfare and good of the collectivity.”

Certainly, belonging in the Church must include a sense of agency so that individuals can choose their relationships and their forms of participation. That personal agency means that one can come to know God and choose to respond to God in one’s own way. In the Catholic tradition, however, it is clear that personal agency is balanced by the notion of communion. One cannot remain in a solely a personal relationship of one’s own choosing but must relate to the other members of the Church and to the world because of that.

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61 James Fowler, Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 89. (emphasis in the original)
primary relationship with God. We are called to work for the good of the world and the good of the Church.  

2.4 Shared Meanings

In order to better understand what it means to say faith is shared visions and values, it may be helpful to consider how Lonergan explains what makes a community. Lonergan says a community is “an achievement of common meaning.” He describes how common experience provides the potential for common understanding and common judgements and, therefore, common commitments. These common choices and decisions have a constitutive effect for community:

- Common meaning is realized by decisions and choices, especially by permanent dedication, in the love that makes families, in the loyalty that makes states, in the faith that makes religions. Community coheres or divines, begins or ends, just where the common fields of experience, common understanding, common judgement, common commitments begin and end.

The potential for common experience and understanding and judgments is an important characteristic of the church since the community grows out of the experience of Jesus’ death and resurrection and the common creeds and doctrine that have flowed as the community struggled to understand this experience and the common choices, decisions and actions which we undertake in worship and in the world according to such common articulations of shared meaning as the teaching of Vatican II, for example. The individual who is born into the community, says Lonergan, must decide for himself or herself what to make of the

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64 Ibid.
available common meanings.\textsuperscript{65} The community thrives when those who belong seek to be authentic in their participation in the shared values and visions – the common meaning. This need for the individual to understand and judge for oneself in order to appropriate the common meaning of the community speaks to the need for the individual to be accountable in terms of his or her authenticity in that pursuit. We will see more about the need for authenticity in Chapter Three. For now, this understanding of how communities are formed helps to shed light on the importance of considering one’s identity through an understanding of belonging and participation through shared meanings.

2.5 Understanding One’s Place

In *The Post-Modern Life Cycle: Challenges for Church and Theology*, Friedrich Schweitzer raises the concern about globalization and its effects in terms of a Christian’s understanding of membership in the church. Schweitzer says it produces a sense of Christianity that is “an individualized Christianity … not related to any congregation.”\textsuperscript{66} This can be seen in terms of lack of interest in formal membership in religious institutions and lack of attendance at mainline churches even as smaller, independent groups gain popularity.\textsuperscript{67} If many individuals no longer see the need for formal membership in any one church in particular, how does one have communion? How does it affect one’s understanding of ecclesial identity?

Sharon Daloz Parks explains the difficulty of Christianity without a place in her article “To Venture and to Abide”. Daloz Parks is looking at the importance of having both a firm

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{66} Friedrich Schweitzer, *The Postmodern Life Cycle: Challenges for Church and Theology* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2004), 14.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 13.
starting point (the place in which you abide) so that you can confidently go out into the world and relate to and be of service to others (the place to which you venture). She is making the argument that one’s belonging is deeply related to one’s participation. She agrees with Fowler that many adults remain at that third stage of synthetic or conventional faith. She describes this stage as a time when people seek and find “an enlarged field of belonging.” However, there is a challenge in this stage as people are looking for their ‘place’. In the postmodern world, the search is often prolonged since the traditional ‘places’ are less valued, the options of places where one might rest seem greatly increased, and there is less value generally seen in settling in any one place. She says there is a growing divide between people who are trying to defend and/or preserve their place and those for whom the idea of place/home/homeland/country holds no value at all.

In terms of belonging in the Church, this would pose a struggle for all Catholics – whether they feel a strong sense of belonging in their place, whether they are still searching, or whether they do not care. Those who feel they have their place may find themselves surrounded by many more who are still searching and many others for whom the search for that one place holds no value. Daloz Parks says that a “consciousness of place is an essential element of human strength and a primary feature in the formation of a sturdy faith.” The implications of this assertion are serious. If knowing one’s place is essential, and many Catholics rest in Fowler’s Stage Three where the search for place happens but in a postmodern world find that search prolonged, difficult, or even confusing, it follows that there

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69 Ibid., 77.

70 Ibid., 63.
may be many Catholics lacking a solid foundation from which they can venture. This would mean that there may be many for whom participation is adversely affected because belonging has not been well established. A sense of place is vital to one’s understanding of one’s participation and one’s ecclesial identity.

2.6 Connectedness

Post-modernism poses many challenges to feelings of belonging. Schweitzer points to the broad movements of postmodernism that most affect religious beliefs and attitudes – namely, individualization, privatization, and pluralisation of faith – and highlights how each of these movements pose a threat to traditional ways of understanding one’s faith and one’s relationships to others in the church. If our faith is purely private, for example, it is difficult for us to articulate a shared vision. If it is entirely individual, there can be no shared vision and one cannot care for the good of the group because the group is irrelevant. Pluralisation of faith is the realization that there are many, many possible visions, goals, and purposes. In a culture that celebrates pluralisation, it becomes difficult to identify others in your own group with whom to share values.

Schweitzer sees Carol Gilligan’s work as a positive corrective to these challenges. Gilligan says that development towards maturity is a gradual recognition of “the central importance in adult life of the connection between self and other;”71 it is a balance between the concepts of “responsibility and care.”72 Instead of autonomy defining maturity as it often does in traditional developmental theory, maturity is seen as “a deepening awareness of our


72 Ibid., 516.
responsibility for ourselves and others and the environment as we come to see how connected these are.”  

So one’s identity is formed in relation to one’s sense of connectedness. This idea of connectedness is, for Schweitzer, the “center of biblical anthropology.” We are made in the image of relationship in the Trinity and we are made for relationship with God and each other. Schweitzer sees connectedness to community as a helpful description for belonging in the church but notes that a truly Christian community cannot simply look inward at inner connections but must always be outward facing:

> A community that thinks only of itself and that cares only for its members clearly contradicts the self-understanding of the Christian faith, which extends love and care even to the enemy. In this sense, I want to call the church a public community. It is a community based on a shared faith. But it is also a community that addresses the public and that works toward the common good.

Looking to one’s connections to the group beyond and addressing the public interest and the common good are concerns shared by citizenship theory that we will look to next.

### 2.7 The Contribution of Citizenship Theory

Citizenship theory looks at three basic questions: What makes someone a citizen? What does one get from being a citizen? What are the responsibilities of a citizen? While most authors are willing to answer the first question simply – that is, a citizen is a person born in and maintaining a legal status of citizen in a particular State – others are interested in a more

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73 Schweitzer, 94.

74 Ibid., 95.

75 Ibid., 96.
nuanced description that answers the further question: What makes someone a ‘good’ citizen? Membership, it seems, always has a deeper meaning in its consequences.

Michael Ignatieff, in his article “The Myth of Citizenship” describes the historical evolution of the notion of citizen from Aristotle to modern Western society. He argues that there has always been a notion that citizens had some defined capacity that allowed them to be good citizens. For example, male land-owners could be citizens because they supposedly had the education and financial freedom to be intellectually available and capable to consider the questions of the State. Ignatieff lays out the classic argument for the criteria for citizenship:

> From its inception, the myth of citizenship implied the following crucial chain of associations: political choice requires independence of mind; independence of mind presupposes material and social independence; citizenship therefore inheres only those capable of material, social, and intellectual independence.\(^\text{76}\)

Ignatieff traces the influence of the rise of the welfare state in the mid-20th century as shifting the emphasis for citizenship. There was a need for the State, using the funds of the ‘haves’, to prop up and help out the ‘have nots’. This requires, however, a desire of the ‘haves’ to see their money, their taxes, used in this way.\(^\text{77}\) Ignatieff is pointing to a shifting understanding of who counts as a citizen and what citizenship entails. Citizenship is less exclusive and includes anyone, regardless of class or rank, who belongs to the State but the rights and responsibilities of citizens are now becoming much more complex. There is less of the vertical relationship of a group of idle intellectuals considering the problems of others. In the vertical relationship, those at both the top and the bottom understood, if not agreed to, the need for the class differences. The poor, needy, and uneducated were literally second class

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\(^{77}\) Ibid., 75.
citizens. The welfare state encourages a citizenship that is more of a horizontal relationship between all citizens where all seek and work for the common good. This horizontal relationship is made possible by evening out economic differences through State-funded welfare schemes. Ignatieff goes on to note that the horizontal relationship is, in fact, widening its horizon in today’s world even further by becoming more global. As citizens in any nation, we must now recognize our inter-connectedness to all other nations in matters of economy, environment and justice.  

Richard Bellamy also describes citizenship in terms of horizontal relationship. For Bellamy, democratic membership and participation in the State are the defining components of citizenship. Democratic citizenship “allows us both to control our political leaders and to control ourselves and to collaborate with our fellow citizens on the basis of equal concern and respect.” One’s membership, or one’s citizenship, has to do with one’s allegiance to a State, recognizing oneself as belonging and being recognized as belonging. So belonging has to do with both the personal act of choosing to belong and the group’s act of accepting that personal choice. Once one is a member, by one’s own choice and through the acceptance of others, one gains rights and has responsibilities. For Bellamy, there is a degree of surrender in choosing to be a member. One surrenders to some power because, ultimately, there is a direct and personal benefit. However, the benefit is not merely personal.

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78 Ibid., 76.


80 Ibid., 13.
Because there is a recognition that others are members in the collective, then there is also a recognition of the importance of the common good. For Bellamy, this is the moral component to citizenship – the decision to choose the common good. This is where responsibility comes in. Citizens have to be responsible both to fellow citizens and to the State. Citizens, however, also have to feel and see their actions to be of consequence. Without this understanding of their own agency, they would likely not surrender in the first place. Again, this clearly has implications for belonging and participation in the Church. It points to the importance of people seeing and feeling that their participation has consequences. This echoes Fowler’s notion of the need for both agency and communion together.

2.7.1 The Notion of Participatory Democracy

Daniel Schurgerensky also argues for a notion of citizenship that involves horizontal relationships between all members of the State, who have a common purpose and work for the common good. When all citizens are working together in this way it is called Participatory Democracy. Schurgerensky’s primary concern, however, are the problems that arise when citizens feel disenfranchised from that common purpose. He argues that societies need “an inclusive organizational structure that allows and nurtures participation, and ensures that such participation is meaningful and relevant.” Like Bellamy, Schurgerensky recognizes that citizens must see their role as real and important and effective. He notes

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several ways in which the State can discourage participation of citizens. The State can, for example, make citizens feel as though they are allowing them to participate only as a means of taking on work that the State is no longer able or prepared to pay for themselves.\(^8^2\) In this case, participation is only allowed in tasks in which the State has no real interest. In terms of Church participation, one could imagine the discouragement of laity who felt they were being asked to do only tasks in which Father has no real interest.

Citizens can also feel that their participation has no real meaning when it is kept at a very superficial level.\(^8^3\) Here, participation is strictly for show; there is no real consequence or effect of a person’s participation. Again, one can imagine how such a feeling could hinder the robust participation of any of the laity in the Church. For Schurgerensky, beyond having State structures that support meaningful participation, you also need “a critical mass of citizens who are willing and well equipped to participate effectively.”\(^8^4\) This differs from the criteria that Ignatieff set out in that, willing or not, equipped or not, all citizens are equally responsible as citizens. Schurgerensky is arguing for the necessity of structures that enable citizens to participate at their best and then groups of actual citizens willing to participate actively in those structures. Again, this is interesting in terms of what it might mean for lay people generally in the Church and for lay, volunteer catechists in particular. As volunteers, one may assume a certain level of willingness to participate but how well equipped are they? Are they participating in the structures being offered? What is the adequacy of those

\(^{82}\) Ibid., 51.

\(^{83}\) Ibid., 52.

\(^{84}\) Ibid.
structures to promote the necessary capabilities and to enable effective participation? These questions relate to this study in terms of considering the effectiveness of catechist formation.

The need for citizens to be well equipped in order to participate well is echoed by many of the proponents of Participatory Democracy. Jim Crowther, et al. from the University of Edinburgh, for example, argue for the necessity of a citizen “to learn, argue, debate and, if necessary, to differ and disagree.” Catherine Broom, looking at the historical view of “good citizens” in British Columbia’s elementary school curriculum, notes that the education system has been concerned with producing “individuals who were aware of society’s injustices and actively worked to ameliorate them.” This is participation beyond just doing what one is told. This is thinking about and reflecting on one’s participation to ask: Is it right? Ought this be done?

Citizenship theory, generally, is helpful in considering the dynamics of belonging in the Church in that it brings forward three central notions of belonging. First, there is a way, a process, or a set of criteria by which someone belongs. Second, once one belongs to the group, there are benefits to that belonging. Finally, belonging also carries responsibilities.

The proponents of Participatory Democracy deepen the understanding of belonging as they emphasize this notion of participatory citizens who have some capacity and motivation to work for the common good and to attend to their work in order to reform systems where necessary. Where I am interested in the full, conscious and active participation of lay persons


in the structure of the Church, citizenship theory and participatory democracy studies help me to consider how participation within the structure of the State relates to participation in the Church.

### 2.7.2 Challenges to the Understanding of Citizenship

The feelings of belonging for citizens are not immune to the challenges of post-modernism. The same pressures that affect one’s sense of belonging in and to the church – namely, individualization, privatization and pluralization – pose challenges for the notion of citizenship as well. Samantha Ratnam looked at some of these challenges as she worked on an Australian project aimed at improving young people’s engagement in global citizenship.

One of Ratnam’s most interesting assertions is that traditional citizenship studies have focused mostly on national citizenship and this is no longer a relevant concept for young people today. The emphasis in educating young people for citizenship has centered around what it means to belong and act in terms of one’s national identity. She argues that there has been a globalization of identity for young people because individuals can now belong to multiple communities simultaneously – both near and far – and consider him or herself as a member and a participant in each. Global citizens are global participants.

Imagine, for example, a young person on Facebook. Beyond any city or nation to which she may belong, she primarily identifies herself in terms of communities other than any geopolitical community. For example, she has a community of friends from her university campus. She has also joined an on-line group protest regarding the treatment of girls in India.

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88 Ibid., 772.
She receives regular updates from Free the Children regarding their work in many nations. She maintains relationships with cousins in three other countries and is planning international travels following her graduation. She intends to teach overseas for at least a year. Her movement between communities is seamless; it is no more time to Skype to friends in Kenya than it is to talk to grandma in Toronto. Her belonging to these communities is no less important to her than her belonging to any State. Her feelings of connection and responsibility may, in fact, be greater in these communities where there is more frequent connection and participation. Ratnam says:

The term citizenship historically has implied nationality but no single nation holds sway over a global citizen. Her activities are transnational and her commitment is to the human issues not the nation state.\footnote{Ibid., 770.}

Post-modernism, therefore, pushes the boundaries of what the common purpose or the common good of citizenship theory might be. No longer are we looking to the common good of all the citizens in my State but to the common good of a global community.

Compounding this broadening of concerns is that there are so many places a person could seek a global purpose it is difficult for that purpose to be universal. That young woman on Facebook could have equally been concerned by AIDS rates in Africa or Native rights in Canada. A key difference in global citizenship is the change in the dynamics of belonging. Ratnam says:

[This is] changing boundaries of belonging. Where citizenship for some implies a sense of belonging – usually tied to the dominant national cultural identity … global citizenship offers individuals the choice of where to belong.\footnote{Ibid., 771.}
Although this increased choice can be positive, it can also be disorienting. Ratnam asserts that this is especially true of young people since the central question of adolescent development is ‘who am I?’ The response to that question, and the process of forming that response becomes increasingly less focused as the number of possible and simultaneously possible responses increases in the post-modern context. Post-modernism can have the effect of making our place in the world less certain and, as Daloz Park argues, while some experience this as liberating, others can find it disconcerting.

The challenges of the post-modern world to understanding citizenship affect how individuals understand themselves and how they interact with others in an increasingly global world. Bellamy also names globalization as one challenge of the post-modern world to citizenship. For Bellamy, globalization includes multiple phenomena. It describes the difficulties that arise due to increased immigration over the last century. For the immigrants themselves, they may not feel as though they are fully members of their new State. For the citizens receiving the immigrants, they may not feel that they share a deep enough common bond or common purpose. This may make the ‘old’ citizens less willing to work for the common good as they feel less connected to these ‘new’ citizens. For all people, the increase in global mobility – not just in terms of immigration but in terms of more casual travel for business or pleasure – give people a new perspective on their home State. They may feel less tied to any one State and to any one group of citizens.

This could be seen as a factor in one’s understanding of belonging in the Church. Having a more global sensibility may make it more difficult for individuals to feel tied to their local

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91 Ibid., 769.

92 Bellamy, 118.
parish, for example. This may explain why some Catholics choose to worship in different parishes on different weekends. It may also point to why some Catholics may feel more comfortable now, than in the past, with attendance at other Christian churches. While this would have been scandalous even 50 years ago, Catholics today are less concerned with occasional worship in Protestant churches and consider these to be enriching experiences. This may also affect how catechists understand their ecclesial identity if they are less inclined to identify the group in which they participate in the same way as the official Church.

2.8 Belonging in the Church

The Church has clear answers to the three questions of belonging posed by citizenship theory. What makes us members of the Church? Over and over again, we are reminded it is our Baptism that grants us membership. *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* states that we are “incorporated in the Church through baptism.” Baptism is, in fact, the door through which one enters the Church. What rights do we gain through membership? It is through Baptism and Confirmation and strengthened by Eucharist that the laity is gifted and able to carry out our mission. So we gain membership through Sacraments but through these same Sacraments we receive the gifts that inform our responsibility. The gifts we receive through the Sacraments have a purpose. “There is only one Spirit who, according to His own richness

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93 *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 11. Membership in the Church by means of our baptism is also mentioned, for example, in *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 10, 12, and 31, in *The Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity*, 15, and *The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*, 3.

94 *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 14.

95 Ibid., 33.
and the needs of the ministries, gives His different gifts for the welfare of the Church."\textsuperscript{96}

What responsibilities does membership entail? The purpose of the gifts of the members and the members themselves is for the good of the Church and the world. Our mission is nothing less than the salvation of the world.

Like citizenship theory, the Church speaks about the relationship of members as key to understanding her structure and purpose. The Church is often described as the Body of Christ and we are reminded that it is God’s Holy Spirit that binds us together as a body:

\begin{quote}
Giving the body unity through Himself and through His power and inner joining of the members, this same Spirit produces and urges love among the believers. From all this it follows that if one member endures anything, all the members co-endure it, and if one member is honored, all the members together rejoice.\textsuperscript{97}
\end{quote}

Here we see the Church affirm an essential quality of belonging. The belonging of members is less about individual membership and more about our communion in one body. There is a mysterious “inner joining” that is produced in all members. However, also interesting is the idea that this bond strongly encourages love among the believers. This echoes the voices of citizenship theory in terms of citizens having a responsibility to care for the needs of fellow citizens as well as developmental theorists, in terms of the mature adult’s development of their sense of security and of being loved so that they can reach out to be connected to or to be in communion with their community.

Again, in affirming the communitarian nature of the Church through the image of the Body of Christ, we hear in \textit{The Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity}:

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 7.
By means of this activity, the Mystical Body of Christ unceasingly gathers and directs its forces toward its own growth. The members of the Church are impelled to engage in this activity because of the charity with which they love God and by which they desire to share with all men [sic] the spiritual goods of both this life and the life to come.\footnote{98 \textit{The Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity}, 7.}

There is a mystical love and bond between members that both motivates and directs their efforts. What is interesting to note is that, while many authors in both faith development theory and citizenship theory point to plurality of belief and pluriform realities as challenges in the post-modern world to having a common mission, the Church at the Second Vatican Council preferred a language of universality. Although there are many diverse peoples and nations, the Church sees universality as one of her great gifts:

\begin{quote}
In virtue of this catholicity each individual part contributes through its special gifts to the good of the other parts and of the whole Church. Through the common sharing of gifts and through the common effort to attain fullness in unity, the whole and each of the parts receive increase.\footnote{99 \textit{The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church}, 13.}
\end{quote}

Belonging in the Church, as we see here, means being joined to a common mission. The work of the Church can never be achieved in isolation by one person but in the combined and interconnected common effort of all.

The Second Vatican Council renewed the thinking about the role of the laity. Since the Council, there has been an ongoing and sustained discussion in the Church about how lay people are called to work in this common mission and how they are to understand themselves as sharers in this mission. As we saw in the introduction to this thesis, Pope Benedict XVI has said that more emphasis needs to be put on the co-responsibility of the laity for the
Church. Benedict XVI makes clear that this renewed sense of the importance of the participation of the laity must include a study of pastoral structures. He states:

[I]t is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted, with respect for vocations and for the respective roles of the consecrated and of lay people. This demands a change in mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as “collaborators” of the clergy but truly recognized as “co-responsible”, for the Church’s being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity.\(^{100}\)

Here we have an argument for the necessity of all in the Church coming to understand how belonging and participation are related, how responsibility flows belonging and how changing how people think about these issues forms the basis for real and lasting change.

The dynamics of belonging in the Church are complex. For anyone to take on our co-responsibility, it will require members of the Church to understand their relationships in the Church, that is, their ecclesial identity and appreciate the relationships that inform that belonging and the faith that, in turn, shapes our ways of belonging. By understanding the meaning of our belonging in the Church, we can begin to appreciate the rights and responsibilities that flow from that membership.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have considered the means of and meaning of belonging from various viewpoints. We have seen the importance of the formative experiences of one’s early life to later expression and understanding of one’s faith and of one’s belonging in the Church. We have seen how, in our post-modern context, individuals may struggle with an understanding of embeddedness and connection. This has particular significance with regard to how

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individuals may understand or be hindered in their understanding of their identity in the Church. Participatory democracy studies encourage educational practises to awaken and deepen one’s sense of belonging by making clear how one contributes to the community and ensuring that the contributions are, in fact, effective and are seen to be effective. We have seen, however, that superficial attempts to educate for participation can lead to disillusionment. Finally, we see that Pope Benedict XVI suggests that improved pastoral structures will be needed to change mindsets as well as experiences.

In this chapter, we have seen that one’s belonging and one’s feelings about and understanding of belonging in the Church influence how and whether one contributes or participates or understands one’s participation or contributions. In the next chapter, we will further explore how one’s ecclesial identity can be understood in terms of one’s participation. We will consider what is meant by participation in the Church by looking at the articulation and development of the understanding of lay participation in the field of liturgy and beyond beginning at Vatican II. We will examine the concerns of many regarding a correct interpretation of participation and we will look to the contribution of theologian Bernard Lonergan in providing a deeper understanding of this concept.
3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, we saw how one’s ecclesial identity, that is, one’s identity in or to the Church, can be examined through the dynamics of belonging. Through citizenship theory, faith development and group dynamics theory, we have seen that the way one understands one’s belonging influences one’s participation. In this present chapter, we will focus more specifically on the understanding of participation.

We will begin by considering what the Church had to say regarding lay participation at the Second Vatican Council and how that concept has been applied and developed in the decades following the Council. We will pause to reflect on what is meant by “the Church” in order to bring greater clarity to what is meant by one’s participation in the Church and how that understanding contributes to forming one’s ecclesial identity. Then we will look to the concerns of theologians regarding superficial interpretations of the concept of participation that have weakened its potential as a basis for theological reflection. Finally, we will look to the contribution of Bernard Lonergan in recapturing a robust sense of what it means to participate in the Church. In this way, this chapter will provide a basis for understanding the importance of a rich sense of participation and its implications for one’s ecclesial identity.

3.2 Lay Participation Described at the Second Vatican Council
The modern liturgical movement that calls for increased participation of the laity traces its roots to eighteenth century Germany where reforms were stressing more communal participation in liturgical celebrations through singing. By the early 1900’s, Pope Pius X was stressing the importance of “active participation” of all Christians in public prayer.¹⁰¹

At the Second Vatican Council, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* spoke of the ideal of lay participation in liturgy:

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people” (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.¹⁰²

The language of lay participation was, in fact, evident in many of the documents of the Council. *The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People* assures the laity that they will be “nourished by their active participation”¹⁰³ in the liturgy and so be strengthened for participation in other apostolic works. *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* tells the laity they are “called to participate actively in the whole life of the Church.”¹⁰⁴ *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* goes on to assert that lay participation has consequences for the whole life of the Church as liturgical celebrations have “effects upon” the Church and indeed upon the individual members of the Church depending on

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¹⁰¹ Robert Tuzik, “Whence the Liturgical Movement,” in *How Firm a Foundation: Leaders of the Liturgical Movement*, Comp. Robert Tuzik (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1990), 3. The intent here is not to give a detailed history of the development of the concept but to acknowledge that thinking about lay participation did not spring from nothing and did not begin at Vatican II.


¹⁰³ *The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 43.
one’s “actual participation in them.” In this last statement, an important criteria is offered in understanding participation. The effects or the consequences of participating in liturgy depend on how one ‘actually’ participates. This seems to indicate that simply being there or somehow participating in other merely superficial ways may not be enough to benefit from the full effects of the liturgy. If this is the case, it seems analogous to say that superficial participation in other areas of the life of the Church is insufficient to benefit from the full effects.

The teaching of the Church is clearly that one’s participation has consequences for the whole of the Church. This goes to show why it is so important that catechists have a deep appreciation of the meaning of their participation through their role as catechists. It matters how one ‘actually’ participates – how one approaches it, how one feels and thinks about it, and how one understands it. One’s ecclesial identity is deeply tied to one’s participation.

3.3 The Concept of Participation beyond Liturgical Settings

In the decades since the Council, many have seen an important link between what was said about lay participation in the Mass and what is intended in terms of participation beyond liturgical settings. Both liturgists and theologians interested in pastoral ministry have made this link. In Models of the Eucharist, Kevin Irwin offers ten models by which we can better understand the Eucharistic action, its intentions, and its consequences. The link between the liturgical action of the Church and the whole rest of the life of the Church is central to his argument that the Mass matters and our participation in it matters because we are intended to

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“live our lives in conformity with what we celebrate.” In the end, he concludes that the purpose of liturgy “is not to get the ritual right but to get life right.”

Richard Gaillardetz looks at patterns in current North American family life and sees challenges to entering into liturgy prepared for full, conscious, active participation. He observes that the frenetic pace of activity in most families and the move towards passivity in leisure with the rise of video games and watching TV make it difficult to enter the liturgy ready for the contemplative attentiveness that is required. He encourages us to be more intentional in our patterns of daily living so that the full, conscious, active participation we engage in for the liturgy can form us for better participation in our own lives which in turn will help us to be better prepared for liturgy. Both authors make the clear connection between the celebration of the mysteries in the Mass with the patterns of how we live our lives. It is meant to be an ongoing gathering from which we are sent only to be gathered again. Gaillardetz concludes that the “Catholic Christian life is always to be lived for and from the liturgy.”

In her dissertation entitled, “Full, Conscious, Active Participation of the Ecclesial Subject”, Maria Patricia Utzerath looks to identify authentic means of lay participation in the Church and new ways to see the relationship between the clergy and the laity. She understands authentic and dialogical communication between the laity and clergy as essential for an

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106 Kevin Irwin, Models of the Eucharist (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), xvi.

107 Ibid., 330.


109 Ibid., 212.
authentic participation of the laity that will contribute in the fullest way to the constituting of
the Church. She argues:

The words “full, conscious, and active participation” … are paradigmatic for the
realization of authentic ecclesial subjects in an authentic Church. When applied to the
laity, they refer to the participation of the laity not only in the liturgy, but also in the
life and mission of the Church.\textsuperscript{110}

While many agree that “full, conscious, and active participation” has the potential to be a
valuable description of lay participation both in and beyond the liturgy, at the same time,
there are concerns regarding the prevailing interpretation of this description of participation.
Many fear that there has been too great an emphasis on activity to the detriment of a much
richer theological understanding of this ideal.

3.4 What is Meant by “the Church”

It is difficult to explore one’s ecclesial identity or to look to the meaning of full, conscious
and active participation in the Church as informing that identity without considering to what
are we referring when we say “the Church”. The question, What is the Church? is a question
seeking a definition. Avery Dulles suggests that the classical way to define things is to
provide a description that relates the subject in question to other subjects of the same kind
and makes distinctions where necessary.\textsuperscript{111} These kinds of definitions are best, says Dulles,
when they describe realities that are external to us. The Church, as mystery, resists these
simple definitions. \textit{The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church} articulates this mystery in its
opening paragraph, “The Church, in Christ, is in the nature of a sacrament – a sign and

\textsuperscript{110}Mary Patricia Utzerath, “Full, Conscious, and Active Participation: The Laity as Ecclesial Subjects

instrument.” In order to provide further depth to the mystery, *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, in fact, uses a variety of metaphorical images of the Church in its opening paragraphs: the Church is a cultivated field, the tillage of God, the building of God, a sheepfold, and a flock.

The study of lay participation in the Church often relies on a description of the Church solely as an institution. The Church is understood as a thing already out there; lay people can belong to ‘it’, go to ‘it’, and give money to ‘it’. Statistical analysis of lay participation often counts the number of times people attend Mass, or the number of ministries people volunteer for or the number of dollars contributed. Sometimes the statistics compare the numbers of volunteers or attendance records based on gender or age or geographic location. The notion of the Church as a stable, solid, unchanging thing already out there seriously affects how one can talk about participation in it. Dulles insists that this is the danger of such definitions; they reduce the Church to some external reality and limit the mystery that the Church is called into existence and sustained by God who works through us to carry out the mission of the Church.

3.4.1 *The Church as Process*

This study will consider, instead, Lonergan’s vision of the Church not as a static reality but as a “process of self-constitution.” The notion of the Church as a process has important implications for thinking about a person’s participation in that process. Joseph Komonchak

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112 *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 1.

113 Ibid., 6.

114 Dulles, 9.

asks the question this way: Who are the Church? Komonchak argues that when we refer to the Church, we often do so without questioning to what we refer. And this non-questioning leads us to assumptions that the Church is the real, already out there.\footnote{116 Joseph Komonchak,“Lonergan and Post-Conciliar Ecclesiology,” in Lonergan Workshop, Ed. Fred Lawrence, 20 (2008), 167.} By finding the Church to be a plural who, that is, a people and an “event of intersubjectivity,”\footnote{117 Joseph Komonchak, Who are the Church? (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2008), 39.} rather than a what, simply an object or a singular third person who, one can see why the thinking and acting and participating of those people who are the Church is so important. Exploring an understanding of the Church as a process allows one to consider how individual members contribute to that process. Thus the ecclesial identity of the lay catechist in particular will be seen in terms of their ongoing participation in the process of self-constitution.

### 3.4.2 The Church as Community

A community, as we saw in Chapter Two, is not merely a group of people who share some geographical space. A community is an “achievement of common meaning.”\footnote{118 Ibid., 79.} Lonergan explains that the Church is the “community that results from the outer communication of Christ’s message and the inner gift of God’s love.”\footnote{119 Ibid., 361.} This common meaning is possible because of the common experience of the first disciples who had a shared experience of Jesus. But the community continues and develops through subsequent striving for common understanding, judgements and decisions in full and effective acts of meaning and through the ongoing communication of those common meanings. Komonchak speaks in terms of how God calls the Church into being by calling forth a response from the people:
The divine elements make the Church, bring her into existence, of course; but they do so only as received in and by the freedom of the members of the Church. The human response to the divine initiative in word and grace is itself a constitutive element of the Church. What God wills to exist when he wills the Church is a human community, a community of people whose constitutive meaning and value are the common human acts of faith, hope, and love; the Church is men and woman become a community by virtue of their co-intentionalities, whose co-intentionality is their community. It is the common faith, the common hope, the common love that make this divinely willed community actually exist.120

This account of the Church serves to illustrate the reality and importance of human participation in constituting the Church alongside the importance of God’s participation.

3.4.3 The Implications for Participation

The implications of this understanding of the community of the Church are that while individuals are certainly participating as individuals, our participation is inter-subjective.

While still Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Ratzinger said:

The communitarian nature of the Church necessarily entails its character as “we”. The Church is not somewhere apart from us, it is we who constitute the Church. … each one of us can and ought to say “we are the Church”.121

So it is both our right and our responsibility to understand that we all constitute the Church. And Ratzinger assures us that this realization “gives rise to a co-responsibility and also the possibility of collaborating personally.”122 This understanding of the Church as a process is important as we continue to explore the meaning and usefulness of full, conscious and active participation.

120 Komonchak, Who Are the Church?, 37-38.


122 Ibid.
3.5 Concerns Regarding “Full, Conscious, Active Participation”

As the theology of full, conscious and active participation has developed since the Council – both within liturgy and beyond – some observers worry that the emphasis has been placed on external tasks and activity rather than a deeper appreciation of the meaning of participation. Pope Benedict XVI laments what he sees as a tendency to reduce the meaning participation to only the things we do. He longs for a “participation that is something more than external activity, but rather the entry of the person, of my being, into the communion of the Church and thus into communion with Christ.” On the 40th anniversary of The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Archbishop Marini echoed this lament, “In the first phase of the implementation of the reform [of the liturgy], participation necessarily took on a mainly external and didactic aspect, which often degenerated into a sort of ‘participationism’ at all costs.”

This concern is not limited to Church hierarchy. We see the same issue being raised by Mark Searle, an American theologian active in the liturgical renewal movement in the 1970’s and 80’s, who is disappointed by the superficial understanding of participation that liturgical reform seemed to have taken in the decades following the Council. He states:

In general, liturgical practise reveals a widespread failure to grasp the theological import of the concept of participation. …The profound spiritual meaning of liturgical


participation was overshadowed by the problem of how to get everybody to join in the singing.\textsuperscript{125}

In order to maintain a rich sense of what participation means, the hermeneutic of “full, conscious and active” lay participation in this study will be explored in terms beyond the narrow confines of external activity.

Searle offers a three-fold understanding of participation in liturgy that may be helpful, by extension, to maintaining a rich sense of the concept in a broader context. Searle accepts that in liturgy there are a variety of roles such as priest, lector, choir member, and member of the congregation. He notes that each of the defined roles has its own set of appropriate gestures in the overall ritual. Therefore, the first level of participation includes these actions and postures “according to one’s assigned role.”\textsuperscript{126} This concept of each role having its own participation is particularly important for Searle as he notes that an understanding of “true participation” must recognize that not everyone has to do the same thing at the same time or participate in everything in order to be participating.\textsuperscript{127} This insight is helpful to clarify why it is so important to consider the participation of catechists in particular. Of course, all of the laity, indeed all of the members of the Church, have a participation in the Church but it is reasonable and important to recognize that, inasmuch as we hold different roles in the Church, we participate in unique ways.

\textsuperscript{125} Mark Searle, “Renewing the liturgy – again: A for the Council, C for the Church,” \textit{Commonweal} 20 (November 18, 1988): 620. (emphasis in the original)

\textsuperscript{126} Mark Searle, \textit{Called to Participate: Theological, Ritual, and Social Perspectives} (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2006), 44.

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 20.
The second level of participation for Searle is “participating in the priestly work of Christ on behalf of the world before the throne of God.”\textsuperscript{128} This seems to echo Pope Benedict’s desire for an understanding of participation as a deep communion with the life of Christ through the Church. It is interesting to consider what importance this may have in terms of the participation of catechists in their ecclesial role. Searle says it is through Baptism that we first gain “a new set of relationships to Christ, the Church, and the world.”\textsuperscript{129} It is because of these new relationships that we can take on our participation in the priestly work of Christ and, further, take on particular assigned roles, such as catechist. This level of participation is a movement for Searle from the visible to the invisible and demands a self-emptying in order to be filled by Christ.\textsuperscript{130} This is helpful to the reflection on “full, conscious, and active participation” as it provides insights regarding the meaning beyond the visible actions of individuals and suggests a way of achieving fullness through one’s self-emptying.

Finally, Searle names the third level of participation as “participating in the trinitarian life of God as human beings.”\textsuperscript{131} He describes this participation in liturgy according to the early Christian doxology “Glory be to the Father, through the Son, in the holy Spirit in the holy Church.” In this way, the liturgy is where the mystery of the invisible God is touched. This is where God’s action in the past through the time of the prophets and up to and including the death and resurrection of Christ meets with the expectation of what God wills for us in the

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 31
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 36.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 44.
future so that, through the Spirit we can be transformed into what we are yet to be.\textsuperscript{132} Searle is adamant that these levels of participation belong together and it is only through these three levels taken together that we can achieve full, conscious and active participation.

3.5.1 The Implications for Participation Outside of Liturgical Settings

This inter-relatedness of the visible and invisible, external and internal aspects of participation, what we ‘do’ and what God ‘does’, helps to explain the importance of catechists understanding the broader and deeper meaning of their participation through their role as catechists. This study is not to suggest that correcting worksheets or reporting progress are not important and valuable forms of participation. It is that these external activities alone cannot fully express the ecclesial significance of these tasks. It is these external activities along with their internal dimensions taken together that form the full, conscious and active participation of the catechist.

Next, we will look to the contribution of Lonergan in terms of further exploring this sense of participation that goes beyond external activity. What is clear at this point, however, is that full, conscious and active participation does have a meaning beyond that which is external or easily visible. It also follows that coming to understand that interior and less visible quality is essential for a robust understanding of what is intended for lay participation.

3.6 The Contribution of Bernard Lonergan to Full, Conscious, Active Participation

We have already seen how Lonergan’s understanding of the Church as process serves to deepen our understanding of the consequences of participation. In this section, we will see

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 43.
the many ways in which Lonergan’s cognitional theory, his understanding of the function of meaning, and his psychological analogy for the Trinity can be helpful in deepening our understanding of full, conscious and active participation.

Each of these descriptors of participation – full, conscious, and active – offers an easy, common-sense meaning. Full is in opposition to that which is partial or half-hearted. Conscious refers to a mind that is awake and keenly aware as opposed to a mind that is sleepy and dull. Active is in opposition to passive. Lonergan’s work serves to deepen each of these aspects of participation and to correct a shallow understanding of the meaning of participation that would place too great an emphasis on external activity. In order to begin, however, one must know something about knowing from Lonergan’s perspective so as to enter a new understanding of knowing as a form of active participation.

### 3.6.1 On Knowing – The Full Act of Meaning

Lonergan’s main concern in *Insight* is to reveal the structure of knowing that is common to everyone who knows, regardless of the content that is known. “[The] function of insight in cognitional activity is so central that to grasp it in its conditions, its working, and its results is to confer a basic yet startling unity on the whole field of human inquiry and human opinion.”  

This unity in human inquiry comes from the common movement in inquiry from experience to understanding to judging. It is a movement toward a reflective insight. This is an important point of departure for this particular study as the intention of this work is to gain insight into the experience and understanding of lay catechists of their ecclesial identity.

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Understanding the movement from experience to knowing helps to clarify what is at stake. In experience, one receives data – presentations – that are observed and noticed inasmuch as one carefully attends to them. Because of the human desire to know, the capacity for unrestricted questioning, and human curiosity, the person asks, What is it? This is the demand of understanding. Inasmuch as one can be intelligent in one’s understanding, one can grasp what a thing or an idea is. Crucial to Lonergan’s thought, however, is the following moment of judgment. So one can say what A is but one’s capacity to question drives one to ask, Is it so? Is A truly A or not? Now A is a conditioned. To affirm or deny A, a person must ask all the relevant questions that would fulfill the conditions of A. He or she must marshal and weigh the evidence and be reasonable in the judging. A is a virtually unconditioned when A is affirmed or denied in the person’s act of judgment. This is the moment of knowing.134

Lonergan says, “The full act of meaning is an act of judging.”135 So from potential acts of meaning, which take place on the level of experiencing, to formal acts of meaning, which occur on the level of understanding, one moves to full acts of meaning in judging. Understanding that acts of meaning can be ‘full’ gives further depth to the meaning of full, conscious, active participation. Full acts of meaning lead to constitutive acts when one goes beyond knowing and decides what to do about one’s judgment. In this way, we see ‘full’ as having more potential than merely a quantifying descriptor of one’s participation.

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134 This is a brief outline of a complex argument laid out by Lonergan throughout Insight. The description of the moment of judgment, which is so essential to Lonergan’s thought, is most thoroughly dealt with in chapters 9, 10, and 11.

135 Lonergan, Method in Theology, 74.
It is the human capacity for questions that leads one beyond the moment of judgement. Once A is affirmed or denied, the question arises, What ought a person do about that? Inasmuch as one can be responsible in deciding, one chooses a path – a response or some action – towards A.

Humanity’s potential to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible is the potential for self-transcendence. It leads people to affirm not just what is apparent but what is so and to choose not just what satisfies personally, in the moment, but that which is a true value – the good as opposed to a mere satisfaction. This potential becomes an actuality when one has the experience of falling in love with God.\footnote{Ibid., 105.} This being in love involves God’s love flooding one’s heart. It is a life-changing love that re-orientates a person’s whole being, dramatically shifts one’s horizons, and transvalues one’s values. A person achieves authenticity in self-transcendence.\footnote{Ibid., 104.}

\subsection*{3.6.2 On Authenticity}

Authenticity, then, demands that a person operates from the unrestricted desire to know and with the transcendental precepts of attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness and responsibility. Lonergan describes inauthenticity as arising where this desire or these precepts are suppressed or inoperative. Where a person has some psychological block that limits what he or she can attend to – some wound from the past, for example – a scotosis (a dramatic bias) develops that blinds a person to all that could be seen or could be
questioned.\textsuperscript{138} Or again, as much as there is a desire to know, a love of the light, as Lonergan describes it, there can be a love of darkness – an inclination that refuses any questions that may interfere with a person’s selfish pursuits. Bias develops – individually as a person chooses personal satisfaction over true value, in groups, as the group chooses for their own good as opposed to the common good, and generally when the good is no longer understood to be normative and oversight, rather than insight, rules the day.\textsuperscript{139}

3.6.3 One’s Participation in Knowing

This brief account of Lonergan’s description of cognitional activity points to knowing as a very participatory activity; it demands a rigorous and authentic participation of the knower. It will be important to the arguments that follow to see knowing as a participatory activity and to understand the importance of self-transcendence and authenticity in one’s participation.

As we have seen, Pope Benedict XVI reminds us of the co-responsibility of all persons in the Church. He points to the need for change in pastoral structures as well as a change in mindset regarding lay participation. Since one’s participation has the possibility of affecting the very being of the Church, participation in the process of the Church must be marked by authenticity. But participation clearly has to do with how one thinks about it.

In Lonergan’s own pedagogical style in \textit{Insight}, one sees clearly how cognitional activity relates to participation. Lonergan is not interested in convincing his reader. Instead, he leads the reader through an argument and then challenges him or her to reflect on the argument in relation to his or her own experience of knowing. It is important to Lonergan that the reader

\textsuperscript{138} Lonergan, \textit{Insight}, 215.

\textsuperscript{139} A full description of biases can be found in Lonergan’s description of the “Longer Cycle” in \textit{Insight}, 251-257.
affirm for herself or himself the truth of his account of knowing. Lonergan says that the drive
to know, to question, to reach for understanding of things beyond us is a basic human
desire. In this way, Lonergan challenges the reader to participate by observing,
questioning, deciding and choosing for him or herself. The reader cannot remain a passive
receiver. Active participation is required in the reader’s learning and Lonergan is confident
the reader will be compelled towards this participation because of the fundamental human
desire to know.

The reflective insight grasped when one can affirm or deny – yes, this is so, or no it is not –
is the key moment of knowing. This is the moment of the grasp of the virtually
unconditioned; that is to say, one has asked and answered the questions necessary to fulfill
all the conditions of the conditioned. And the moment of knowing is an important moment
for a participator in the Church. When one can affirm, yes, it is so, then one has to take
responsibility for that affirmation. This is the moment of self-appropriation. One is not
simply taking someone else’s word or acting because it seems others do or it is expected.
Full, conscious, and active participation requires that essential moment when the participator
takes personal responsibility for what is affirmed.

3.6.4 Thinking more about ‘Active’ Participation

In the opening remarks of Insight, Lonergan acknowledges, “there remains the question,
What practical good can come of this book?” His answer is telling:

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140 Lonergan, Insight, 28.
141 Lonergan, Method in Theology, 102.
142 Lonergan, Insight, 7.
Insight is the source not only of theoretical knowledge but also of all its practical application, and indeed all of intelligent activity. …insight into insight brings to light the cumulative process of progress. For concrete situations give rise to insights which issue into policies and courses of action. Action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights, better policies, more effective courses of action. …insight into oversight reveals the cumulative process of decline. For the flight from understanding blocks the insights that concrete situations demand. There follow unintelligent policies and inept courses of action.\textsuperscript{143}

Lonergan is arguing that understanding the process of coming to know can lead to real and concrete solutions through intelligent activity. Whereas participation in the Church is often investigated according to what activities are carried out, in what circumstances, on whose authority, Lonergan offers a deepening of the concept of participation. It is not sufficient to ask what one does but whether one does the thing intelligently and responsibly. This has important implications for the study at hand in terms of my own responsibility as the Director of Catechesis in setting and enacting policies and choosing from among possible courses of action.

And, as Lonergan affirms over and over throughout \textit{Insight}, the task of being attentive to one’s experience and intelligent in one’s understanding and reasonable in one’s judgements and responsible in one’s actions cannot be done \textit{for} someone. The subject must affirm herself or himself as a knower.\textsuperscript{144} Therefore, being open to the unrestricted desire to know, one must allow all the possible questions regarding one’s participation to arise. In this way, a person can take responsibility for that which is possible. The intent of this study is that both the catechist study participants and myself become more attentive to our own experience, raise the critical questions, and begin that process of knowing and self-appropriation.

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 8.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 353.
3.6.5 The Psychological Analogy of the Trinity

Lonergan brings further meaning to full, conscious and active participation in the analogy he draws between the divine relations in the Trinity and the movement of human intellectual activity. Recall the description of the activity of human knowing so far. First, one observes and asks: What is it? In human understanding, one is drawn to utter a word. That is, one is drawn to understand something and declare, It is A. Then, evidence is weighed and judged until one can truly affirm, A is A. Having made the affirmation, one is drawn to choose or act in response to A. Lonergan argues that the relations among the Trinity, though not identical to this movement in human understanding, can be understood by analogy to this movement.

Lonergan explains how the dynamic relations within the Trinity is something like the dynamic movement in human understanding. In the Trinity, the Father does not seek to understand, as we do, he understands. Therefore, he utters a true word that is the Son. Together the Father and Son affirm the uttering in love and the Spirit proceeds (or is spirated) in the act of loving. The experience of this loving is our participation in the mission of charity in the world. This is our response. Dadosky says that “the habit of charity is a participation in the passive spiration of the Father and the Son breathing the Holy Spirit.”

Of course, this movement within the Trinity differs from human understanding because in human understanding, there is an emanation of what has been understood by the understanding. The understood is distinct from the object itself. The more perfect the understanding, the more perfect the unity between understood and the source of the

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145 John Dadosky, “Ecclesia de Trinitate: Ecclesial Foundations from Above,” New Blackfriars 94, issue 1049 (January 2013): 76. Dadosky also makes the point that the habit of charity is a particularly important participation when we recognize that, as The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church makes clear, one is not saved “who does not persevere in charity,” 14.
understanding.\textsuperscript{146} By analogy, the Son proceeds from the Father something like the intellectual emanation in understanding. However, there is a perfection in God, not found in human understanding. This means that “what issues forth in the procession is exactly and perfectly alike in content as its principle.”\textsuperscript{147} The Word proceeds from the Father in a perfect act of unity. Unlike human words and understanding that can only seek to express the fullness of what we have grasped, there is no substantial difference between what God seeks to express and does express.

Whereas the Son is a procession of the word, Lonergan expresses the spiration of the Spirit from the Father and Son as a procession of love, sanctifying grace, and the gift freely given.\textsuperscript{148} Darren Dias describes this ongoing uttering, speaking, hearing and choosing as an ontological and psychological indwelling of the three persons of the Trinity.\textsuperscript{149}

Thinking about the ways in which the inner relations of the Trinity is alike and different from human understanding takes on further consequence when one considers that catechists are responsible for uttering a word, even perhaps for attempting to utter the word, to others as part of the outer communication of the Church that responds to God’s call and contributes to constituting the Church. Whereas what proceeds from the Father is the Word, and there is an intimate coherence between what is intended and what is spoken, in the catechetical endeavour one must remain cautious that there is always a distance for us between what is


\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 102.

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 117.

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 108.
intended and what is spoken, the understanding and the object understood. The psychological analogy of the Trinity helps to clarify the call to conscious participation and full participation because it points to the importance of one’s authenticity. It also recognizes that it is through the gift of the Spirit – the gift of charity of the Father and Son sent into the world through the Spirit – that the articulation of the catechist can be made ever more authentic.

3.6.6 Thinking more about ‘Conscious’ Participation

It may be helpful to the understanding of Lonergan’s psychological analogy of the Trinity to consider how Joseph Mudd applies it to ‘conscious participation’ in the liturgy. Mudd is another example of someone concerned by shallow interpretations of “full, conscious, active participation.” For Mudd, conscious participation requires becoming “increasingly aware of one’s participation in the constitutive communication that is the Trinity.” This elevates the notion of participation in the Mass from the mere actions or gestures allowed or anticipated in liturgical rubrics to the deeper truth that is intended in the symbolic mediation in liturgy. It is an awareness that incorporates our desire for authenticity. Conscious participation in the liturgy, therefore, “can be understood as the incorporation of liturgical subjects into the divine conversation.”

Although complex, the psychological analogy of the Trinity allows us to think about what St. Paul means when he says:

For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God’s except the Spirit of


151 Ibid.
God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God …we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor 2: 11-12, 16)

St. Paul is speaking about a human potential to think with the mind of Christ because of the gift of the Spirit. This echoes Searle’s assertions that, on the second level, we participate in liturgy through our participation in Christ. Again, however, what can be said about participation in the liturgy is often echoed by others as resonating with one’s participation beyond the liturgical context as well. Dias, for example, affirms that “[h]uman participation in the divine life is through the missions which open to us the eternal processions that constitute God. Humankind is invited to share, to participate in, and appropriate the divine life.” Therefore, conscious participation points to more than just being awake; it points to a participation in the mind and life of God. Full, conscious, and active participation refers to all of one’s participation, in all times, places and contexts.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that the hermeneutic of full, conscious and active participation is an important way to understand participation in the Church. Although offered initially by the Council as a description of lay participation in the liturgy, it has developed over the past five decades as a description of lay participation in all areas of life in the Church. As this theological insight has developed, however, there have been concerns that too great an emphasis has been placed on external participation thus diminishing the potential of the theological insight. Liturgists such as Mark Searle have offered theological explanations of full, conscious and active participation that have aimed at renewing and deepening the 

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152 Dias, 112.
potential of the hermeneutic. Lonergan offers many ways in which to maintain the depth and richness of this approach to participation.

This chapter has considered lay participation in general terms; that is, what has been said here about participation applies to all lay persons in the Church. In the next chapter, we will look more specifically to the ministry of catechesis and its place within the mission of the Church. We will consider the growing role of lay catechists in this ministry and how their participation may be of particular consequence to the Church.
Chapter 4
The Particular Case of Catechesis and Catechists

4.1 Introduction

As we have seen, the laity is called to participate in the Church throughout the documents of Vatican II. In *The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*, the laity is assured of its “special and indispensable role in the mission of the Church.”¹⁵³ The laity has been given different gifts, so that “each one has received suitable talents and these should be cultivated, as should also the personal gifts he [sic] has from the Holy Spirit.”¹⁵⁴ These gifts, however, must be developed and used for the greater good of the Church and its mission.

The mission of the laity is to make the Church “present and fruitful” in the world by bearing witness and spreading the knowledge of Christ by its actions.¹⁵⁵ The tasks of daily living are opportunities to fulfill the lay mission. The lay faithful should go about their daily lives, in marriage, in parenthood, and in employment, in prayerful witness. The struggles of the laity should be offered to God as a means to sanctifying the world.¹⁵⁶

What has been said up to this point regarding belonging and participation in the Church applies to all lay persons regardless of one’s role or whether or not one has a defined role in

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¹⁵³ *The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*, 1.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 4. Throughout this decree, particular gifts are mentioned such as: “professional competence” (4); the exercise of charity which would bring liberty and dignity to those who are in want of food, drink, clothing, housing, medicine, work, or education (8); and the ability to “draw men towards the Church who had been perhaps very far away from it” (10) by the laity’s zealous participation in the liturgical life of the community.

¹⁵⁵ *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 11.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 34.
the Church. The subjects of the Action-in-Ministry that informs this study, however, are catechists – specifically, lay volunteer catechists. This chapter will look to explore the Church’s teaching regarding catechesis and catechists. Bearing in mind the understanding of the Church as a process, we will clarify how catechists contribute to that process in particularly important ways through the functional specialty of communications. We will look to the image of the Church as Mother in order to see how catechists can be understood as mothering in the faith while they themselves are mothered in the Church. We will look to Lonergan’s notion of a scheme of recurrence as an important way to picture the activity of catechesis. We will see how choosing, valuing and deciding can create, contribute to, and sustain schemes of recurrence and what implications arise from this insight. Finally, we will consider the implications of one’s participation in the Church existing, as Komonchak asserts, “within the endless struggle of the three historic principles of progress, decline, and redemptive recovery.”

4.2 What is Catechesis?

It is helpful to consider how catechesis is defined and distinguished from other kinds of instruction and proclamation in the Church. Catechesis can be distinguished from religious instruction, on the one hand, and evangelization, on the other. Religious instruction can be offered by and to anyone; that is, neither the instructor nor the student is required to be a believer. The GDC points out that this type of instruction often helps to relate different religions to one another and incorporates other academic disciplines into religious studies in

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order to see the complementarity of the various areas of study. The motivation for such study could range from personal curiosity to academic inquiry. Evangelization has a very particular motivation; it is the response of the Church to the great commission in the gospel of Matthew, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (28: 19). It is a process and an ongoing proclamation of the gospel by believers to non-believers in order to lead them to conversion.

Catechesis “matures initial conversion, educates the convert in the faith and incorporates him [sic] into the Christian community.” So whereas religious instruction can be offered to anyone, and evangelization is a mostly externally reaching proclamation for the purpose of conversion, catechesis has a greater focus on an internal communication of the gospel – a proclamation intended to assist the faith of one who already believes.

The preface to the *GDC* traces the reflection on catechesis from Vatican II to Pope Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, to John Paul II’s *Catechesi Tradendae*. These documents serve to place catechesis within the broader context of the Church’s mission and show the pre-eminent place that catechesis holds in the life of the Church. John Paul II says:

> Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church’s life. Not only her geographical extension and numerical increase, but even more, her inner growth and correspondence with God’s plan depend essentially on catechesis.

It is no wonder, then, that these documents also clearly acknowledge the need for resources to be invested in this ministry. John Paul II goes so far as to suggest that we owe our best people, energy and resources to the formation of catechists.

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158 *GDC*, 74.

159 Ibid., 61.

The GDC clearly instructs bishops to give priority to the task, which includes providing appropriate financial resources.\textsuperscript{162} Catechesis is intended to “deepen man’s [sic] encounter with God and forge a bond of permanent communion with him”.\textsuperscript{163} This is achieved through the fundamental tasks of catechesis, which are identified as follows:

1. Catechesis should promote knowledge of the faith.
2. Catechesis should provide liturgical education so as to lead participants to “full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy”.
3. Catechesis should include moral formation.
4. Catechesis should teach participants to pray.
5. Catechesis should prepare Christians to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church.
6. Catechesis should prepare Christians to belong to the community.\textsuperscript{164}

Catechesis aims to provide content regarding doctrines but also to model and encourage celebration and Christian living. It also explicitly intends that those catechized will, in turn, be able to participate well in the life and mission of the Church. Here we have the double importance of catechesis as the activity of catechesis is itself a participation in the Church that is also meant to prepare others to participate. Thus catechesis assists in perpetuating a cycle of participation.

4.3 Responsibility for Catechesis

The teachings of the Church at Vatican II and following chronicle the shifting responsibilities in the field of catechesis. Vatican II affirmed the role of parents as first educators of their children and spoke strongly of their specific duty to pass on the faith to

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 15.

\textsuperscript{162} GDC, 223.

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 23.

\textsuperscript{164} GDC, 85 – 86.
their children. At the same time, the Church acknowledged that parents would require assistance with this task. The laity was urged to “ardently cooperate in the spread of the Word of God, particularly by catechetical instruction.” In *Catechesi Tradendae*, John Paul II referred to the “shared but differentiated responsibility” for catechesis of various members of the Church:

> Priests and religious have in catechesis a pre-eminent field for their apostolate. On another level, parents have a unique responsibility. Teachers, the various ministers of the Church, catechists … all have in various degrees very precise responsibilities in this education.

The description of responsibilities is clear that there is a hierarchical structure in which lay catechists have a supporting role. Pastors have the duty to provide catechesis. Men and women Religious have an historical legacy of assisting with catechesis and are urged to continue. Lay catechists are to collaborate with priests and Religious, “lowly and hidden” though their work may be.

In documents from the Congregation for Catholic Education following the publication of *Catechesi Tradendae*, we see a developing sense of the role of the laity in the area of education. In “Lay Catholics in Schools” from 1982, the Congregation recognized that “[l]ay Catholics … who devote their lives to teaching … have become more and more vitally important in recent years.” The document points to the realities of a decrease in vocations

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165 This language is used throughout the documents of Vatican II including: *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 48, *The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*, 11, and “Declaration on Christian Education,” 3.

166 *The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*, 10.

167 John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 16.

168 Ibid., 66.

of Religious dedicated to teaching, and to the theological development in the understanding of the role of the laity. The Congregation acknowledges that this is a new role for the laity which is “positive and enriching.”170 The document affirms that all teachers must understand the need for personal formation.171

4.4 Catechesis as Communication

The basic purpose of catechesis is to proclaim the gospel of Christ Jesus. Catechesi Tradendae, the GDC, and most recently Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation Evangelii Gaudium all emphasize that the central proclamation is the life and death and resurrection of Christ that reconciles us to the Father and through the love of the Spirit brings us to “share in the life of the Holy Trinity.”172

This proclamation falls under the category of communications in Lonergan’s listing of the functional specialties of theology. The functional specialties describe how the data of theology is to be gathered through research and interpreted and understood according to history. Through the specialty of dialectics, which naturally arise from conflicting interpretations, conflicts are resolved and worked out as foundations. Doctrines are determined according to the foundations laid out and systematics allow for the doctrines to be placed into coherent conversation with one another so that clarification of the whole is possible. It is because of the work of these seven prior functional specialties – that is: research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, and systematics – that the

170 “Lay Catholics in Schools,” 2-3.

171 Ibid., 3, 22, and 60.

172 Catechesi Tradendae, 5. See also GDC, 80 as well as Evangelii Gaudium, 164 where Pope Francis declares: “On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: ‘Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.’”
eighth specialty, communications, is then possible. This stage of communication is particularly important to Lonergan as this is the stage that “bears fruit”\textsuperscript{173} inasmuch as this is the communication that in the process of self-communication is constituting the Church. Since catechesis is a form of the communication of the gospel, then it is an important way in which the common meaning that constitutes the community that is the Church is achieved. Lonergan explains that:

\[\text{[To] communicate the Christian message is to lead another to share in one’s cognitive, constitutive, effective meaning. It is cognitive inasmuch as the message tells what is to be believed. It is constitutive inasmuch as it crystallized the hidden inner gift of love into overt Christian fellowship. It is effective inasmuch as it directs Christian service to human society to bring about the kingdom of God.}\textsuperscript{174}\]

This means that in order to be an authentic communicator of the gospel, one has to have understood the cognitive meaning, live the constitutive meaning, and practise the effective meaning in one’s own life. Recall from Chapter Two that the shared common meaning is what defines the community. Lonergan again emphasizes the importance of achieving this common meaning, “[s]uch common meaning is doubly constitutive. In each individual it is constitutive of the individual as a member of the community. In the group of individuals it is constitutive of the community.”\textsuperscript{175} In terms of catechists in the CCC then, beyond the body of doctrines and content of lessons, and apart from acting for the common good, there is this constitutive nature of the task that must be appropriated.

\subsection*{4.4.1 Grasping the Implications}

\textsuperscript{173} Lonergan, \textit{Method in Theology}, 355.

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 362.

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 357.
It is in understanding this ‘double constitutive’ effect of the communication of common meaning that the particular importance of catechists and their participation in the Church are understood. Komonchak emphasises this critical role of communications, “communications then refers not only to an activity of the church outward, but to the very process by which it continues to exist at all.”

Catechists must see and understand themselves as communicating the message that makes them and those catechized individually part of the community and simultaneously constitutes the community around the common meaning. In explaining the process by which this proclamation contributes to the constituting of the Church, Komonchak affirms that “the originating and ever-necessary event is the announcement of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the human race and the acceptance of that announcement in faith.” He then explains it “was by the communication of this message of eternal life and its reception in faith and love by successive generations that the Church continued to exist until that communication was made to our generation also.” Komonchak offers the image of Church as Mother to bring further life to this insight.

4.4.2 The Image of Church as Mother and Its Relevance to Catechists

Komonchak seeks to recapture and rehabilitate the ancient metaphor Church as Mother in order to express this giving and receiving from generation to generation in the Church. He

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177 Komonchak, Who Are the Church?, 40.
178 Ibid., 41.
179 While in use as a descriptor of the Church for many centuries, it was used widely on our own era throughout the documents of Vatican II. See the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 14, 21, 60 and The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 43. See also The Dogmatic Constitution on the
admits that this image of Mother has suffered in our era because it has been seen as a reference solely to the hierarchy. Some worry it is a means of subordinating the laity as children who must be cared for by a parent.\textsuperscript{180} In \textit{A Council that Will Never End: Lumen Gentium and the Church Today}, Paul Lakeland sees the image of mother as an image of one who pacifies and discourages active participation. Quoting Pope Francis in a recent homily, Lakeland says that where the laity fail to be moved by the Spirit to participate in the Church’s mission and want to rely instead solely on the hierarchy to be Church, then the Church is no longer Mother but babysitter. He says, “The Church is not the mother but the babysitter that takes care of the baby – to put the baby to sleep. It is a Church dormant.”\textsuperscript{181} It is interesting to see here the concern that when full, conscious and active participation is not achieved, the Church is dormant.

Komonchak believes, however, that we can recapture what St. Augustine meant when he said, “The Church is to herself both a mother and her children; for all of those of whom the Church consists, taken together are called a mother, while those same individuals, taken

\textsuperscript{180} Paul Lakeland is one of those concerned that this language causes an infantilization of the laity by the hierarchy. See “Maturity and the Lay Vocation: from Ecclesiology to Ecclesiality,” in \textit{Catholic Identity and the Laity}, Ed. Tim Muldoon (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), 257. See also from this text, Edward Hahnenberg, “Lay? Ministry? Christian Mission in a Pluralistic World.” Hahnenberg says that when we use this language of mother and children it damages our ability to speak about lay ministry and lay participation in the Church. He suggests that when we call the Church our Mother “we don’t need a theologian, we need a therapist,” 215.

\textsuperscript{181} Paul Lakeland, \textit{A Council that Will Never End: Lumen Gentium and the Church Today} (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2013), 59.
singly, are called her children.” The image of mother is helpful because it is a generative image; it is an image that both gives new life and nurtures the life already present.

This image of Church as Mother may be of particular assistance to lay catechists as Komonchak explains mother Church bears us in her womb, gives birth to us at baptism, nurses us with the gospel and brings us to Christian maturity. “This Mother,” he says, “was not something distant, apart from them, this mother Church consisted of those who singly are her children and the maternal roles were carried out by members of the local Church, both clergy and laity.” As Dadosky explains, this revives and broadens the image of Church as mother so that there is a sense in which every believer is simultaneously a mother in calling her children together and mothered in the womb by those who communicate the faith. This would be particularly meaningful for catechists as they work to ‘call the children together’. They are mothering others in the faith while they themselves are mothered by the Church.

While both Komonchak and Dadosky acknowledge that the image of Church as Mother has suffered because of the association of Mother with church hierarchy only, they have sought

182 Komonchak, *Who are the Church?*, 47-48.
183 Ibid., 48.
184 Ibid.
186 I wonder if this image of the catechist ‘mothering’ in the faith is somehow influential in terms of the decisions of men and women to enter into this ministry. Certainly in my own experience, women greatly outnumber the men but even John Paul II acknowledges this phenomenon in *Catechesi Tradendae*: “I am anxious to give thanks in the Church’s name to all of you, lay teachers of catechesis in the parishes, the men and the still more numerous women throughout the world who are devoting yourselves to the religious education of many generations.”, 66 (emphasis added). In any event, the reasons that more men do not serve as catechists may need further study at some point.
to recapture the sense in which all of us, clergy and laity, are mothers. In this way, the image invites, encourages and gives dignity to participation.

4.4.3 Catechesis as a Scheme of Recurrence

Another way to picture catechesis is to understand the process according to Lonergan’s model of schemes of recurrence. This model can explain the cyclical, ongoing nature of catechesis generally, but also serves to explain the emergence and functioning of the CCC in the Diocese of Hamilton in particular. Consider first the events that led to the development and success of the correspondence courses.

Recognizing that there was a need to assist parents with catechesis, and that schools and parishes could not always meet the need themselves, the Loretto Sisters and Bishop Ryan, Bishop of Hamilton from 1937-1973, responded in 1938 to form the Catechetical Correspondence Courses. The Sisters set up systems for taking registrations, securing and paying for materials, sending and receiving lessons and books, and tracking student progress. They communicated with families and parishes to encourage learning and to report achievement.

Children who completed these courses were deemed by parishes to be prepared for the reception of Sacraments of Initiation. Families were pleased to have their children participate in the faith life of the Church, and to meet the important faith milestones of First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation.

As parishes became more and more comfortable with, and confident in, the quality of the catechesis, they began to rely more often on the correspondence courses. As more families became familiar with the program, they recommended it to other families. As the Diocese of
Hamilton saw parishes and families benefitting from the program, it continued to support the program – financially and otherwise. We can see an ongoing cycle of events such that the families who have children come to the parish that relies on the diocesan office that provides the means of catechesis as directed by the Bishop that largely satisfies all concerned. This is an instance of a scheme of recurrence.

A scheme of recurrence is described by Lonergan in terms of how we understand the events that constitute them. Lonergan observes that, in a universe which allows for a myriad of possible events, each of those events has a statistical probability of occurring. For any event to occur, the minimum fulfilling conditions for that event have to have been fulfilled. The fulfillment of prior necessary conditions, however, does not dictate that the event will happen but does allow the possibility that the event could happen. At any given moment, there are many possible events that could occur because of favourable conditions. Of all those possible events, some are more probable than others. The probability of any given event occurring can be expressed by a statistical probability. The statistical probabilities, however, cannot predict which events happen and which do not. The occurrence of actual events varies non-systematically from their probabilities, which is to say that, some of the time, the improbable happens, and, at other times, the probable fails to happen.

Lonergan’s observations about the probabilities of singular events lead to insight into what happens in sets of events. Events can happen with other events such that Events A, B, and C

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187 Lonergan describes what is meant by “event” at length in *Insight*. See, for example, pp. 105-106, and 121-123. A simple explanation of event can be found on p. 148. “An event is what is to be known by answering yes to such questions as, Did it happen? Is it occurring? Will it occur?”
all happen coincidentally. Sometimes, however, conditions for events are fulfilled in such a way that events are not merely coincidental. As the conditions for A are filled, event B occurs, and as B occurs, it fulfills the conditions for C such that C occurs. These events may even curl around on themselves, and have a circular nature, such that Event A causes Event B which causes Event C which then causes A to recur. Lonergan called this a scheme of recurrence.

A very simple description of the laity can be made in terms of a scheme of recurrence as an example. Event A would be the birth of persons who are brought into the Church through Baptism. Event B is how the baptized persons live and participate in the Church. Event C would represent the fact that these people often grow up and give birth to children who are brought into the Church through Baptism. Eventually, the generation of the parents grows old and dies, but their children continue on by growing and giving birth to their own children who are, in turn, brought into the Church through Baptism; and this is the recurrence of Event A. This is, of course, a very rough description of the scheme of the laity. The “living and participating in the Church” part of the scheme looks very different depending on such factors as geographic location, historical time period, and feeling of personal calling. But, despite the different manifestations of the scheme, the laity can be pictured in terms of a scheme of recurrence.

Having looked at this simple scheme, we can also picture catechesis in the Catholic Church as a scheme of recurrence and, in fact a conditioned series of schemes of recurrence. This is because where the Church exists there will be parishes. Parishes have parishioners, many of whom are families. Families, which are bound to educate their children in the faith through the baptismal promises, look for help in providing catechesis to their children. And some
form of catechesis does, indeed, occur in all times and places where families, parish, and the Church exist. These prior schemes of universal Church, parish, and families are also necessary for the correspondence courses to exist, but the existence of the necessary prior fulfilling conditions does not guarantee the emergence of the particular scheme of the correspondence courses. This is clear when we consider that the prior schemes all occur in other dioceses around the province of Ontario, for example, and the correspondence courses did not emerge in those other dioceses.

The constituent elements of the scheme of the Catechetical Correspondence Courses are not single events, but are, themselves, a set of highly complex relationships of events, forces, energies, and people. Lonergan explains that, just as single events can combine to form schemes of recurrence, so schemes can combine to form a series of schemes of recurrence. These schemes are a conditioned series if, and when, all prior schemes are functioning actually for any later member to become a concrete possibility. In terms of the correspondence courses, the constituent elements are A, B, C, and D, where A represents the scheme of the family, B is the scheme of the parish, C is the hierarchy of the Church (that is, in this case, the Diocese of Hamilton), and D is the administrator and catechists of the program.

In our geographic region, one of the most readily available, practical, and accepted ways for parents to provide catechesis for their children is by sending them to the Catholic school system. There are Catholic children, however, who are not in the Catholic school system for a variety of reasons. These families then have to seek a faith education opportunity elsewhere. Parishes can, of course, offer many types of catechesis. Parish-based catechesis for children has a concrete possibility of existing as the necessary fulfilling conditions of
catechesis (which are, roughly speaking, someone who knows the good news of Jesus Christ, and someone who wants to know it) are always fulfilled in a parish. But the reality of actual parishes is that there are limited funds, limited volunteers, often overwhelming numbers of resources from which to choose and many pastoral needs for the parish to address. Therefore, that which is possible does not always occur. In practice then, many parishes do not offer ongoing, systematized catechetical programs for children on their own as these would require many volunteers and resources to run.

As we have seen in the description of the structure of the correspondence courses as a conditioned series of recurrent schemes, it provides catechesis to children, as a service to both families and parishes. The program fills the need of parents and parishes to pass on the faith, and to prepare young people for the Sacraments. The need to pass on the faith forms an important aspect of the mission of the whole Church. So, the intent of the correspondence courses is to serve the greater mission of Church of proclaiming the gospel and passing on the faith, through parishes, by helping families to pass on the faith to their children so they may become faithful disciples of Christ.\textsuperscript{188}

\textsuperscript{188} Having explained its development and functioning, and the reasons it has continued and thrived for so long, it may occur to the reader to ask: \textit{Is the CCC good catechesis?} The CCC was never intended as an ideal form of catechesis. It was designed to fill a particular need when catechesis, such as catechesis in the Catholic school system or through systematic parish instruction, were unavailable for one reason or another. So the CCC provides catechesis in the absence of other formal catechetical instruction. That having been said, the current program materials of the CCC do meet the first four fundamental criteria of the \textit{GDC}. That is, the \textit{We Believe} series by Sadlier Publishing does provide basic information on the faith, on liturgical practice, and on symbols; it provides moral education, and it teaches prayer. The final two criteria, which refer to bringing Christians into the life of the Church, are more difficult to achieve through a correspondence program. This is where the ongoing communication with children and their families becomes essential so that relationship can be fostered. One of the great strengths of the CCC is that it supports parents in their role as first educators of their children in the faith.
4.4.3.1 Participating in Schemes of Recurrence

Komonchak affirms the importance of understanding the constitution of the Church in the participation in communications which brings about shared common meaning and further explains that it is in the acts of meaning of participants that this constitution occurs. “The ontological reality of the Church consists of the common intentional acts of meaning and value of her members.”189 Patrick Byrne tells us that “[w]hat radically distinguishes human schemes of recurrence from natural ones is that their emergence and survival depend upon acts of human intelligence and choice.”190 These acts of human intelligence are what Lonergan calls acts of meaning.191 The beginnings of the correspondence courses can be found in acts of meaning. Bishop Ryan asked the Loretto Sisters to begin a catechetical correspondence program. The choosing, deciding and valuing makes the scheme (or series of schemes) possible, but it is not deterministic. The administrative structure – that is the Loretto Sisters – had to “make it happen” by assembling the materials, marshalling the work force, and interpreting the intent of the bishop and the aim of catechesis in order to “make it so”. Many different schemes may have emerged. Through the vision and work of the Loretto Sisters and then the School Sisters of Notre Dame, and all of their subsequent and accumulating acts of meaning, the correspondence courses that we have today in the Diocese of Hamilton emerged.

Lonergan says:

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Beyond the world we know about, there is the further world we make. But what we make we first intend. We imagine, we plan, we investigate possibilities ... we are engaged in acts of meaning; and without them the process would not occur or the end be achieved.\(^{192}\)

This is the world of the CCC, and their constituent schemes of family, parish, Church, and catechists. People are not at the complete mercy of their environment. That is, people are not required to wait passively for every fulfilling condition to occur according to its schedule of probabilities. We do not have to wait for ideal circumstances to arise; we can make things happen by our valuing, and deciding, and acting. These are our acts of meaning which constitute the schemes in which we participate.

Kenneth Melchin explains how understanding schemes of recurrence helps people to understand, and then to contribute to world process. People can have an insight into recurrent schemes of acts of meaning that have constituted their history, and can grasp the intelligibility in the schemes, and identify the fulfilling conditions for those schemes. And while those are interesting and valuable observations, people can go beyond that observation of past events to imagine future possible schemes, and imagine the necessary fulfilling conditions for those schemes, and then act on those insights.\(^{193}\)

Inasmuch as the Church is a process of self-constitution or an event of intersubjectivity, its schemes are made up of people and are, therefore, constituted by acts of meaning. Each individual is capable of his or her own choosing, valuing, deciding, and acting in those schemes. These acts of meaning, however, are not isolated events, but are situated in the


larger context of the ongoing schemes of recurrent acts of meaning that have contributed and continue to contribute to the constitution of the Church.

The schemes that one contributes to by one’s choosing, deciding, and acting are limited, however, by the types or kinds of acts of meaning of which one is capable or which one is willing to consider. If someone cannot conceive of choice X, then he or she cannot produce X. If someone refuses to consider Y, then Y cannot be produced. Melchin says, “the way people see themselves sets the ranges of possibilities”. 194 This is equally true for individuals and for groups. Melchin wants us to notice our own boundary conditions. He asks us to consider what meanings are operative in the environment in which we function. He reminds us of the importance of attending to our own acts of meaning as they are constituting the schemes around us.

No one can participate well in schemes of recurrence that they do not know or do not understand. Part of that structured formation must help catechists to see themselves within the greater context of the universal Church. They need to see that their work is not isolated but that it is tied to the mission of the whole People of God. They need to be encouraged to attend to what they are learning and living in the communities in which they find themselves. As Lonergan reminds us, the schemes in which we participate are being constituted “by one’s choices, one’s decisions, or alternatively by one’s drifting, one’s failure to confront issues and decide.” 195 What Lonergan calls “deliberate human living” 196 is so essential

194 Ibid.


196 Ibid.
because the decision to remain unaware, the choice to do nothing, and the temptation to be selfish, are acts of meaning that are just as powerful as the decision to attend carefully, to act authentically, and to decide for the common good. Participation in this way has to do with the historical reality of progress, decline and redemption.

4.4.4 A Word about Progress, Decline and Redemption

It is helpful, even as we consider the importance of one’s participation in the scheme of catechesis, to put all human participation in the Church into perspective. Lonergan observes that in our human history there is evidence of both progress and decline. Progress rests on an accumulation of successive insights. Lonergan finds progress to be characteristic of humanity inasmuch as people have this basic orientation towards unrestricted questions and self-transcendence. In this way, there is a continuing dynamism of world development in history whereby injustices of the past are corrected and societies cooperate for the greater good. This accounts for the evidence of flourishing of nations, societies and institutions in history. There is, however, also evidence of failures and even epic disasters. Continual progress, therefore, is not guaranteed. There exists always the possibility of decline because of biases, inauthenticity and the accumulation of successive oversights.

Decline is a particularly difficult problem because the more oversights become systemic, absurdity becomes the norm and it becomes less and less likely that anyone can solve the problem through their own good thinking. Lonergan offers us the solution in the Law of the Cross. At some point, only through the self-sacrificing love of God by means of the Cross,

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197 Lonergan, Method in Theology, 53.
198 Lonergan, Insight, 710-711.
can this situation of absurdity be redressed; the antidote to decline is redemption. Thus progress, decline and redemption form an ongoing cycle in which all of us – individually and communally – participate.

4.4.4.1 Recognizing the Limitations of Human Participation

So what is the responsibility of the person participating in an ongoing cycle of progress, decline, and redemption? In his essay entitled, “Creating and Healing in History”, Lonergan speaks of the need of societies to face challenges and find solutions that contribute to systems that promote the good. Such an accumulation of solutions and insights are development that comes from below upwards; these are human actions and participation. This is the action of ‘creating’ in which humans can participate. It is the understanding that comes from careful attention to experiences, and the right judgements that flow from those understandings and the actions that proceed from the judgements.

The ability of lay persons to participate in the creation of solutions in the Church – problems such as how to be effective catechists or how to be good formation leaders for catechists – is an important aspect of this present study. Although insights may come from anywhere, human creating does not come out of nowhere. One is always building on the insights of the past and the systems that have already been developed. In the case of catechesis and catechist formation, it is not about the throwing away of past insights but careful attending to the current situation in order to understand it and to judge how best to proceed. Because the

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199 Insight, 750.
good is always concrete, responses to such questions must be concrete. This is the intent of the current study, to find concrete responses that contribute to the creation of solutions.

As important as one’s own creative efforts are, however, this is only one side of participation. In the first place, one must acknowledge that no one is immune to bias and therefore, no one is immune to decline that no amount of good thinking can work one’s way out of. And so, in the second place, one must also be open to the development that flows from above downwards. This is the power of God’s love that re-orient one’s efforts and is evident in the love of family and neighbour and ultimately one’s response of loving God back. Lonergan explains how this love can have a profound healing effect and the goodness that results from this healing can always be seen in the concrete. So being open to such healing will result in us participating in acts of concrete good.

Again, this serves as a reminder as we continue to seek understanding of catechists’ participation lest one get the impression that everything in the Church depends upon the people. If it is all about human participation, individually and collectively, one imagines a Church that has no need of and no reference to God. The present argument, for a richer understanding of full, conscious and active participation as a way of understanding the catechist’s ecclesial identity in no way means to suggest that human participation is the totality of what constitutes the Church. The argument here is simply that one’s participation does matter, that although it can be observed in external actions such as marking papers, participation is also more than this. Participation is a rich concept that requires our attention.

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201 Ibid., 573.
Lonergan’s insight regarding the dual flow of development, from downwards up in our creating and upwards down in God’s healing serves to balance the understanding of participation. 202 It affirms the personal and communal responsibility of believers while not leaving that community as the creators of their own church. This clarifies for us that the purpose of this study is to attend to the participation of one group of people not because it represents a whole in and of itself, but because it is consequential. In this respect, one must remain ever grateful that one’s own participation is not solely definitive of, nor entirely responsible for what the Church is or becomes.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have looked at the particular case of catechists to see what is distinct about their participation in the Church. We have seen the pre-eminent place in which the Church holds its evangelizing mission in which catechesis forms an essential part. We have seen how responsibility for catechesis has been shifting in the decades following the Second Vatican Council so that more and more lay people are being relied on to fulfill this role. This shift accounts for the current situation in the Diocese of Hamilton where the CCC are administered and run almost entirely by lay catechists. We have seen that the Church holds the formation of lay catechists as a key priority.

In considering the ecclesial identity of catechists, that is their identity in and to the Church, we have considered the implications of the image of Mother Church and, by extension, the image of catechists as mothered in the Church and mothering others. This image has reinforced the importance of understanding the identity of catechists in relation to the rest of

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202 Ibid.
the Church and has described the relationship in very life-giving terms. In understanding catechesis as a scheme of recurrence, we have again seen how the participation of individual catechists contributes to much larger schemes and systems in the Church. We have seen how acts of meaning contribute to such schemes. This insight leads to an understanding of how individuals can participate and anticipate future participation in intentional and beneficial ways. Finally, we have considered the consequences of full, conscious and active participation through acts of meaning in the ongoing cycle of progress, decline and redemption. Even as we have emphasized the importance of human participation in the Church – that is the flow of participation from downwards up – we have been reminded of the importance of understanding the contribution and the flow of participation from upwards down by means of God’s grace.

Having considered the issues of belonging and participation in terms of understanding one’s ecclesial identity, and here considering the particular importance of the issue of participation in regards to catechists, we will, in the following chapters, turn to examine how one set of catechists in the Diocese of Hamilton understands their ecclesial identity. The Action-in-Ministry, described in the next chapters, will explore how five lay catechists articulate their own understanding of their belonging and connectedness, their activities – both internal and external, and how they reflect on the meaning of full, conscious and active participation as it pertains to their role as catechists. Through this investigation, we will explore with these catechists what understandings emerge regarding their ecclesial identity.
Chapter 5
The Action-In-Ministry – Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The Action-In-Ministry is “foundational to the Doctor of Ministry.” It is the opportunity for student-researchers to gather data from the practise of their ministry “to determine how the theory that emerges from it corresponds to and/or challenges their ministry experience as well as their social and theological theory base” thus providing the basis for analysis and evaluation in the thesis. The Action-In-Ministry is informed by the larger ministry experience but is sufficiently focused to address the specific question of the thesis.

As I have argued, all members of the Church, that is those incorporated into the Body of Christ through Baptism, are involved in the process of the Church’s self-constitution. In a particular way, those members who are specifically responsible for the ongoing communication of the gospel have a uniquely important role in terms of their contribution to the scheme of recurrence in which the Church gives birth to the Church every day. The broad interest of the study at hand has been defined in terms of issues of belonging and participation in the Church along with the proposal of “full, conscious and active participation” as a useful hermeneutic through which to explore one’s role in the Church.

The focus of this study is to explore the understanding of catechists in current ministry, that is, those currently making this particular contribution to the constituting of the Church, and have them articulate their understanding of their role. The Action-In-Ministry component of

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203 Toronto School of Theology, Doctor of Ministry Program Handbook: Distance Delivery Format, Revised edition (Toronto: TST, April 2011), 30.

204 Ibid.

205 Komonchak, Who are the Church?, 47.
this thesis gives voice to these lay catechists speaking to their own understanding of their participation. In the analysis of the data gathered, the themes raised by the catechists themselves can be placed into dialogue with the multi-faceted theoretical framework proposed in the preceding chapters in order to come to clarify the understanding of the ecclesial identity of the catechist. The Action-In-Ministry, then, is designed to bring the relevant data to the research question:

How do lay catechists see their participation in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses as informing their ecclesial identity?

5.2 The General Description of the Action-In-Ministry

The Action-In-Ministry for this thesis is a case study of five lay volunteer catechists in the bounded context of the Catechetical Correspondence Courses in the Diocese of Hamilton. Within this bounded case, there are a variety of situations in which catechists may serve:

- catechists who are associated with a several parishes,
- catechists who are parishioners of the parish where they serve,
- catechists who work alone, and
- catechists who work in teams because of the size of the program in their parish.

Through purposeful selection according to set criteria, participants were sought representing each of these different situations in order to bring a variety of perspectives on the issue. As case study always involves multiple sources of data collection, this study included individual recorded interviews with observation notes, a reflective response homework

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activity and a post meeting with individual participants. The post meeting served as both an instrument of verification of data as well as a final opportunity for participants to provide further data. At that meeting, I fed back to each participant what I had heard them say by means of a prepared data summary and provided the participant an opportunity to verify, correct or make additions to the data.

The intention of the study is to explore the catechists’ understanding of their own ecclesial identity in terms of their participation in this ministry and how they understand their role to be related to the broader mission and work of the Church. In the following sections, we will consider the rationale for the chosen methodology of case study along with assumptions involved in this study, the participant selection criteria, and development and execution of each of these steps in the study process.

5.3 Assumptions at Work in the Action-In-Ministry

There are several key assumptions that underlie this Action-In-Ministry which are evident in both the design of the study and in the areas of focus in the theological and social frameworks that have been described in the preceding chapters. The assumptions of the study are as follows:

a. That lay catechists in the Diocese of Hamilton have individual and unique experiences of participation but that these experiences also share some common aspects.

b. That these catechists can identify those experiences and indeed should be invited to explore them to find meaning in them and to consider the deeper ecclesial character of their role.
c. That there needs to be formation aimed more clearly at the support of the understanding of this ecclesial identity. This, of course, is one of the most significant assumptions of this study as it goes to the heart of the research inquiry. It follows from the argument presented in Chapter One that catechist formation texts and programs already available place a greater emphasis on the knowledge and ‘savoir-faire’ or methodological concerns of catechesis, than the ‘being’ of the catechist. Flowing from that argument is the contention that the ecclesial identity of the catechist is rarely addressed and needs clarification.

d. Finally, that full, conscious, and active participation is a rich theological description of lay participation in the Church well beyond the context of liturgy that requires further study and that it holds the potential to assist in the understanding of one’s ecclesial identity.

In the next section, the rationale for choosing case study as the methodology of this study is explored.

5.4 The Rationale for Case Study

The concern of this study is how catechists understand their ecclesial identity. Certainly, this issue could be studied in a variety of contexts and in a variety of ways. It would be possible to take a phenomenological approach, for example, and to explore deeply the phenomenon with a group of lay persons. The issue could also be investigated using a grounded theory approach to describe factors that enhance or inhibit participation. Case studies, however, are meant to research issues that “are complex, stated, problematic relationships.”207 Case study,

therefore, will be useful in this context because this study involves the complex issues of lay participation, the self-understandings of current catechists in their own context and the apparent disconnect or lack of understanding of their fundamental ecclesial identity.

Robert Stake says, case studies “pull attention both to ordinary experience and also to the disciplines of knowledge such as sociology, economics, ethics and literary criticisms”\(^{208}\) as well as ecclesiology and catechesis in this instance. William Myers describes case study as a snapshot of an on-going process. The validity of the study, for Myers, rests in the ability of the researcher to see the insights and testimony emerging through the use of several research tools resulting in a thesis that describes “that which occurred in ministry.”\(^{209}\) He goes on to affirm that this research methodology of case study is important because it sparks “‘naturalistic generalizations’ on the part of their readers; that is, readers connect their own experiences to that of the case study and come away with a new perspective, insight or hunch regarding the role and the nature of ministry.”\(^{210}\)

Case study is most often used when the “research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system.”\(^{211}\) The purpose of this study is to look at the issue of lay participation in a bounded context of catechists serving in one particular catechetical program within a single diocese. The intent of this case study is to provide data for analysis that contributes in a direct way to a more meaningful understanding of how

\(^{208}\) Ibid., 125.


\(^{210}\) Ibid., xii-xiii.

\(^{211}\) Creswell, 73.
catechists currently see their ecclesial identity and, therefore, greater clarity for me in my formation efforts with catechists.

Stake suggests that studying multiple cases “leads to better understanding.”\textsuperscript{212} Both John Creswell and Robert Yin suggest that multiple case (or collective case) studies can improve the trustworthiness of the findings.\textsuperscript{213} The trustworthiness comes from what Yin refers to as ‘replication theory.’ Yin’s theory seeks to correct what he names as a misguided approach to case study by some qualitative researchers who seek to make overly ambitious claims of generalizability. Having chosen multiple cases to study, these researchers hope to relate their findings to all similar cases. Instead, Yin advocates using multiple cases, with a rigorous study protocol, such that a subsequent researcher could conduct the same research and replicate the same results. This is analogous to the scientist who, having discovered an important insight by means of an experiment, sets out to conduct the same experiment to verify that the same result occurs. It is in replicating the results that the conclusions are found to be valid. In qualitative research, then, Yin suggests it is the creation of a study that can be replicated that forms the basis for its validity.\textsuperscript{214} With this in mind, this case study was designed with careful participant selection criteria and study protocols that are sufficiently detailed to meet the standards of replicability.

5.5 Participant Selection

\textsuperscript{212} Stake, 123.


\textsuperscript{214} Yin, 47.
In *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*, Tim Sensing says that one should choose “information rich cases that can provide depth to [the] data.”\(^{215}\) He advocates for maximum variation sampling in order to provide a broad range of perspectives on the issue.\(^{216}\) Keeping this in mind, participants were chosen from among the one hundred lay volunteer catechists of the Catechetical Correspondence Courses according to the following criteria:

a. They must have been catechists for at least four years. This ensures that they have experience over time on which to draw (i.e. they are likely to be information rich) but also increases the probability that they will be comfortable in the role and confident in describing their activities and understanding.

b. They must be volunteer catechists as opposed to parish employees. There are a small number of catechists in the correspondence courses who are also parish secretaries or parish ministers or otherwise employed by the Church. Since they are employees of particular parishes, they are not be invited to participate in order to mitigate any real or perceived power imbalance between the researcher and the participants.

c. They must have attended at least one diocesan formation event in the past four years. This is to mitigate any possibility that a catechist feels she or he is being invited to participate in order to discipline them or out of a sense of judgement if they had never attended such an event. It also increases the chances that participants will have a certain level of comfort and trust in the process as the researcher is not a


\(^{216}\) Ibid., 84.
stranger to them. The reality is that attendance at these formation days is relatively stable; that is, catechists who choose to attend one formation day often attend each and every one, and catechists who decline the invitation normally do not attend any. There are very few catechists who attend on a sporadic basis.

d. The catechists selected were to represent as wide a variety as possible. The reality is that these catechists are a relatively homogeneous group in that they are almost all women, they have comparable socio-economic status, they are generally aged 40 – 65 years old and they are predominantly English first language with little cultural diversity. Therefore, the variety comes from the variety of ministry situations in which they serve. Ideally, the study should include one of each of the varieties of catechists – that is parish-based catechist, floater catechist, lone parish catechist, and catechist who is part of a group – in order to get a spectrum of experiences.

Catechists who were eligible for the study according to the participation criteria were identified and contacted by sending a blind email to small groups at a time giving them basic information about the study and inviting them to contact me if they were interested (see Appendix A). The invitations were sent out in small groups to avoid having too many interested participants and having to turn down large numbers of interested catechists.

The thesis proposal indicated that the study would include five or six participants. As potential participants expressed interest in proceeding, I began verifying that catechists from a variety of settings were included in the participant group. Interested catechists were sent the consent letter. Once six eligible participants had responded, I ceased inviting others to the study. Of the six who expressed interest, five went on to agree formally to participate by signing the letter of consent (Appendix B of the Thesis Proposal attached here as Appendix
D) and the date, time and location for the first interview was set. The sixth potential participant decided to withdraw before signing the consent. The welcome notes (Appendix D of the Thesis Proposal) were sent to the five study participants to remind them of the purpose of the study, to assure them that there was no requirement to prepare any material for the interview and to return to them a photocopy of their signed consent.

5.6 Development and Implementation of the Study Protocol

As we have seen, Yin argues that the qualitative case study requires a carefully constructed protocol and properly organized results to bring reliability to the results. Therefore, the qualitative researcher must bring a rigour to the planning and execution of the research such that the reader is assured that any subsequent researcher could undertake the same study following the same procedures as outlined and reach the same results. In the following section, each step in the development and implementation of the study protocol will be examined.

5.6.1 Design of the Interview and Reflective Homework Activity

The interview is a primary tool of the Doctor of Ministry study. In *Asking Questions*, Norman Bradburn et al. affirm the usefulness of open-ended questions since they tend to “produce vignettes of considerable richness” and are invaluable “when you want to go deeply into a particular topic.” They also argue that question order counts. They suggest

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217 Yin, 47.

218 Creswell, 132.

that “questions should be ordered so as to minimize the effect of respondents’ answers on subsequent questions.”\(^{220}\) Using a structured interview, with a defined set of questions, allows the researcher to ask each participant the same questions in the same order each time. Therefore, this study was constructed around a substantial, structured interview with open-ended questions.

Beyond the interview, participants would be given further opportunity to provide data through a reflective homework activity. Myers notes the importance of assigned homework in case studies. He says it is often used because it “can be said to express deep-felt understandings.”\(^{221}\) The homework activity is important in this study for three reasons. First, it provides another opportunity to gather data. Second, it allows participants to give data using a second medium; that is, initially, participants will give data by means of an oral interview but in the homework activity, they will be able to express themselves in writing.

Finally, the homework activity provides an opportunity for reflection. While an interview can be a rich experience and allows for dialogue between the researcher and the participant, the interview setting provides for relatively little time for reflection. The issues of the meaning of the catechist’s work and the usefulness of a hermeneutic such as ‘full, conscious, and active participation’ in describing their work are likely subjects that most catechists have not really considered. The homework activity provides time, space, and privacy for the participants to think back over their oral responses and refine in their own minds what is bubbling to the surface for them. As Bradburn et al. explain, in order for the “respondents to

\(^{220}\) Ibid., 332.

\(^{221}\) Myers, 61.
provide meaningful answers … they must be given time to get their thoughts in order and then express them fully.”

With these basic principles in mind, I began developing lists of potential questions for the interview and the homework activity including variations in wordings for the same question and variations in question order. Following Bradburn et al.’s strategy, I began with fact-based questions, which tend to be non-threatening questions looking for description before asking opinion-based questions which tend to require respondents to interpret or assign value and meaning. I met with members of my Collegial Learning Group (CLG) and my Ministry Base Group (MBG) to discuss the pros and cons of various questions and wordings.

It was decided that participants would be asked a series of questions beginning with the factual information about how long they have been a catechist and in what setting (i.e. a single parish, a number of parishes, etc.). Next, participants would describe their interaction as catechists with a single, typical family in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses as well as to describe themselves as catechists. Again, the intent of beginning with factual and descriptive questions about the catechists themselves and the tasks of their regular daily experience as catechists is to help put participants at ease in the interview setting. They would also be asked to identify the joys and challenges of being catechists. Thus, the first portion of the interview offers the participant opportunities to describe one’s self, one’s activities, one’s purpose as a catechist, and one’s feelings about being a catechist. The next portion of the interview offers a series of questions that target data regarding how participants see their work in connection to the work of other catechists, as well as to the

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222 Bradburn et al., 155 - 156.
223 Ibid. 332.
parish, the diocese, and the world-wide Church. Having refined the list to a proposed interview protocol with two follow-up questions for the homework activity, I attempted a pilot case.

5.6.2 The Pilot Case and Pre-test

Both Creswell and Yin advocate for the use of both pilot cases and a pre-test. A pilot case “helps you to refine your data collection plans with respect to both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed.”\(^ {224}\) Informants for this pilot, according to Yin, are likely chosen for such practical reasons as they are “unusually congenial and accessible, or the site may be geographically convenient.”\(^ {225}\) The inquiry in the pilot test is “much broader and less focused” because it should be addressing both “substantive and methodological issues.”\(^ {226}\) Essentially, it allows the researcher to try different wordings, different questions and different strategies as well as allowing the researcher to see first-hand the possible effects of question order interactions.

I found an excellent candidate for the pilot case at my own workplace. The informant is a catechist in the correspondence courses and therefore very familiar with the program as well as my interest in this area of ministry. She is ineligible as an actual study participant for two important reasons: first, she has only had two years’ experience in the program and second, she is employed by the diocese in another capacity and therefore not strictly a volunteer. I explained to the informant that the purpose of the pilot was to refine the interview questions

\(^{224}\) Creswell, 133 and Yin, 79.

\(^{225}\) Yin, 80.

\(^{226}\) Ibid.
and my methodology rather than to gather data from her regarding the substance of the interview. I timed the interview to get a sense of whether it could reasonably be concluded in the one hour time-frame for which participants were to be invited.

The pilot case interview was not recorded and no notes as to her responses were taken. Instead, notes were taken on her feedback to the questions, to the order in which they were asked, and to her experience of me as an interviewer. As Bradburn et al. suggest, it is important at this stage to assess whether the questions are gathering the data you intend and whether your format is convenient and clear.227

As the interview proceeded, I paused often following each response to ask about the informant’s reaction to the question. How did she feel when she heard it? Did she find it clear and non-threatening? I tried asking the questions with no introduction and then suggested to the informant the ‘opening dialogue’ I had intended to use. I sought her feedback in terms of whether she found it helpful or leading. I made adjustments to questions as necessary.

For example, Question 5 states “When I am being a catechist I am being …..” This question was developed from an insight in the initial interview vetting with the CLG and MBG members. It was determined that many of the proposed questions of the interview seemed to focus on outward tasks. If this study was to allow participants to speak about participation in more complex ways, they needed a variety of opportunities to address the meaning of their participation. This question, which focuses on ‘being’ rather than ‘doing’, was an attempt to address that need. The informant in the pilot case, however, found the question ambiguous.

227 Bradburn et al., 317.
She was reluctant to give any answer. She wanted clarification of the intent of the question. When I added the prologue: “The best you can, complete this statement as a description of your work,” she responded naturally. It was decided that the prologue would be helpful to put participants at ease and to assure them that the question was not attempting to be overly deep, merely provide another means of description. The protocol was amended and the actual study participants were all given that prologue.

Having completed the pilot case, I attempted a pre-test. Yin refers to this as the “formal ‘dress rehearsal’.” The intent here is to use the proposed interview protocol as faithfully as possible. Again, I chose an informant who is an actual catechist in the correspondence courses, is aware of my study, but is ineligible to participate because she is employed in another capacity by the diocese. She was eager and pleased to assist. Again, I timed the interview to be certain that it was reasonable to expect that it could be completed within the hour time-frame. In order to be faithful to the protocol, I ran through the interview with no interruptions or additions. Only at the end did I ask for feedback. The informant had no suggestions for improvement and had enjoyed the process. I felt confident with the research tool at this point, so the final version of the interview protocol was set. The following is a listing of the questions for both the interview and the reflective homework activity:

**The Interview Protocol**

**Question 1:** How long have you been a catechist in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses (CCC)? Are you a catechist in your own parish? If so, do you work alone or in a team? If not, are you a floater catechist? How many parishes do you typically serve?

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228 Yin, 79.

229 The complete interview protocol, including the opening and closing dialogue can be found as Appendix B.
Question 2: Think of a typical family and child in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses. Describe your work with them over the course of a year.

Question 3: What is the purpose of your work in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses?

Question 4: Describe the joys and challenges of being a catechist in the CCC?

Question 5: The best you can, complete the following statement: When I am being a catechist in the CCC, I am ____________________________.

The next series of questions has to do with how you see yourself connected to others.

Question 6: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of the parish?

Question 7: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of other catechists?

Question 8: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of the diocese?

Question 9: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of the world-wide Church?

The Post-Interview Homework Activity

Reflection Question 1: At the Second Vatican Council, our Church called lay people to “full, conscious and active participation.” These words were used to describe our participation in liturgy, that is, the Mass. Some authors since then have suggested that these words “full, conscious and active” could describe the participation of lay people in the Church outside of the context of Mass.

How do you respond to these words as a description of your own participation in the Church in terms of your work in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses?

Reflection Question 2: Now that you have spent time thinking about your participation in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses, what are your hopes going forward for you and your fellow catechists?

5.6.3 The Interviews
The study took place over a period of several weeks beginning in late December 2014 and was completed by the end of February 2015. I conducted the initial one-hour interviews at sites of the participants’ choosing. Participants were encouraged to choose a location that was quiet and in which they would feel most comfortable. Two participants requested meetings at their parish and both reserved small meeting rooms where we could speak privately. Two asked to come to the diocesan center for their convenience. We chose a quiet room in which to record our interview. One participant requested a meeting in her home.

Although the participants are all well known to me, I took time prior to the formal recorded interview to be sure participants were comfortable in the setting. Interviews were tape-recorded. We began by reviewing the participant’s consent to participate and to be recorded. All participants confirmed their consent. The interviews proceeded according to the interview protocol. Participants were identified by a pseudonym. I made field notes during the interview to record any issues, reactions, body language, or responses that seem particularly significant. As Yin states, these notes are an important part of “listening” in an interview which includes “making keen observations or sensing what might be going on.”

Meeting face to face with participants allowed me to observe body language as well as record their spoken responses. This was particularly helpful where participants paused in their answers or seemed to be searching for the words they wanted. Often, in these pregnant pauses, the participants would make gestures to try to articulate or clarify some thought particularly in the section of questions regarding their connectedness to others. These were rich opportunities for observation that certainly contributed insights to the data analysis.

230 Yin, 60.
At the conclusion of these interviews, we reviewed the reflection questions for the written homework assignment together in case the participant had any questions. Participants were given a stamped, pre-addressed envelope in which to return the reflection. The first reflection question asks about how catechists respond to thinking about participation in terms of full, conscious, active participation. The second reflection question gives participants an opportunity to give feedback about their hopes and dreams for themselves and their fellow catechists. This final question allows participants to share insights about how they are now thinking about their participation and their need for connection and how they may see their formation contributing to that. It also allows catechists to benefit directly from their participation in the study by being able to give direct feedback to the formation director.

Participants were asked to complete and return the homework activity within two weeks. All participants expressed gratitude that they were given an opportunity to reflect further on the subject of their participation in the correspondence courses.

Following each of the interviews, field notes were reviewed immediately so that observations could be completed while the memories were fresh. The tape-recorded interviews were copied onto an encrypted memory stick and given to a transcriber who had signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix C). Transcriptions were completed within three weeks of the interviews. By the end of February 2015, all transcriptions and written reflections had been received.

5.6.4 Preparing the Data Summaries

The data collected to this point included the recorded interview along with the written transcript, the field notes and the written reflection activity. Having both the transcript and
recording of the interviews allows the researcher to pay close attention to responses and identify critical verbatim but also allows for re-listening to the initial interview in order to hear the nuances of pauses, words or phrases that may have been stressed, even nervous laughter. The field notes allowed me to identify phrases that seemed most essential in the moment as well as noting body language and hand gestures that contributed to my overall understanding of the responses. Myers affirms that field notes provide that “immediacy” of the observation.\textsuperscript{231} Finally, as the written reflections were received, photocopies were made that could be highlighted and marked for key statements and themes. Originals were kept in a separate binder in order to preserve them in case they needed to be reviewed in an untouched format.

In order to prepare the data summaries, the transcripts, recordings, notes, and reflections were reviewed often. I maintained written rough notes during this review process that served as the basis for the data summaries. This allowed me to make notes and return to the summaries several times to make revisions and to refine the summaries. I decided that the summaries would be in point form so as to remain statements of “What I Heard” to make it easier for the participant to review and to avoid changing the tone of responses inadvertently by too much editorializing. Where I had made observations beyond the strictly spoken responses, I included these under the heading “What I Observed”. Again, Yin identifies this as “listening” to different modalities beyond the aural that may provide clues to “important message between the lines” that require corroboration.\textsuperscript{232} For this reason, I included these observations on the summary so they could be verified.

\textsuperscript{231} Myers, 39.
\textsuperscript{232} Yin, 60.
Further to these observations, it became evident as the summaries were being compiled that some responses caused me to wonder if I had fully or correctly understood the participant. For example, one participant stressed the importance of playing or taking “a role in the parish” several times throughout her interview and written reflection. As I prepared the summary, I began to wonder what that expression meant for her. Was it that she had a job in the parish? Or that she fulfilled a position? I wondered if she considered that others in the parish had a similar “role”. Questions for clarification were coded in red on the prepared summary and listed as “I wonder” questions so that participants would be unlikely to feel judged that their answers were somehow lacking and would be encouraged that these were areas that had generated genuine interest on the researcher’s part.

5.6.5 The Data Verification Meeting

Participants were asked back for the final meeting where they were presented with a written copy of the data summary. In this way, the study participants themselves were given the opportunity to contribute to the analysis through their reflective confirmation of the response summaries presented. Sensing encourages this type of member-checking as yet “another opportunity to hear from your participants” and an opportunity for participants to “generate new ideas, patterns and interpretations that you missed.”233 This meeting at the end of the study period is an important contribution to the credibility of the study and the validating of results.234

233 Sensing, 221.
234 Ibid., 75.
These meetings were not tape-recorded but notes were taken. Both researcher and research participant reviewed the summary together, pausing at the “I wonder” questions. Participant’s answers to these questions for clarification were noted in writing directly on the summary sheets and read back to the participants immediately for verification. Any other amendments to the prepared summary that participants felt were necessary were noted in the same manner and verified immediately with the participants. Once the participants were satisfied that the summary was a “fair and reasonable summary” of their responses, the meeting was ended. Participants were thanked for their important contribution to the study and reminded that they were welcome to a copy of the published thesis following its successful defence. All participants expressed their enjoyment of the study process and their interest in seeing the final thesis.

5.6.6 Organization of Data Collection Process

Yin advocates for two important criteria in data collection that substantially increase the reliability and credibility of the study. These include the use of multiple sources of information and the maintenance of a data base that allows for a clear chain of evidence to be forged. In order to achieve that reliability, a study protocol tracking form was developed by the researcher and used to verify that all steps of the study were followed for each participant and to track the completion of these steps for each participant. In this way, the actual proceedings could be tracked according to the plan of the study protocol.

Upon completion of the verification meetings, the data summaries were filed along with all other participant data so that each participant file contains:

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235Yin, 83.
1. The audio recording of the interview
2. The transcription of the interview
3. The field notes taken at the interview
4. The participant’s written reflection
5. The rough notes of the researcher showing edits over time in preparing the data summaries
6. The final typed data summaries with any amendments or additions from the participant during the verification meeting hand-written on the pages

By carefully maintaining the data base, the study conclusions can be seen as arising directly from the study data. This strong chain of evidence is important, as Yin argues, as it provides compelling support for the study findings.²³⁶

5.7 Data Analysis Process

The data analysis process took place over several weeks. Throughout the research process, the data was examined and re-examined, read and listened to and re-read again. This ensures the researcher’s ongoing familiarity with the data and also served, during the data gathering phase, to verify that the study was producing relevant data. Once the research phase of the study ended, more systematic and formalized analysis was begun to see what observations and conclusions could be made about participant understanding of their ecclesial identity as catechists.

The data collected was looked at for common themes as well as areas of disagreement. As Sensing observes, there are three analytical frames through which data may be viewed:

a. Areas of overlap, themes and patterns.

²³⁶ Ibid.
Participant catechists represent as wide a variety of ministry situations as possible within this bounded case of the Catechetical Correspondence Courses. Lincoln and Guba suggest that this variety is useful when searching out common themes. When a pattern emerges from a small sample of a heterogeneous group, then the value of the information increases.\(^{237}\)

b. Areas of disagreement.

It is important to allow the data to speak for itself and not impose false patterns for the sake of tidy conclusions. Searching for the disagreement keeps the researcher from the temptation of over-generalization.\(^{238}\)

c. Realities not represented in the data – the silences.\(^{239}\)

Often what is not said is just as important as what is said. There may be a variety of reasons for participants to omit information. Attending to issues not raised is also a way to check for researcher pre-suppositions as it calls for attention to what was expected but not articulated.

5.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodology for and description of the Action-In-Ministry has been set forth. This case study of five catechists in the Correspondence Courses of the Diocese of Hamilton was completed over a 10-week period from December 2014 to February 2015. It included the interviewing of each participant, the transcription of that interview along with the field notes made at the time of the interview, a reflection activity given as a homework assignment.

\(^{237}\) Sensing, 84.

\(^{238}\) Ibid.

\(^{239}\) Ibid., 192. This is the source of the list of all three areas of data review.
assignment and a final verification meeting where participants responded to the prepared summary of their responses.

The rationale for case study has been explored. It has been argued that the Doctor of Ministry Action-In-Ministry lends itself to case study in general and that, in this particular situation, case study allowed for the relevant information regarding the complex issue the ecclesial identity of the catechist to be gathered. The assumptions that underlie the study have been named. A detailed description of the design process and participant selection criteria along with an unfolding of the study has been provided. The three-fold analysis process of looking for areas of agreement, disagreement and the silences has been proposed. Through the detailing of the data collection and organization process, a stable chain of evidence has been established that leads to the reporting of results and the analysis of those results in the next chapter.
6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined the methodology, strategies and protocol for the Action-in-Ministry. In this chapter, we will examine what was said by these catechists in the course of the study. We will explore the areas of commonality that emerged from the data and the areas that bore out diversity and sometimes discord. We will examine how responses met or diverged from expectations and look at what implications can be seen as a result of this analysis.

In the final section of this chapter, we will examine how the results that arise from the analysis of the data relate to the theoretical framework proposed in the opening chapters of this thesis. That is, we will look at the data in terms of theories of belonging and participation, in terms of what implications can be seen regarding the work of catechists specifically and finally in terms of the usefulness of the hermeneutic of “full, conscious and active participation”. We will see how the respondents share their understanding of their ecclesial identity and we will examine what conclusions can be drawn from these understandings. First, we will begin with an explanation of the process of coding.

6.2 Setting the Scene

This case study looks at the work of catechists in one particular catechetical program – the Catechetical Correspondence Courses (CCC) – in one particular diocese – the Diocese of Hamilton. Five volunteer catechists agreed to be study participants. What follows is a brief description of how the CCC functions – the process of registration, the profile of typical
clients, and the responsibilities of catechists in the process. Next, the study participants will be introduced. Finally, a description of the process of coding the data from the study participants will be provided.

6.2.1 The Bounded Case of the Catechetical Correspondence Courses

The CCC, as was noted in Chapter Four, has been functioning in the Diocese of Hamilton for over 80 years. The main purpose of the program is to serve families who, for one reason or another, do not have their children enrolled in the Catholic school system. Families register their children either through their parish or directly with the diocesan office by filling in a registration form and making a payment for the course materials. My office, that is the Catechesis Office of the Diocese of Hamilton, makes a determination of which catechetical program best suits the needs of the child and which catechist will work with the family. The materials, which include a text book and worksheets, are then sent by mail to the families and the catechist is contacted via email to alert them to the registration. The CCC serves over 1,000 children a year in the diocese. Typically, just over 2/3 of these children are registering for sacramental preparation (either First Communion and First Reconciliation or Confirmation). The other 1/3 of children are engaging in ongoing catechesis and are enrolled in programs stretching from kindergarten through to high school.

Over the course of several months, families work through the lessons at home and children complete the worksheets to demonstrate learning and to communicate that learning to their catechist. We routinely tell parents that the worksheets are not meant to be treated as homework like other school homework. They are the response of a child to the faith journey he or she has undertaken. We explain that this faith journey is not solely a private journey
but a journey that is significant to the parish and the wider Church. We tell them that their
catechist is a representative of the wider Church who rejoices along with the whole Body of
Christ in this young person’s growth.

There are three main responsibilities of the catechists in the CCC. First, is to receive and
review worksheets. Second, is to prepare reports for parishes and the diocesan Catechesis
Office regarding the children’s progress. Third, is to find ways to journey with the family
through meaningful communication. These three areas of responsibility are explained and
explored through initial orientation training as well as ongoing training for catechists.

Catechists receive lessons either through Canada Post or scanned by email or through a drop
box at the parish itself. They review them, responding to the child’s responses with
encouragement and correction where needed. They maintain records of the lessons received
and, as the year progresses, they create reports to attest to the completion of lessons and then
the completion of the total program.

In terms of assisting catechists with ongoing, positive communication with children and
families, catechists are provided with a variety of supplementary resources. Children in the
Grade 2 program, for example, receive an Advent card with 24 windows that open for each
day leading to Christmas. This is used by catechists as an encouragement to the children to
continue working on their lessons but also to participate in the church’s joyful anticipation of
Christmas. As they are preparing for First Reconciliation, usually during Lent, children
receive a pamphlet from their catechist helping them with the formula for Confession and
suggesting a simple Act of Contrition to be memorized. Later in the year, as First
Communion approaches, the catechist sends a white and gold ribbon that can be used as a
special bookmark that says “Called to the Table”. Finally, just before First Communion, the child receives a commemorative Mass booklet for the actual day of their First Communion so he or she can follow along well in the Mass on that day and keep it afterwards as a special reminder of the celebration.

6.2.2  The Catechist Study Participants

The study participants for this Action-in-Ministry were five lay women catechists in the CCC. They were assured anonymity in this study and so have been identified here by pseudonym. I have named them Marguerite, Anne, Monica, Catherine, and Therese.\textsuperscript{240} Although the selection criteria stated that they must have been catechists for at least four years, they have all served well beyond that with the median years of service being 10. This extensive experience in the CCC was evident in the ease with which respondents shared and the richness of their responses.

Study participants also represent a wide range of ministry situations. Marguerite is both part of a team and a lone catechist in her parish. She serves on a team in other children’s catechetical programming in her parish but is the sole catechist for the CCC in her parish. Anne serves as the lone CCC catechist in her own parish. Monica is a ‘floater’ catechist. She currently serves two parishes but has served up to four at a time in the past. Catherine is the coordinator of the CCC team in her parish. Therese is a lone catechist in her own parish.

\textsuperscript{240} It may or may not be apparent to the reader that I have chosen the names of five great saints of the Catholic Church. This is, in no way, a coincidence. This study process and the individual interviews and meetings with these women were deeply moving for me. I am amazed at the goodness of these women who work so hard with such great love. I make no claim about them individually in terms of their lives corresponding to the lives of their saint’s name. Collectively, however, I feel I have been in the presence of women whose lives are infused with the Holy Spirit and whose true desire is to serve God. I hope my admiration for them and my sense of God in them is represented in my naming of them.
used to be part of a team but, over the years, the catechetical programming at the parish has changed focus and she now serves on her own.

The Diocese of Hamilton is a large geographical area that extends from the city of Hamilton in the south to Owen Sound in the north, and from Oakville to Brantford to Kincardine across the east to west corridor. It is divided into six sub-regions called “deaneries.” The study participants serve in four different cities with populations ranging from less than 100,000 persons to over 500,000. The four cities represent four different deaneries so there is a geographical diversity among the participants as well.

6.2.3 Coding the Data

Reading and re-reading the data produced a number of insights. As certain words and phrases seemed to become relevant, they were assigned a colour for tracking purposes. These themes were then colour-coded wherever they occurred in the data. In order to clarify the source of these themes, responses have been tagged here in terms of where they occurred in the data gathering. A quote from a response to a question in the interview, for example, is noted according to the question number. A response to question 3, which asks what the purpose of the catechist’s work in the CCC is, is noted as Q3 along with the respondent’s name. If the data comes from a clarification provided at the verification meeting, it will be so noted following the question number (ie. Q3vm). Responses to the homework activity are noted as RQ1 (for Reflection Question 1) and RQ2 (for Reflection Question 2).

The data was looked at in terms of the three categories for analysis set forth in Chapter Five and proposed by Sensing – the areas of overlap, disagreement, and the silences.
In terms of the kinds of patterns of overlap that began to arise from the data, there were two main types – cross question broad patterns and single question focused patterns. First, there were definitely words, phrases and concepts that could be seen arising over and over again across the various respondents in relation to a variety of questions. These recurring themes created cross question broad patterns. For example, respondents all spoke about responsibilities in the Church but their statements arose in relation to several different questions. So whereas, for Marguerite responsibility was an issue in terms of the tasks of her work, for Therese, it was an issue that came up in the joys and challenges of her work, and for Catherine, this was a prevalent concept in the purpose of her work.

However, it was also evident that there were single question focused patterns occurring in the interview and the homework activity; that is, there were responses to particular questions that were producing their own particular patterns. Question 4 of the interview protocol, for example, which asks for a description of the joys and challenges of the catechist, produced interesting results on its own when compared from one respondent to the next. In reporting areas of overlap, therefore, the analysis has been organized either under the heading of the common theme arising in response to a variety of questions or according to the particular question that produced its own pattern. Following an examination of all areas of overlap, we will look at the implications of these patterns.

Disagreement between respondents was most often noted in relation to particular questions when compared from one respondent to the next. This was the case, for example, in examining the responses to Question 3, which asked the purpose of the catechists’ work. Whereas one might have expected some commonality in perceived purpose, there was, in
fact, no real agreement among the five respondents. The implications of the area of disagreement and diversity of response will also be considered.

Silences were noted in terms of the absence of terms and concepts that had been expected. In remarking on silences in the data, the researcher must take responsibility for her own expectations that were not met. That is, an argument must be made as to why one might have reasonably expected certain responses. Implications of the silences must then reflect on both the researcher who acknowledges these unmet expectations as well as on the respondents.

In the following sections, we will consider the emerging patterns under each of these headings: overlap, disagreement and silences.

6.3 Areas of Overlap

As is expected, there are a number of areas in which responses overlap. Again, these patterns can be seen in single question focused patterns, such as the clear overlap in Q4 regarding joys and challenges of the catechist’s work, and then in themes that are apparent across broad sections of questions, such as the theme of reciprocity and responsibility in catechesis. The finding of common themes and patterns is an affirmation of one of the key assumptions in the study that, although unique and individual, catechists have experiences that do have commonalities. In identifying these areas of commonality, one area in particular, that is regarding the role of parents, produced an unexpected discovery that will be looked at in Section 6.3.5.3, which speaks in an analogous way to the heart of the thesis question.

6.3.1 Reciprocity
The theme of reciprocity was identified as a broad theme occurring across many questions. Almost all respondents made comments about the give and take of being a catechist at various points during the interview and in the reflection questions. While they all clearly state that they primarily do the work for the sake of the children, they also acknowledge it has benefits for them. As she spoke about the purpose of her work, Monica summed it up like this: “It’s for me; it’s for them. I also learn and grow with it” (Q3). And later she said, “I’m learning as well as teaching. It’s a two-way street” (Q5).

Therese and Marguerite also spoke in terms of the benefit that the CCC has been to their own learning. Marguerite said, “My own faith has grown. My participation has grown in the Church because of my volunteering in the Church” (Q9). Marguerite seemed to identify her own learning as a happy by-product of her volunteering whereas Therese admits that an important factor in her volunteering as a catechist was a desire to learn more herself. “It was the whole reason I started being a catechist myself…to learn the dialogue, to learn more, to learn the terminology that I didn’t understand” (Q9). As a mother, Therese has found this learning important in terms of deepening of her own faith and sharing her faith with her own family (RQ1, and general discussion-vm). Marguerite’s hopes for the future include her hope that “God continues to teach me better ways to be patient and understanding as I continue to learn every day” (RQ2).

Catherine also speaks of the reciprocal nature of her volunteering but less in terms of her own learning and more in terms of how it allows her to fulfill her duties to the parish. Being a catechist allows her to take on a role at the parish as well as providing an important service to children and families. She feels some children and families would not have access to catechesis without the CCC so she is pleased and proud to be part of offering that service.
She says, “I like to fulfill a role here in our parish … I was still [working in other ministries] when I took on this role and then I decided this role would be enough, so I let the other one go (Q3).” Catherine was taught that membership in the Church carries responsibilities so she has always looked for ways to volunteer and give service (RQ1, Q3vm).

Only Anne did not speak specifically in terms of reciprocity in being a catechist. I wondered if this was related to the announcement of her retirement from this ministry following the study. I wondered if she had felt that she benefitted from her work at one time but now, as she was preparing to leave, she was less focused on this aspect of her work. She said, “I’m ready to be done” (Q6). Certainly, she indicated in our meetings she was looking forward to other responsibilities with her own family (general discussion-vm).

6.3.2 Responsibility

Related to the theme of reciprocity is the theme of responsibility. This theme was one of the earliest identified because it was so prevalent across the responses. There were three main responsibilities identified by the respondents: responsibilities of children, parents, and catechists. The responsibility of the parents for their children’s faith journey was consistently identified as a challenge for catechists and was so specifically addressed in that area of the interview (Q4), it will be dealt with in greater detail in its own section (6.3.5.3).

The other two areas of responsibility were the responsibilities of the children, especially following their Confirmation, and the responsibility of the catechists themselves. Anne was the most clear about the children’s responsibilities. Once they have completed their lessons, she sends a note of congratulations which includes this encouragement, “I hope you live up
to your commitments, etc. etc. Go to Mass every day” (Q2).\textsuperscript{241} When asked to what or to whom was the commitment, Anne said simply, “It’s the commitment to faith” (Q2vm). Anne says this is most relevant for the older children who are confirmed. When they are younger, they have less responsibility (Q3). Anne, Marguerite and Therese, however, all agree the children need to go to Mass more often. Marguerite says she keeps looking for ways to provide incentives (Q4). But the responsibility of these children is more than just attending Mass. Again, Marguerite says, “faith doesn’t just happen on Tuesdays (i.e. at a catechism class) or on Sunday … we have to live our faith” (Q9). It’s one of Catherine’s great hopes that the children grow up to learn that they must take an active role in the parish, too (RQ1).

The respondents are equally clear about their own responsibilities. For Anne and Therese, it flows from a direct call from God. “God has called me to be a catechist,” says Therese (RQ2). Anne adds that she has been given particular gifts by God that are meant to be used in this way. “God has asked me to use the talents he has given to me to help all whom I meet to become closer to him” (RQ1). Anne also adds that this call from God is worked out through the Church, she says, “I believe I fulfill this mandate [to use my gifts] as a catechist and in my relationship with God in his Church” (RQ1). For Catherine, it is Baptism or church membership that leads to having responsibilities. She says she was taught that “as a practising Catholic I had a responsibility to volunteer in the Church” (RQ1). When she saw that there was no one in the parish “stepping up” for this particular ministry of the CCC, she felt she had to do so (Q3). Marguerite points specifically to a shortage of priests and religious as the source of increased responsibility for the laity in general and for her in particular. Lay

\textsuperscript{241} Anne offered these examples of what she might write as two separate examples. That is, she is not saying that daily Mass is a commitment, instead, she is saying she hopes they live up to their commitments, and she also hopes they someday begin the practice of frequently going to Mass. As a retired person, Anne herself would go to Mass often though not strictly on a daily basis.
people have to “pick up the slack” as there are “fewer priests and religious order nuns and brothers and they cannot carry the ‘load of educating’ by themselves” (RQ1).

It is interesting that, in identifying their own responsibilities, these catechists echo the teaching of the Church over and over again. Catherine, Therese and Anne have identified what *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, *The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, and *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* all say in terms of the gifts of the laity and their responsibility to participate in the mission of the Church rooted in their Baptism.\(^{242}\) In placing her call from God as being mediated and fulfilled through the Church, Anne has echoed Saint John Paul II who says in *Christifidelis Laici*, “The call is addressed to everyone: lay people as well are personally called by the Lord, from whom they receive a mission on behalf of the Church and the world.”\(^{243}\) And Marguerite has identified the reality dealt with in “Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith” of a decrease in vocations of Religious dedicated to teaching and fewer clergy that has led to an increased role for laity in catechesis.\(^{244}\) This resonance between catechist responses and official Church teaching may have important consequences for future formation planning and will be looked at below in terms of the implications of the areas of overlap in Section 6.3.6.

6.3.3 *The Children as Source of Joy for the Catechist*

\(^{242}\) Although this is a broad theme that is seen throughout the documents of Vatican II, one could look to *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 33, *The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 4, and *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 43, which state respectively that “every lay person” has gifts to participate in the mission of the Church, that “each one has received suitable talents … and personal gifts”, and that all the faithful are “called to participate in the whole life of the Church.”

\(^{243}\) *Christifidelis laici*, 2.

\(^{244}\) “Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,” 1.
It is not surprising that the respondents all identify the children primarily, and their families by extension, as a potential source for great joy. Where they can see the children growing and learning, and engaging in their faith journey, catechists feel joyous and energized. They often identify the quality of the children’s work, from its tidiness to the robustness of the answers, as the way in which they can see the level of engagement and dedication of the children. Thinking of one family in particular with four children, Marguerite happily remembers the celebrations of Sacraments with the three older children. The youngest is now the last child in the CCC. She says, “This whole family has been absolutely wonderful. I feel I’m a part of their family because I’ve seen them growing up and I’ve participated in their faith life. They’re just really special… This particular family is excellent [in terms of handing in lessons] (Q2).”

Others agree that seeing the children commit to the lessons or demonstrate growth or come to some point of completion is joyful:

I really feel this program is a worthwhile program for the students… I love to see them at their Confirmations; it’s come to fruition – all their work. (Q4, Catherine)

Some of [the children] just scribble a few words down and then there are other ones. There are these elaborate answers and I know they’ve spent so much time, much more time than what they needed to do on this one lesson and that to me is joyful as well because I know they were really into what they were learning about and that’s why they sat and drew this big baptismal picture or whatever it is from their memory. (Q4, Therese)

The joys are for me that the student commits to the program and does the work and are interested in what they’re doing. (Q4, Anne)

The younger children give me the most joy [but] the older ones that go through for Confirmation, if they are dedicated, it is a joy to mark their work even though it’s a lot of reading. (Q4, Monica)

Some respondents mention that this joy is increased where the children or parents explicitly thank them for their contribution to the child’s learning. “It’s very heartwarming,” says
Therese (Q4). “It’s lovely when the parents are so appreciative and see the value,” says Marguerite (Q2). It seems particularly satisfying to know that the work was meaningful and has lasting benefits for the child. The joy of the catechist is linked to their sense that something meaningful and important has been handed on. This is especially evident as respondents were asked to voice their hopes for the future. Many speak of their hope that the children have really learned something and point to the deep desire that children continue to learn and benefit from the CCC. In her reflection activity, Therese writes that her great hope is that one day she will:

know that we, as catechists, are making a difference in these children’s lives, whether we can actively see it or not. And to understand that as with many things about our faith we cannot always “see with our eyes” what God’s intentions are, but to know in our hearts and to see with our souls the difference we are making. (RQ2)

Therese’s summary is particularly poignant as many of her responses indicated the frustration and discouragement she often feels in her work.

6.3.4 Gathering with Other Catechists as Source of Joy – Q7

When asked about the connection of their work to the work of other catechists in the CCC, respondents identified diocesan catechist gatherings as a source of joy. They appreciate that they can “tell each other of the challenges we’re facing and we lift each other up” (Monica). Catherine says she appreciates the guidance provided through these sessions. Anne describes how the catechists support one another. She says, “I like to get together with everyone and listen to what their needs are. If I need help maybe someone in another parish can help me out or if they have a need, maybe I can help them out with what I’m doing.” Marguerite agrees, “I feel a strong sense of bonding.” The joy here is linked to the importance of
belonging; the catechists enjoy sharing and fellowship. Anne concludes with, “I think you need that togetherness so you’re not isolated in your own parish.”

6.3.5 The Challenges for the Catechist

The challenges identified by catechists arise in terms of three areas. There are challenges related to the lack communication with the parish. There are challenges related to children who seem to lack commitment or who fail to complete the work. Finally, there are challenges that relate to parents who seem to be resistant to the program requirements or who resist communication with the catechist.

6.3.5.1 Lack of Communication with the Parish

Communicating with the parish is, of course, most difficult for floater catechists, who are serving parishes where they are not parishioners. Pastors and parish secretaries may have never met these catechists. Monica, the one floater catechist in the study, said it this way, “Some parishes are very helpful … but when there’s no response … then I’m kind of lost in limbo and that’s a challenge” (Q4). Although Therese serves in her own parish, she also says that lack of communication with the parish is a frustration. Sometimes, she says, “I really don’t feel like there is much of a connection at all” with the parish (Q6).

Marguerite and Catherine, both of whom serve in multiple ministries in their parish and both of whom serve on a team, said they had good communication with the parish (Q4, Marguerite – Q6, Catherine).
6.3.5.2 The Child who Apparently Lacks Commitment

All respondents point to children who do not complete lessons or do not complete them well as a source of frustration. Anne says, “The majority of [children] are sincere in what they are doing… but there are a few that aren’t … I talk to the parents on the phone if the kids are not doing what they’re supposed to be doing (Q2).” Marguerite describes the difficult situation of a family who hands in all the lessons the week before the Sacrament and show up on the day “not knowing how to receive the gift. So I spend a frantic thirty minutes refreshing” (Q2). For many, this is where the correspondence nature of this catechetical program is most difficult. “It’s when they don’t really want to be doing it,” says Monica, “you can see they are doing the least little amount of work like a one-line answer” (Q4). Therese agrees, “Some of them are zipping through it like ‘let’s just get this done’” (Q4). Where children struggle, Therese says it is often difficult to tell how one can help them or to determine if the help one does offer makes any difference. “Most of them are just kind of wanting to do their own thing … they don’t want to utilize me,” she says (Q2).

6.3.5.3 The Parents as Challenges and the Unexpected Discovery – Q4

Parents were consistently identified as a challenge for all catechists. Monica says, “It’s difficult when they begin the program and then, all of a sudden, drop away. There can be no judgment, of course, but it’s a big disappointment” when someone fails to complete the program and you do not know why. Anne says, “the parents themselves are not committed to what is going on sometimes.” She wonders what the parents are expecting, “They think that we should do everything or the Church should do everything and somehow or other their children are going to absorb all of this and become good Catholics without them helping out.” Catherine suggests it may be a case of misunderstanding, “I guess … some parents
don’t really understand the role that they fill or should be filling in their child’s education, their faith journey. That frustrates me sometimes that they have no responsibility for that.”

Therese compares the responses from children where parents are engaged in and committed to the program to situations where parents are not committed. “There is just such a difference I see in the quality of work.” Where she sees family involvement in Church and previous catechetical programs “I just know how different they are in terms of understanding the work.”

In these responses, I noticed a pattern emerging that was all too familiar. The catechists know that the parents have a role and responsibility in their child’s faith life. They know that if the parents fail to recognize this or choose to ignore this, the consequences are serious. Therese and Monica are left wondering and, in some ways, worrying what will become of these children. For Anne, Catherine and Marguerite, it becomes a worry not only in terms of the individuals but also in terms of the life of the Church.

These concerns are not all that different from my own questions regarding catechists. The basis of this thesis is the problem in ministry of wondering whether catechists fully understand their role and responsibility and the important ways in which their individual participation has meaning in the broader mission of the whole Church. The underlying concern is that if and when catechists fail to comprehend fully their participation in the Church, this has serious consequences to the way in which the Church is constituted. It seems that this is, at root, the same concern of these catechists regarding parents. The catechists speak of the negative consequences of poor parent participation in terms of future church attendance or future self-identification of the children as Catholics. That is, they
worry that the children will not go to Mass or will not bring up their own children as Catholic
if their parents are not truly engaged in their faith journey. The concern of catechists,
however, parallels my own that there are far-reaching consequences when individuals fail to
recognize or take ownership for their responsibilities in the Church.

I began this thesis with the assertion that my own specific research question lies within the
much broader context of issues of belonging and participation generally and what
membership has to do with responsibility. In the context of this study, respondents did not
wonder about their own responsibilities; they spoke fairly definitively about them, as we saw
in the previous section (Section 6.3.2). Having a strong sense of their own responsibilities,
however, seems to have led respondents to wonder what others understand of their
responsibility.

This was an unexpected discovery for me. Perhaps we have an intuitive sense of what Pope
Francis affirms in his teaching on the Church, “There is no I in the Church. It is we. How
often we have heard Pope Benedict speak of the ecclesial ‘we’.”245 This suggests for me than
any time one looks inward to reflect on what one’s own personal role or identity in the
Church might be, one will be inevitably led to look outwards to others in that community.
This is the recognition of the Church as an “event of intersubjectivity;”246 one’s own role is
deeply intertwined with the roles of all the others.

6.3.6 The Implications of the Overlap

245 Francis, “On Belonging to the Church.”

246 Komonchak. Who are the Church?, 5.
In a study of the self-understanding of catechists, it is not surprising that the areas of overlap include the catechists’ desire to see children grow in their faith, a desire for meaning in their work, and an appreciation of knowing they are not alone. Being a catechist means being in relationship with a number of stake-holders – parents, children, parish, and diocesan office and, as in all relationships, good communication is key to success. This work is also deeply rooted in the catechists’ own faith so, again, the overlap around issues of responsibility and feelings of reciprocity in the ministry are not surprising.

What was unexpected for me, as researcher, was the extent of the gratefulness these catechists had for the opportunity to reflect on and speak about all these issues through the study process. It points to the need for more opportunities for catechists to share about their work with one another in larger groups.

The second implication that flows from these areas of overlap is the realization that these catechists seem to have an intuitive sense of their responsibilities as members of the Church. Since they are already articulating some of the foundational teaching regarding the role of the laity generally and the role of the laity in catechesis, it may be worthwhile to focus future formation on these foundational Church documents where these concepts are articulated.

Giving catechists the primary sources and allowing them to see the resonance of the language being used with their own lived experience seems essential. These documents may, in fact, be an important encouragement to catechists that what they already sense about themselves is affirmed throughout Church teaching.

6.4 Areas of Disagreement
The responses also showed, as expected, a variety of experiences, a spectrum of feelings and a diversity of understandings. There are three questions from the interview protocol, however, that produced interesting patterns of discord within themselves. The first is Q2 – the description of the catechist’s tasks with a typical family over the course of a year. The second is Q3 – the description of the purpose of the work in the CCC. The third, Q5, is the statement respondents were asked to complete “When I am being a catechist in the CCC, I am being ____.” The discord in the responses allows one to see that when common understanding of even the external tasks is lacking, then common understanding of one’s identity when one is involved in those external tasks is difficult to achieve.

6.4.1 The Description of Tasks – Q2

The description provided at the outset of this chapter is a reasonable summary of the program. The CCC functions in a relatively similar way across the diocese. One of the main purposes of Q2 was to put respondents at ease by asking a simple description question to begin the interview. Considering they are all describing the same basic tasks, my expectation around this question was that catechists would describe these tasks in a relatively similar manner. The responses, however, demonstrated a remarkable diversity.

Catherine was very business-like and efficient:

I would say first contact was instigated by their registration that was confirmed to me by your office. I would then email that family and provide an introductory email with all the information about how we run the program, where to leave notes, if they are doing Confirmation for example then when those dates will be, what are important dates for parents in general, just a general overview. That first email goes out shortly after I receive the registration and then usually the parent will respond and it goes from there. I instruct the parents to send in chapters two at a time at the most and then inform me when they have dropped it off and then I pick it up, mark it, put it back in the folders, and contact them again. In the meantime, I send reminders when Confirmation retreats are coming up, parent information meetings.
She prides herself on her clear communication with parents and parish staff throughout the process (Q2vm).

Anne describes the work in very fluid terms. Sometimes she meets them at a parent meeting, sometimes not. Sometimes she contacts them by phone, sometimes by email. You get the sense talking to Anne that she has done this work a long time and she sees it as a very flexible process. For example, when describing the back and forth with lessons, Anne says, “We’re trading it in various ways. One is a box at the church. The other is I take it right directly to the parents and drop it in their mailbox, knock on the door and so on. And they sometimes put it my mailbox too. I don’t mind that.” The process may look one way with one family, and different with another. She is unfazed either way.

Marguerite describes it as a set process without variation. She begins by saying, “The course runs from September to May.” While her process is unchanging, the families within the process vary. Some complete lessons well, some come at the last minute. Regardless, Marguerite works towards the dates for the reception of Sacraments. She describes the unfolding of the year as follows:

We usually start the second week of September and we run until the week after the children have their First Holy Communion. So last year, we had communion like May; we went right to the end of May. This year, we’re finishing up the first week in May because the children have their First Holy Communion late April. So we run until the Sacraments are completed in our church.

It was interesting that Marguerite never actually mentioned the exchange of lessons until I prompted her. When I asked about the back and forth with lessons, she noted that some families return them regularly according to a schedule while others tended to be late and hand them in all at the end.
Monica describes the tasks of her work in the CCC with unbounded joy. She delights in describing the minutiae of writing little comments on the children’s work and affixing stickers to it before sending it back. This is her most animated response in the whole interview. She acts out the marking with her hands; bouncing hands make check marks in the air on the imagined worksheets and then delicately fold the unseen pages to be sent back. She says:

I start getting the work and I have it marked within the next two or three days. I send it off and then that’s that. As I’m marking, I’m checking. I’m writing “Great!” I’m writing “Super.” I’m writing, “Maybe you could check pages so and so in the textbook.” At the end of those pages, I put a star on the first page. I put, “Great work.” Then I like to go into the little package that you sent along from the office and I’ll add something of that in there and send off my work and wait for some more.

Her description of communication with parents is also very detailed and very positive:

When I receive the registration, the office lets me know that the books have been sent to the family, I send an email introduction letter. I did not used to. It used to be more mailed by post but now I do it by email. I let them know how they can get a hold of me three different ways: email, telephone, snail mail. Most of them are in touch with me by email. And so we email back and forth and the parents let me know pretty much all the time, or a typical family would let me know, “We have something ready. We will send it off to you.” “Good. I’m expecting it.” I send some kind of reply back.

Therese, who admits to a certain frustration with her work (Q2vm), describes many of the same tasks as the others – such as emailing parents and mailing lessons – but with very different feeling. She says, “Really, the back and forth is not a lot.” One gets the sense of her ambivalence towards the tasks as she describes the process:

But really, I mean, there are remarks on their work that go back and forth; there are emails that are sent occasionally when somebody gets a bit behind but there isn’t for the majority of my families, there isn’t a whole ton of contact throughout the year other than if they’re behind. But I offer my help on anything they get stuck on. … I’d say most of them are just kind of wanting to do their own thing and then the end of the year, it’s just basically trying to get people to finish off.
This was an interesting response since she did not seem to be describing less contact with families than other catechists but clearly felt a lack a satisfaction in the contact.

The same basic tasks are described by the five respondents as either very flexible and fluid and dependent on the children and families or very set and routine without variation – families and children either conform or do not. The tasks are, for some, a well-known routine, for others, a source of great joy and for others a source of frustration. These variations in description may be due, in part, to differences in personality. Perhaps Catherine is a great organizer and so she chooses to emphasize the organizational qualities of the tasks. It may be that the variation in responses is due to the prior life experiences of the catechists. Anne is a retired teacher and, having volunteered in the CCC for many years, is now set to retire as a catechist. Perhaps she finds the tasks quite routine and, with decades of experience, expects a certain amount of ebb and flow, and ups and downs. Regardless of the reason for the diversity of response, however, it seems significant that these catechists do not entirely agree on even the basic tasks of their work.

6.4.2 The Statement of Purpose – Q3

Not surprisingly, where the articulation of the basic tasks produced a variety of responses, the description of the purpose of the work also showed remarkable diversity.

Monica said the purpose of the work was two-fold, “The purpose is to keep guiding the children … this way, I can keep in touch with that good feeling like I’m doing something spiritual for the kids, maybe not just for the kids but the family too. Like I say, it’s for me; it’s for them. I also learn and I grow with it.” Catherine also identified a dual purpose but different from Monica’s. For Catherine, on the one hand, the purpose of the work is to
provide a method of catechesis that varies from other methods so that there is flexibility of
options for children and their families. “It really does suit some children more than others.”
On the other hand, the work provides opportunities for lay people to contribute to the parish.

Both Anne and Marguerite spoke of the purpose in broad ways. Anne, who spoke often about
children having a responsibility to be committed to the Church repeated this in her
description of the purpose of her work. “My purpose is to help the student come into the
Church and help the students to make a commitment to their Church.” Marguerite saw her
purpose in terms of children’s relationship to God through Jesus, “My greatest purpose is to
have the children appreciate God and see all that Jesus has given them to be thankful for.”
Marguerite had described the tasks of her work very much in terms of preparing for
sacraments. She identifies the moments of sacrament again as key to the purpose. “I like to
see the sparkle in their eye. It happens most when they are in grade one and two [i.e. at First
Communion] but the sparkle reappears in Confirmation.”

Finally, Therese, who was clearly struggling to find meaning in her tasks, responded simply,
“I don’t know. … I mean, I should be the one who is encouraging these students along … I
mean I guess it’s encouraging if they go back through it and read it, but if they don’t which I
don’t know … then really I’m a marker.”

It is evident from these responses that diversity in articulation of tasks translates into
diversity in understanding of purpose. Lonergan affirms the importance of being attentive,
intelligent, reasonable and responsible.\textsuperscript{247} For the catechist, this means asking: What am I doing? What does it mean? Why am I doing that? What ought to be done?

Therese is a clear example of someone who is unsure of what she is doing and therefore unsure of its meaning. This uncertainty makes her doubt the worth of what she does and makes the questions of what ought to be done that much harder for her to address.

In terms of the other respondents, it is important to recognize that their answers to this question were very spontaneous. They did not respond out of a sustained reflection. In this way, their responses can be understood as a first thought on the matter rather than a statement of some deeply defined notion. I have no doubt, for example, that Monica, Catherine and Anne would agree with Marguerite that it’s about putting children in touch with God and Jesus and finding their gratitude in that. Likewise, I feel confident they could all agree with Anne’s assessment that it brings children into the Church. The lack of unity in response is indicative to me that catechists need more time to attend to the tasks of their work in order to work out for themselves the connections between what they are doing and what the meaning of those actions is.

\textit{6.4.3 ‘Being’ a Catechist – Q5}

The final area of discord in the data centered around the responses when catechists were asked to complete the statement: “When I am being a catechist in the CCC, I am being____.” Unlike the responses to Q2 and Q3, where there was such diversity there was no real pattern to be discerned, Q5 produced two distinct patterns of response that diverged

\textsuperscript{247} Lonergan, \textit{Method in Theology}, 53.
from one another. One pattern can be called the ‘synonymous job title’ pattern. The second pattern can be called ‘the relationship’ pattern.

For Anne, the answer was simple. “When I am being a catechist in the CCC, I am being like a teacher.” Then, “I am being a teacher,” she added for emphasis. Therese first responded that she did not know what she was being but then quickly revised that to say, “I am just a marker … I put the time in to mark their work.” Monica also responded that when being a catechist she was being a teacher. In each of these instances, the respondent substituted the word catechist for a synonymous job title, either ‘teacher’ or ‘marker.’

Both Therese and Anne stayed with that simple, clear synonym. Monica, however, shifted mid-response away from the job title alone to descriptions of her being as catechist in terms of relationship, “I am being a spiritual guide, guidance counselor, guide. I was going to say I am being a bit of a parent but no. That’s going a bit far. So I am being a teacher but I am giving and taking because I am learning as well as teaching.” This response was noted previously in the ways in which is speaks to the theme of reciprocity but here it points to the identity of the catechist as being in relationship. Her response has the feel of the fellow traveller on the faith journey that was the preferred image for Catherine and Marguerite. Catherine says, “I am guiding children. It’s guiding them on their faith journey. We all have different journeys.” Marguerite wanted to search for the right image to express what she is being as a catechist, “I’d like to say a stepping stone? A sister. A stepping stone between this child’s knowledge and the growth of that knowledge. I don’t carry them but I’d like to say I walk side by side in their growth.”
It is not surprising that catechists understand themselves in different ways; they are, after all, unique individuals. There is a dichotomy presented in the two patterns of response, however. On the one hand, when one is ‘being’ a catechist, one might have an experience that is highly task-defined. On the other hand, some respondents describe the experience as more relationship-based.

6.4.4 The Implications of the Disagreement

Recognizing the discord or diversity between responses in these three questions affirms one of the important assumptions of this study. Namely, that although there are commonalities among the experiences of catechists in the CCC, each experience is also unique. In each instance, however, the disagreements underline the importance of allowing catechists time to reflect on their work. They need to attend to the external tasks and gain some understanding of those tasks in order to reflect on any deeper meaning that may be inherent in the tasks.

This is an important insight for me as a formation leader and exposes a pre-supposition that needs to be set aside. I had assumed that because the tasks of the CCC are relatively similar in all places across the diocese, by and large, catechists would describe them similarly. I had anticipated diversity in terms of judgments but not in the prior stages of attending and understanding. The results from this small sample of catechists, however, show this is clearly not the case. Allowing catechists to name and define their tasks together in order to find common language and to bring to light disagreements may be an important first step in terms of future efforts to reflect on the ecclesial identity of the catechist.

In terms of the diversity in the understanding of the ‘being’ of the catechist, this again underlines the relevance of the thesis question at hand and the need for this study. The
responses fall into one of two categories; either the catechist is teacher or marker or the
catechist is a companion on the journey. There is, however, no articulation of the being of the
catechist in reference to the Church; there was no sense of the catechist as having an identity
that relates to the Church at this point in the interview.

6.5 The Silences

Sensing encourages the researcher to look also for what was expected but not heard. This
serves to allow the researcher to identify pre-suppositions that were carried into the study.\textsuperscript{248}
The questions of this study gave respondents the opportunity to provide data on how they
understood their work, how they felt connected to the broader mission of the Church, and
how the hermeneutic “full, conscious, and active participation” affected them. Within that
context, there were two areas of silence in the responses that surprised me and one further
area worth noting.

First, I had expected that as catechists spoke about ‘the Church’, images would emerge in
their responses. Second, I had thought that, when asked about their connection to the
diocesan Church, catechists may have spoken more about the Bishop and his role. Instead,
the Bishop was rarely mentioned and most often referred to only in relation to the celebration
of Confirmation. These silences speak both to the ecclesiology of the respondents along with
my own. Finally, it is worth noting that there was an almost complete lack of reporting of
any conflict with the parish priest. While I believe there may be a simple explanation of this
fact, it certainly represents a silence.

\textsuperscript{248} Sensing, 192.
6.5.1 Where is the Body of Christ?

I had expected some use of imagery regarding the Church or Christ to come up somewhere in the responses. There was, however, never any image of the Church offered in any response. Respondents never described themselves, for example, as belonging to the Body of Christ or the People of God. Although they spoke often of children and the Sacraments, they never spoke of leading children to the table or bringing children to the Lord. Their language was very matter of fact; when they spoke of the Church, they said “the Church”. They never used any biblical images of Jesus as the Good Shepherd or the vine and branches. Especially in Q9, when asked to speak about the connection of their work to the world-wide Church, I had thought they might be likely to use imagery here but there was none.

6.5.2 The Bishop as Catechist

There was also no sense of the role of Bishop as catechist. When asked how their work in the CCC related to the work of the diocese, no one spoke of the commonality of their work with the work of the Bishop as teacher in his diocese. No one spoke of their participation as relating to a participation in the ministry of the Bishop.

Anne and Monica both mentioned the Bishop at Confirmations. Monica did identify the Bishop as the “head of the diocese” (Q8) but did not go on to make a further link in terms of his teaching role.

6.5.3 The Parish Priest

Comments from the participants regarding their parish priests were not surprising to me in the same way as the silences already named but the complete lack of reporting of conflict may be worth noting. Anne and Catherine report nothing but a good relationship and clear
communication. Even though Anne is retiring, she has taken the initiative to find and train her own replacement (Q6). Catherine stressed her strong and positive relationship to the parish priest; she speaks directly to him and discusses problems as they arise. “I work closely with [him],” she says (Q6). Therese only mentioned the parish priest once to say that when parents have complaints they should speak directly to the pastor rather than “dump” their concerns on her (Q4). This was reported as a challenge with the parents rather than with the pastor.

Both Marguerite and Monica wished for something more from the priest. Marguerite wishes the parish priest could drop in and say hello to the children so they can know him better (RQ2). She remembers when she was young, the priest visited. She is quick, however, to note that priests cannot do everything now as there are too few and they are spread too thinly. She indicates she will pray for a resolution to this. Monica wishes that a priest would “possibly … show some form of acknowledgment that we are part of the team in the work we do with their young parishioners” (RQ2). Monica, as a floater catechist, of course has much less contact with the priests of the parishes she serves. Her reports are most often received and acknowledged by other parish staff such as the lay parish minister or the secretary. Her comment is tentative in tone; she hopes it could “possibly” happen. Interestingly, both Monica and Marguerite express these longings in the context of RQ2 that asks them to name their hopes; these are not named under ‘challenges’ in Q4.

6.5.4 The Implications of the Silences

The first two areas of silence reveal something of my own ecclesiology as well as that of the catechists. In terms of the role of the Bishop, it is not surprising to me that I have a strong
sense of the importance of his ministry. I work for the Bishop and, as I made clear at the outset of this thesis, I am encouraged by the Bishop that my work is an important participation in his own teaching ministry. The fact that respondents did not share that sense may point to a potential area in terms of future catechist formation. It would be difficult to conceive of the ecclesial identity of the catechist without a robust sense of the ecclesial community and the various roles and responsibilities each one in the community holds. St. Paul teaches, “The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you” (1 Corinthians 12: 21-22). The many parts of the one body need to know that they are, in fact, all parts of the one body and, further they need to know how they are related to one another.

The use here of the image of the Body of Christ in St. Paul’s letter to the Corinthians points to my own tendency towards picturing the Church through a variety of images offered from many sources. Images feature prominently in ecclesiology whether it is the gateway, field, or sheepfold\(^{249}\) from *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* or the language of sacrament, servant or herald proposed by Avery Dulles in *Models of the Church* or the beautiful image of Mother used repeatedly throughout the documents of Vatican II\(^{250}\) and seen, for example, recaptured by Joseph Komonchak in his essay *Who are the Church?.* Images can be helpful in synthesizing a number of aspects or characteristics and describe and reflect the complexity of the Church. Perhaps these catechists have limited exposure to images as descriptors of the Church or perhaps they experience the Church in such a singular way that one can say – there it is; take a look – so obvious, it needs no nuance.

\(^{249}\) *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 6.

In any event, these silences certainly point to areas of discord between my own ecclesiology and the ecclesiology expressed by these respondents. This discord provides a basis for discussion of these topics in future training and formation activities.

The lack of reporting of conflict with the parish priest has different implications for me. It has to be said that parishes can be places where people do not get along or where office politics cause problems, not unlike every other place where people work together. As the diocesan Director of Catechesis, I am sometimes called upon to mediate tensions in parishes between lay parish ministers and volunteers, volunteers and pastors, parents and parish staffs, etc. If someone surveyed all 100 lay volunteer catechists, I suspect conflict in the parish would have been reported by at least some of them. So why was it not reported here?

It is possible that respondents felt reluctant to report difficulty to me as an employee of the Bishop or because I have ongoing contact with priests. It is possible that respondents would not want to disappoint me by suggesting there are problems. I find both these reasons to be unlikely, however, especially considering the candour with which they all described other conflicts, such as conflicts with parents. I believe the much more likely reason, however, is that this study was limited to long-serving, experienced catechists. Volunteers who have more than 10 years’ experience have most likely lived through more than one pastor. If there were conflicts, they have figured out how to manage them. On the other side, parish priests would not allow a difficult or problematic volunteer or someone who is incompetent to continue for very long. Had the priest felt there was conflict, the catechists would likely have been removed. The implications of this silence, therefore, is that it is important to remember that the experience of long-standing parish volunteers probably differs from the experience
of newer volunteers who are just learning to navigate the waters and who may or may not in the end persist in this ministry.

6.6 Relating the Responses to the Theoretical Framework

One of the intentions of this study is to place the responses of catechists in conversation with the theoretical framework that has been proposed in the opening chapters. In these chapters, the importance and meaning of belonging and how belonging affects participation was explored. We have considered what is meant by ‘the Church’ so that we could consider what it is to participate in the Church and we have looked to the potential of ‘full, conscious, and active participation’ as a way of describing one’s participation. All this was to bring clarity to how one might come to understand one’s ecclesial identity. In the following section, we will see how these respondents have spoken about belonging and participation in the Church and how these responses resonate with our earlier discussions. Their responses across the entirety of the study paint the picture of their emerging ecclesiological perspectives.

6.6.1 Emerging Perspectives

As each of these catechists spoke about her work, and her connections to her parish, the diocese, other catechists and the world-wide Church, there was an unfolding sense of her own ecclesiological perspective. To understand their ecclesial identities, we first need to consider the community or place in which and to which they feel they belong and work in.

6.6.1.1 Therese

Therese sees a strong connection between herself and the families she serves. She mediates the relationship between the families and the parish, which she identifies with the pastor and lay parish minister (Q6). She also identifies her service as a catechist as a diocesan service.
She is “taking care of a number of families for the diocese” (Q8). In terms of the world-wide Church, she speaks in terms of participating in an ongoing process. Her hope is that the children she serves become interested in the Church and grow up to become parents who are interested in bringing their children to the Church (Q9). Despite this hope, Therese often seems discouraged. She participates in a process that she does not entirely feel a part of, “It could be me or it could be anybody doing this work” (Q3vm). She is unsure whether her work makes any difference.

Anne
Anne knows that on a personal level, she is helping students come into the Church. She refers to the children often as students. Her relationship to the work in the parish is that she is helping Father out (Q6). As she confesses nervously that she is set to retire, she is quick to offer a new catechist who can take her place. She identifies the diocese as ensuring a “commonality of faith” (Q8). This commonality is deeply important to her. “It’s what keeps us together,” she says. The Church, for Anne, is largely the parish. She has difficulty thinking about the connection of her work to the work of the diocese and the world-wide Church. She ends the interview saying she wants more time to think about it.

Anne feels confident in her parish. She has been Catholic all her life. The truths of the faith are second nature. Going to Mass and committing to the church are to be expected. She volunteers because Father needs her. She has never really thought about the meaning of her work in terms of the wider Church. She describes a recent visit to Medjugorje where she felt confronted with the reality of the world-wide Church for the first time. “All those people, standing shoulder to shoulder, praying in different languages and I thought here’s the world-
wide Church” (Q9). Despite that experience, she’s still not sure how her work might be connected to all of that.

6.6.1.3 Catherine

For Catherine, the parish is a busy place with many roles to be filled. There is a coordinator of children’s liturgy, someone to organize altar servers, lectors, etc. (Q3). There are many people who make up the parish for Catherine such as the secretary, the sacramental coordinator, the priest and many lay people (Q6). She sees her participation in the diocese in terms of how she participates in enacting and upholding diocesan policy around catechesis and the Sacraments of Initiation for children. Confirmation is deeply important for Catherine as it marks the moment when people become “Catholic in the true sense” (Q9).

Catherine has an ecclesiology deeply rooted in the sacramentality of initiation. Baptism and Confirmation are not mere milestones to be worked towards, they are the defining moments that both gift us and demand a response from us.

6.6.1.4 Monica

Being a catechist is one of the many jobs at the parish, according to Monica. Her work has a strong connection to the parish because it teaches about and leads to participation in the Mass and the Sacraments. When Monica speaks about the parish, she speaks about the priest and the parish minister; the parish is the locus of catechesis and the locus of Sacraments. Her work is connected to the diocese in that she prepares children for Confirmation and the Bishop celebrates Confirmation. She speaks modestly of her connection and contribution to the world-wide Church. “I do feel, as little as it might be, I’m working on evangelization, which is a big word now with the Church… I’m not doing it on my own of course” (Q9).
Monica acted out the connection of her work to the world-wide Church during our interview. She says, “I am doing something even though it seems like a small thing” (Q9) and using both hands, she shows how the Church is a vertically layered structure. There are a number of horizontal layers that build from the bottom up. She returns, in the end, to indicate a very thin slice at the lowest level of this invisible tower where she resides – small and low. This image so struck me that I spoke to her about it at the verification meeting and she laughed and agreed that was an accurate depiction of her feelings on the matter.

6.6.1.5 Marguerite

Marguerite describes her role in the parish as being “part of the welcoming committee” (Q6) and speaks very positively about her relationship with the pastor. She is “supporting staff.” She describes families and situations where children have had special circumstances that made catechesis more difficult and happily reports how she and her pastor have worked together to be creative and flexible to meet their needs. She has a sense that the diocesan Church ensures a commonality of catechesis that is “really important” (Q8). When asked about the world-wide Church, like Monica, Marguerite acts out her ecclesiology. She speaks of being a little peg (Q9) and she places her hands, as fists, one on top of the other to indicate one specific place, which is her. Then her fists begin to circle; they move out from one another forming many horizontal circles in all directions while she struggles to find more words. Each time, the circle comes back to a small spot in the space before her. “I am just a little tiny peg growing the Church” (Q9).

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251 Marguerite is using supporting as an adjective here. She is not a paid employee but definitely sees herself, paid or not, as being a working member of the parish team.
Marguerite is confident. She sees herself in the Church, with a role, in relationship, making decisions and helping people. Although she identifies herself with the humble image of a little tiny peg, she knows how important a little peg she is because she contributes to growing the Church.

6.6.2 The Hermeneutic of “full, conscious, active participation” – RQ1

Because this thesis proposes that “full, conscious, and active participation” may be an important lens through which lay persons can come to understand their participation, the study protocol gave respondents an opportunity to speak specifically to this hermeneutic. Assuming that this would be a novel way for catechists to think about their participation, it was included as part of the reflective homework activity (RQ1) so that respondents had adequate time to reflect on the meaning of these words as a description of their own participation.

There was a real sense across the responses that the catechists did not want their ‘participation’ to be equated with ‘work’. Anne, for example said, “It’s not work for me; it’s an honour.” Monica echoed this sentiment that her participation is “a desire and an honour.” Anne, Therese and Marguerite all spoke about their participation as a response to God. Therese said it was about God’s expectations of her. Anne said she fulfilled her mandate from God to bring people close to him through this work. Marguerite simply said, “I think it is God’s intention that we are to be full, conscious members of our church.”

Many of the respondents attempted to parse the descriptors to give meaning to each one. “Conscious” was used by Catherine and Therese to denote the importance of their intentions as catechists. Catherine had made a conscious choice as an adult to become Catholic and then
made other conscious choices to serve in a variety of ministries in her parish. Therese emphasizes that she participates actively by being a catechist in the CCC and that it was conscious because she has decided to do this.

These were interesting assertions since one of the early concerns during the design phase of this research was that the hermeneutic of full, conscious and active participation would have little meaning for the study participants. The worry was that catechists would be unlikely to find meaning in that hermeneutic in the same way that I was finding meaning in it and that they would remain with very superficial or vague descriptions of their participation such as “I do this because Father asked me.” Interestingly, when asked about the purpose of their work, many did point to this mundane reality of their service: “I fulfill a role in my parish.” (Catherine, Q3); and “The main thing is I’m helping Father out” (Anne, Q6); and again, “It’s one of the many jobs the parish has” (Monica, Q6). But when given time and presented with this new hermeneutic, all of them found new and much deeper expressions for their work. No one spoke about Father asking or the parish needing this work in reference to this reflection question.

Instead, they reflected on their participation as being about their “relationship with God in his Church.” (Anne) They spoke about their participation as being primarily a participation in the children’s faith journey. Even Monica, who used each descriptor separately in terms of very specific tasks of the catechist (full because she marks papers all over the diocese, conscious because she marks lessons promptly and sends notes of encouragement and active because she initiates the communication with families and keeps careful reports), comes to a robust statement about what is all means: “Full, conscious, active participation is about
having participation in the children’s learning of their faith.” It is not, in the end, about the specific tasks but their collective meaning is something more than the marking of lessons.

The description moved Catherine to reflect that her participation makes her a full and active member of the parish but also gives her greater connection to and awareness of the families and parish staff and parish priest in her own parish and makes her aware, through the diocesan office, of being part of the worldwide Church. Therese, found a voice for her frustration in the CCC, lamenting that although her participation is active and conscious, she does not yet feel it is full because she has further talents to offer the Church that are not being utilized.

6.6.3 The Implications of the Reaction

Far from being an overly obscure theoretical concept, “full, conscious, and active participation” did generate rich reflection. It allowed respondents a way of seeing the bigger picture beyond the specific tasks (Monica and Anne). It gave an opportunity to reflect on the quality of their own participation (Therese). It also allowed them to articulate the importance of one’s intentionality in one’s participation (Catherine and Therese). With no exposure to my own convictions regarding this hermeneutic nor with any exposure to other thinkers on its implications, “full, conscious, and active participation” did serve to provide a useful lens through which to consider one’s participation. It led these study participants away from superficial descriptions of their work. Therefore, it has proven its usefulness lens for further use with catechists in the future in order to deepen their reflection on the meaning of their own participation.
6.7 The Ecclesial Identity of the Catechist

In all they have said about what they do in the CCC and why, the purpose of their work and the nature of their responsibilities, their frustrations and their connection or lack thereof to others in the Church, these respondents have provided important data regarding their understanding of their own ecclesial identities.

The theoretical framework proposed by this thesis suggests that one’s ecclesial identity is influenced by three important factors: one’s understanding of belonging, one’s understanding of the Church, and one’s understanding of participation. It was argued in Chapter Two that one’s sense of belonging has profound consequences for the way one chooses to participate. In Chapter Three, we saw that the way in which one defines the Church also deeply influences the way one can understand one’s participation.

The intent of the study is to give catechists meaningful opportunities to describe their participation in the Church through the CCC and to see what understanding of ecclesial identity is emerging. As we saw in Chapter Two, theories of group dynamics, faith development, citizenship theory and participatory citizenship help suggest what might influence and account for where and how one’s identities are formed. As we saw in Josselson’s model of group dynamics, for example, the way one participates in a group is deeply rooted in one’s earliest experiences of feeling safe and secure. Fowler’s model of faith development also suggests that varying life stages affect one’s approach to one’s faith and one’s relationship to others, including those in authority, within one’s faith group. Considerations from Chapter Three regarding how the Church is constituted also inform one’s ecclesial identity. Therefore, the questions surrounding the ecclesial identity of the
catechist are roughly: Do you belong? How do you belong or how do you know you belong? To whom or to what do you belong? What does it mean?

What follows in this next section are the understandings of ecclesial identity that emerged from the totality of the data of each participant.

6.7.1 The View from Within

Therese is unclear about her ecclesial identity. She knows she is called by God. She longs for greater understanding of her purpose (RQ1). She describes her participation in the CCC at this time, however, as though she is a line worker in a large factory. She has tasks; she reviews worksheets and makes comments and communicates. These tasks, however, lack meaning for her. She is unsure if the tasks are particular to her or if anyone could do them. She is not sure if she makes a difference. She does not set the process and she cannot change the process. She says she does not really get to make decisions as to how things work (Q4) and she rarely knows what the results are (RQ2). She has no real image of the finished product on which she is working.

Marguerite is certain of her ecclesial belonging. It is supported by her open communication and excellent relationship with the pastor. Her identity is very tied to her parish. Her parish is her ecclesial reality. She recognizes, however, that her local reality is linked in some mysterious, difficult to articulate way, to something much larger. She is the tiny peg in the big swirly reality of the world-wide Church. She is grounded in one place but connected in ways she cannot entirely describe. Her participation in the CCC allows the cycle of the building of the Church to continue.
Monica, too, knows she is a small part of something much larger. Her ecclesial identity has that same tone as Marguerite that in a small way she participates in the evangelizing mission of the whole Church. She identifies the parish with the person of the pastor and as the place of the celebration of Sacraments. Her little actions of marking and commenting are working to bring people to the parish and to the practise of faith. She belongs as one of many who belong. She delights in her participation because she sees it as having a meaningful, if small, impact on the whole Church.

Catherine knows you come to belong through the Sacraments of Initiation. Belonging to the Church demands participation from each one of us. Catherine loves her participation and takes pride in it. She is deeply embedded in her parish where she sees herself very connected through people, communication and relationships. Catherine knows that participation through ministry is how we live out our Catholic lives; it’s what she hopes for others.

Anne knows she belongs; she just does. It follows clearly for her that because she’s Catholic, she goes to Mass, and she helps out Father when he asks. The Church is very local for Anne; it is experienced in her parish. The wider Church is a mysterious thing that she has rarely considered or experienced. She knows that God gifts her, especially in the area of teaching, and she has a responsibility to use those gifts to bring others to God through the Church.

6.7.2 Seven Emerging Insights

As I have argued, ecclesial identity is influenced by one’s understanding of belonging and participation and is affected by one’s understanding of the Church. Being a catechist gives a particular importance to one’s participation as one is contributing to the ongoing communication of the gospel that contributes to the constitution of the Church. The final step
of this study is to draw conclusions from these understandings of ecclesial identity that flow from the data. Seven separate insights emerge from the evidence of the respondents in light of this study.

In the first place, there emerges an insight into the importance of communication between catechists and parishes. In Chapter Two, we saw the importance of one’s feelings of security in order to have a positive sense of belonging. The stability created by this security allows for positive participation in one’s group whether it be a citizen’s participation in the State or a believer’s participation in a faith group. According to attachment theory, this security can be formed by one’s early experiences of being held.252 One of the areas that can provide that kind of stability and security for catechists seems to be communication with the parish. The catechists who describe close communication with the pastor and other parish staff, such as Marguerite and Catherine, are very secure in their participation because they are secure in their belonging. Monica states that when and where poor communication happens, it is a disappointment and challenge for her. She very much appreciates when the parish is interested in engaging in communication. It increases both her sense of the worth of her work and her satisfaction in her work (Q4). Therese, who lacks a sense of the worth of her work, identifies lack of communication as a contributing factor to her frustrations. As Daloz Parks describes it, that security of knowing one’s place and the need to abide somewhere stable, is what makes it possible for one to venture forth.253 The evidence points to the conclusion that communication with and from the parish is, in some way, analogous to holding in attachment theory – it provides security to the individual and validates the work. So communication is

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252 Josselson, 203.
253 Daloz Parks, 69.
closely linked with the creation of stability for catechists with regards to the feeling of belonging.

In the second place, there emerges an insight regarding the necessity of both agency and communion for the individual in order to have a robust ecclesial identity. It was also argued in Chapter Two that agency and communion are important concepts that inform one’s understanding of one’s participation in the Church. Communion, the subordination of one’s self interest for the good of the group,\textsuperscript{254} is related to the feeling of belonging. One must first know the group and care for the good of the group in order to even consider sacrificing one’s own interests for that group. This makes the notion of communion related to the previous notion of communication inasmuch as one comes to know one’s group through communication.

Communion requires that one understands one’s self to be part of something. As Monica says, it “would be nice to know we are part of a team” (RQ2). As Josselson cautions, however, the inverse of the creation of stability and security is poor attachment, which leads to loneliness and alienation from one’s group.\textsuperscript{255} So communion requires people to feel secure in their belonging. Agency, however, has to do with one’s participation. Agency means knowing that something is actually happening because of one’s own actions. Therese lacks a feeling of agency. She does not know if her work is particularly meaningful because she does not see the end results. She feels glimmers of satisfaction when she receives a thank you note from a student but it is not enough to overcome her general sense of not knowing

\textsuperscript{254} Fowler, \textit{Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian}, 89.

\textsuperscript{255} Josselson, 206.
whether she makes a difference or whether her work makes a difference. Fowler argues that the mature Christian must find the balance in the tension between working towards the initiatives of the self and the willingness to act for the greater good of the community. 256

One’s ecclesial identity, therefore, should manifest this balance between a sense of one’s own ability to make things happen and the recognition that one can and should work for the greater good of the ecclesial community. Pope Francis spoke of this need for balance in an address to catechists where he urges them to go forth, to go outwards, and to take the initiative, “[I want] a Church, a catechist, with the courage to risk going out, and not a catechist who is studious, knows everything, but is always closed.” 257 This desire for catechists with personal initiative is balanced in his warning, “But careful! Jesus does not say: Go off and do things on your own. No! That is not what he is saying. Jesus says: Go, for I am with you!” 258 So the drive to go cannot lead catechists out on their own: they go with Christ through the community of the Church.

In the third place, an insight regarding the difficulty with embeddedness and connectedness emerges. Both Josselson and Schweitzer argue for the need of the individual to feel connected or embedded in order to participate well in their wider group. 259 Like the previous notion of communion, this involves knowing one is part of something or having a sense of

256 Fowler, Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian, 89.

257 Francis, “Address of the Holy Father to Participants In The Pilgrimage Of Catechists on the Occasion of the Year Of Faith and of the International Congress on Catechesis,” (Paul VI Audience Hall, Friday, 27 September 2013). http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130927_pellegrinaggio-catechisti.html (accessed March 6, 2015) It is interesting that here, Pope Francis equates catechist with the Church, and that he also identifies his own ministry as a catechist. “I am a catechist too”, he says (paragraph 1).

258 Ibid.

259 Josselson, 212 and Schweitzer, 96.
one’s place. It is clear from the respondents in this study that they do not all agree on the place in which they are embedded or to which they are connected. As catechists, they are embedded in the parish (Anne), or in their relationship to God (Therese), or in relationship to the Church (Catherine). If having one’s place and feeling secure in it allows one to venture forth, as Daloz Park argues, it seems significant that these catechists will venture forth from varying starting points. Surely this affects the possibilities in terms of end points. Where there is a lack of common experience or understanding, Lonergan suggests we may fail to achieve the common meaning that constitutes the community.

This is important in terms of the little community of catechists in the CCC for whom I am responsible. This lack of common language or understanding in the place in which they are embedded, may explain, in part, why it is so difficult to gather or create the community in diocesan formation days. The difficulty with the notion of connectedness or embeddedness, therefore, comes when one asks: Connected to what? Embedded where? Formation for the community of catechists in the CCC must address these questions further to probe for possible common understandings.

Following from this insight, the fourth insight emerges that, in order to have the potential for common meaning among the catechists of the CCC, the potential for community, a greater sense of communion and even to improve one’s feeling of agency, it seems that some teaching is required. Without common language and common understanding, formation takes place at the tower of Babel where confusion reigns and the group is scattered. Teaching catechists about the roles and responsibilities of various offices in the Church and exposing

260 Daloz Parks, 69.

261 Lonergan, Method in Theology, 79.
them to core, primary documents regarding catechesis provides a critical starting point. This lack of common language from the Catholic tradition directly affects the ability to have community among the catechists.

In the fifth place, there is an insight into the important knowledge already held by these catechists. In Chapter Four, it was argued that while all persons have responsibilities in the Church, catechists have a particularly pivotal role as they contribute directly to the communication that is constituting the ongoing process of the Church. It is, therefore, of particular importance for catechists to consider their ecclesial identity. The urgency for this understanding was outlined in the opening chapter and can be summed up by the statement from the GDC that formation should promote the “constant fostering of the ecclesial vocation of catechists by keeping alive in them an awareness of being sent by the Church.”

It is clear from the evidence of the study that while the catechists do not necessarily share an understanding of their ecclesial identity, all are very aware of the particular importance of the role of the catechist. They hold the role in high esteem as an honour in passing on the faith (Anne, RQ1), a calling from God (Therese, RQ2), and a yearning to serve (Marguerite, RQ1).

In the sixth place, one of the major contentions of this thesis is that the hermeneutic of “full, conscious and active participation” is a rich theological lens through which to consider the ecclesial identity of the catechist. It was argued in Chapter Three that, in the same way that this hermeneutic is applied to lay participation in the liturgy it can and indeed has been applied to the life and work of the laity outside the context of Mass. The concern that participation only be seen in terms of the external activity was explored. In applying the

\[GDC, 247 \text{ a.}\]
thought of Lonergan to these descriptors of participation, one has a much clearer understanding of the depth and breadth to which this hermeneutic can reach. Without any intervention with study participants to influence their understanding of this description of their participation, participants were allowed to respond to these terms upon personal reflection. The results were rich, thick descriptions of the respondents’ understanding of their participation. The conclusion, therefore, is that the hermeneutic was successful in terms of moving catechists away from superficial descriptions of their tasks.

Finally, it is clear from the results of this study that one’s ecclesial identity cannot be considered in isolation. Individual reflection on one’s ecclesial identity is a necessary but not sufficient reflection to come to a robust understanding. One’s ecclesial identity is always one’s identity in relation to and with the group. The ecclesial ‘I’ seems to lead inevitably to the ecclesial ‘we’. One must consider the broader Church in order to place oneself in that context. This is not merely theoretically necessary but practically necessary, too. This is evident in the outward gaze of respondents to raise questions about the participation of others (parents and children, particularly) even as they came to explore their own participation. Their tasks (Q2), purpose (Q3), joys and challenges (Q4) and their very being are all expressed in terms of their relations to others. This seems particularly significant considering respondents raised these concerns regarding the responsibilities of others before they were ever asked about how their work is connected to others.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the data has been examined and patterns of overlap and common themes have been recognized as well as areas of discord. Themes such as responsibility of the catechist
and reciprocity in catechesis have emerged. Responses that might have been expected and were not found were looked at for the implications of those silences both in terms of the researcher’s expectations and the silences themselves.

The study describes the emerging ecclesiological perspectives of each catechist respondent and comes to a conclusion regarding the catechists’ understanding of their own ecclesial identity. These understandings have been placed in the context of the theoretical framework of theories of belonging and participation, church constitution and the particularities of the role of the catechist. From this analysis, the following seven insights emerge:

1. Communication in the parish is analogous to holding in attachment theory – that is it creates security for the catechist.

2. A sense of both communion and agency must be present in balanced tension in the catechist to inform his or her ecclesial identity.

3. Catechists may indeed feel embeddedness and connected but there is variation in what or where they are embedded or connected. This provides a concrete challenge to creation and maintenance of community.

4. Catechists seem to understand intuitively that there is something important ‘at stake’ in terms of their role in the Church.

5. Providing common language through instruction regarding Church teaching allows for greater potential common meaning and common understanding that, in turn, leads to greater potential for the common judging and choosing that bonds community.

6. “Full, conscious, and active participation” is a useful hermeneutic through which to explore one’s ecclesial identity.
7. The search for one’s ecclesial identity inevitably raises questions about the ecclesial community – the ecclesial ‘I’ is always understood in the context of the ecclesial ‘we’.

In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I examine how these insights can positively impact my own practise of ministry, where they may be helpful to others in ministry, and what further areas for study are now indicated.
7.1 Introduction

Having proposed seven insights that flow from the evidence of the Action-in-Ministry, the question remains, as Lonergan says, “What practical good can come of this”? Lonergan answers the question about the importance of insights in terms of how they affect decisions and actions. He says, “Concrete situations give rise to insights which issue into policies and courses of action. Action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights, better policies, more effective courses of action.” This is the purpose of the Doctor of Ministry: to examine concrete situations in ministry by way of theological studies and with recourse to other fields that inform the concern for insights that lead to policies and actions that transform the situation and improve one’s practice of ministry.

7.2 Where We Have Been

This thesis began with a description of a ministry concern regarding the self-understanding of catechists of their ecclesial identity. It was argued that one’s ecclesial identity is informed by one’s understanding of one’s belonging and one’s understanding of the Church that both, in turn, affect one’s participation in the Church. The research question to address the concern is:

How do lay catechists see their participation in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses

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263 Lonergan, Insight, 7.

264 Ibid., 8.

as informing their ecclesial identity?

Further, it was proposed that reflecting on one’s participation through the lens of “full, conscious, and active participation” was important and valuable to the question at hand.

Having named the ministry concern and the research question, the theoretical framework built on insights from sociology, psychology, and ecclesiology, along with Church teaching regarding catechesis was outlined. In Chapter Two, faith development and group dynamics theory along with citizenship theory explained how individuals come to belong in groups and how their understanding of belonging affects their capacity for participation. The teaching of the Church regarding belonging through Baptism and the responsibilities flowing from that belonging were also considered. The question of what one means by ‘the Church’ and how one can come to a rich understanding of lay participation in the Church was argued in Chapter Three. Chapter Four argued why these concerns are of particular relevance in relation to catechesis and catechists. Throughout this framework, the thought of theologian Bernard Lonergan contributed to understanding how communities are formed, the importance of acts of meaning, and the process of the Church. By applying Lonergan’s model of schemes of recurrence to catechesis, the potential to participate in and through that scheme was explored. The understanding of participation was deepened as Lonergan’s psychological analogy of the Trinity was applied to “full, conscious, and active participation”.

7.3 The Study of the Question by Case Study

Chapter Five set forth the Action-in-Ministry, which was a case study of five lay volunteer catechists in the CCC. By means of an interview, a reflective homework activity and a
follow-up meeting, catechists were given the opportunity to speak about their activities, their purpose, their feelings about their work, and their understanding of their connection to the broader Church. They were also able to reflect on the meaning of “full, conscious and active participation” in terms of their work in the CCC. Finally, they were invited to share their hopes and dreams for themselves as catechists as well as for their fellow catechists going forward.

7.4 The Response to the Question

In Chapter Six, this study provided a detailed presentation of the results and an analysis of those results according to a framework that looked for overlapping themes among responses, areas of disagreement between responses, and areas of silence – where responses diverged from the researcher’s expectations. From this analysis, seven insights were proposed that speak to the self-understanding of catechists, the meaning of their participation, the importance of the feeling of belonging, their need for common language and their understanding of ecclesial identity.

7.5 Implications for Ministry

Due to the small sample size in this study, results cannot be overly generalized and may not be applicable in other catechetical ministries or in other dioceses. The findings of this study may not, for instance, speak to the experience or understanding of paid catechists who are employed by their parish. The intent of the qualitative case study in the Doctor of Ministry, however, is to paint a picture and gain an awareness of the situation at hand. Myers says, at the end of the day, the minister should be able to say, “this is my voice, these are my lenses,
this is one descriptive account of what is taking place in this particular setting.” In this way, what is revealed in the small study of this one catechetical ministry is deeply relevant for the practise of that ministry. Each of the insights brought forward in the results and analysis suggest concrete actions in my own ministry as Director of Catechesis.

7.5.1 Implications for My Own Ministry

The results of this study provide many opportunities for improvement to my own practise of ministry in administering the formation for lay catechists in the Diocese of Hamilton. Solid principles of adult education and transformative learning emphasize that adults must be encouraged to examine their own experiences as a means of identifying their own needs. In contrast to most pedagogy, which often prescribes the required content of learning, andragogy values the unique experiences of the adults and begins in that experience to identify learning needs. As the GDC states, catechists must receive formation that goes beyond simply communicating the content of the faith or the methodology of catechesis. Catechists must have formation in the ‘being’ of the catechist focusing on the fundamental ecclesial character of this role. Through this study, I have been able to identify important learning needs in this group of catechists through their own articulation of their experience and understanding.

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266 Myers, xi.

267 While the word ‘pedagogy’ is often used to describe all methodology in teaching, it does relate technically to the teaching of children. ‘Andragogy’, on the other hand, is the technical term for the methodology of teaching adults.

268 Anne Walsh, On Good Soil (Ottawa: National Office for Religious Education, CCCB: 2011), 124. The concept of beginning with one’s own experience is widely understood as a principle of adult education but is identified, for example, in this important Canadian Catholic Church resource as a “Best Practice” for catechist formation.
The first two insights from the study suggest both what the catechists need in terms of formation around communication and how essential the parish, primarily in the person of the pastor, is in terms of being a co-communicator. These insights are:

1. Communication in the parish is analogous to holding in attachment theory— that is it creates security for the catechist.

2. A sense of both communion and agency must be present in balanced tension in the catechist to inform his or her ecclesial identity.

Without this basic sense of security, the catechists’ ability to engage well in the community of the parish and the Church beyond is hindered. It compromises her sense of her own capacity to act either individually or in the group. If she is not secure in her belonging, she has difficulty identifying whether or not she in fact has any agency and her ability to work in communion is harmed. Training catechists around effective means of communication is, however, insufficient to create the kind of mutual, ongoing communication between catechist and pastor that improves feelings of security for the catechist. Pastors and other parish staff will need to understand the impact of communication or lack thereof on catechists.

The third insight, regarding embeddedness, speaks to the need for catechists to have opportunities to reflect together about where and how they are connected to the Church. This insight is:

3. Catechists may indeed feel embeddedness and connected but there is variation in what or where they are embedded or connected.

Because I have evidence of disparity of thought from this small group of catechists regarding their connectedness, it points to the need for the larger group to share their own reflections around connectedness and community. This requires time and opportunity. More creative
means of ‘gathering’ are needed. The mode of such sharing, whether it must be in person or may be online, for example, will need to be considered. It is clear from the evidence, however, that individuals need to see and interact with the reflections of fellow catechists, so they can see similarities and differences and begin to reflect more deeply on whether they have a common embeddedness or whether the differences are meaningful.

The fourth and fifth insight, regarding what catechists seem to know and not know, lead to greater clarity for me in terms of the content of formation sessions. Again, these insights are:

4. Catechists seem to intuitively understand that there is something important ‘at stake’ in terms of their role in the Church.

5. Providing common language through instruction regarding Church teaching allows for greater potential common meaning and common understanding that, in turn, leads to greater potential for the common judging and choosing that bonds community.

To this point, I have used training and formation opportunities primarily to teach about catechesis. I have provided interpretation of Church teaching, for example, to assist them. However, the evidence of this study suggests that catechists already intuitively know a lot about catechesis. What they lack is a sense of the universality of their own insights and the common language to express them. Providing that common language through study of primary Church documents and allowing catechists to interpret them increases the potential for common understanding that, in turn, leads to greater potential for the common judging and choosing that bonds community. Providing the primary source resources of official Church teaching regarding catechesis and Church structure will allow catechists to see their
own insights reflected in these words. This could also be an important way in which catechists are given evidence of their connectedness to the broader mission of the Church.

6. “Full, conscious, and active participation” is a useful hermeneutic through which to explore one’s ecclesial identity.

As the evidence suggests that this has been useful in this context with these catechists, I am encouraged to offer this reflection to catechists outside of the bounds of this study as a way to further reflection. It may help to clarify for themselves that beyond the important tasks of correcting and reporting, there is a broader and deeper meaning that is significant.

Finally, the implications of the seventh insight suggest the need for the simultaneous reflection for catechists in terms of looking inwardly at their own participation and outwardly at how their participation affects and is affected by the whole intertwined community of the Church. The seventh insight is:

7. The search for one’s ecclesial identity inevitably raises questions about the ecclesial community – the ecclesial ‘I’ is always understood in the context of the ecclesial ‘we’

While ecclesial identity must be a fundamental concern of the catechist, ecclesial identity must always be seen and understood in relation to others.

7.5.2 Implications for the Ministry of Others

Because this study sought greater understanding of ecclesial identity among parish volunteers, it may have resonance for other ministers involved with those who volunteer in parishes. There are many lay persons involved in liturgical ministries, adult faith formation groups, and other support groups of various kinds. It is my hope that this study may be of
assistance to the other Pastoral Offices of the Diocese of Hamilton (i.e. Liturgy, Discipleship, and Family Ministry) that all offer training and formation to lay volunteers in these various ministry capacities. Although specific to the context of the Diocese of Hamilton, this study may also assist diocesan directors in similar positions in other dioceses and therefore, it is hoped that the insights generated in this study may contribute positively to decision making and policy setting other formation programs.

Because this case study allowed for the reflection of catechists on their participation by applying the language of “full, conscious and active participation” in this new way provides a lens through which to view the problem of the “change in mindset” required regarding lay responsibility generally in the Church to which Pope Benedict XVI refers. This case study may be of assistance to others who seek to study the meaning of lay participation in the Church in other contexts and with diverse populations inasmuch as this research can contribute to the discussion already in progress about the value of and issues with the hermeneutic of “full, conscious, and active participation”.

Finally, I believe this study has been of benefit to the ministry of the research participants themselves. As they are encouraged to become more attentive in reflecting on and exploring the meaning of their own participation, it allows them to begin the process of evaluating their own decisions and actions. Because they were invited to share openly not only their

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269 The Diocese of St. Catharines, for example, launched its lay formation program “Rediscover the Joy” in the Fall of 2014 and is coming now to the close of its first year. More than 70 lay people participated in this program. At the same time, the Archdiocese of Toronto launched its own online formation program aimed particularly at catechists in conjunction with the University of Dayton. It is being closely monitored and assessed through the Office of Formation for Discipleship at the archdiocese as it gains greater popularity.

270 Benedict XVI, “Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome on the Theme: Church Membership and Pastoral Co-Responsibility.”
experience but their hopes, it encourages both the agency and communion that Fowler suggests as necessary for mature, secure Christians. As Clemens Sedmak affirms, “It is wonderful to have mindful people who see the world with ever new eyes.”

It seemed significant to me that, following the study, Monica sent her regular reports in to both the parish and the diocesan Catechesis Office with a greeting I had never seen her use before. She began, “Dear Co-workers in Christ.” I take this as possible evidence of a new awareness of her connectedness and an encouragement to continue to find ways to invite all of the catechists of the diocese to enter into such reflection.

7.6 Areas for Further Study

There are three areas for further study that are suggested by this study at hand. The first follows from the observation that reflection on “full, conscious, active participation” was useful in the context of this study. Further study is required in order to determine the lasting impact of this type of reflection and its impact on the values, decisions and actions of catechists following a more sustained reflection. At the present time, it cannot be determined that this hermeneutic approach has a positive, long-lasting impact, only that it has the potential for it.

Second, even as we consider the meaning of “full, conscious, active participation” outside the context of liturgy, it requires further study to see what impact reflection on one’s participation within the liturgy might have on one’s practise of ministry. It is the subject for another study to see, for example, how Richard Gaillardetz’s contention that participation in

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271 Sedmak, 1.

272 Email received from study participant catechist ‘Monica’, March12, 2015.
all spheres of life is improved through more attentive living so that we are always focused on living “for and from” the liturgy.\textsuperscript{273}

Third, there is a need for further study regarding the obstacles that keep parish volunteers generally and catechists in particular from participating more in formation programs. Whether it is primarily a lack of understanding, or financial considerations if and when these programs include a cost, or large distances to travel, or overly busy lives, or inadequate modes of delivery of formation, further study of what impedes participation and what might encourage participation in formation is necessary.

7.7 Conclusion

Archbishop Marini, in his reflection on the Council’s vision for the liturgy, laments participation that is understood solely in terms of external activity and calls for us to “pay attention in celebration to ‘being’ rather than simply ‘doing’.”\textsuperscript{274} In regards to full, active, and conscious participation of the laity in liturgy he says:

By insisting on the quality of participation in the liturgical celebration, the Constitution forcefully reaffirms that in the liturgy of the New Covenant every Christian is fully … offering of his life, in communion with the sacrifice of Christ which took place once for all, is the spiritual worship pleasing to God. The existential offering thus calls for conscious, full, active, interior and exterior participation in the sacramental offering. Consequently the Christian who celebrates his faith must give primacy to interiorization, that is, to a personal appropriation of what he hears and does in the liturgy. Only authentic interiorization will ensure an exteriorization capable of expressing what is most deeply experienced.\textsuperscript{275}

Archbishop Marini argues for the need for interiorization of participation for the laity as a way of ensuring that the exteriorization is capable of expressing what is most deeply

\textsuperscript{273} Gaillardetz, 212.
\textsuperscript{274} Marini, “The Fortieth Anniversary of The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.”
\textsuperscript{275} Ibid.
experienced. It follows that catechists need to understand this existential interior participation by way of authentic interiorization in order to ensure that the correcting of worksheets and the writing of comments, and the placing of stickers are capable of expressing the deeper reality. As the person responsible for the formation of these catechists, this thesis has allowed me to hear from the catechists themselves how that authentic interiorization may be encouraged. It is my hope that, as Monica would say, “in my own small way”, the whole ecclesial ‘we’ will be enriched by the insights that have emerged as these catechists and I have endeavoured to reflect on our own ecclesial ‘I’.
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Appendix A

Invitation to Potential Study Participants

Hi all,
I am contacting you today as a student at the University of Toronto nearing the end of my doctoral studies. It’s that time in my studies to start looking towards the research I will need for my thesis.

I am interested in the experience of volunteer catechists in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses. I am interested in things like how catechists enjoy their work, what tasks they take part in, and how they see their work.

I am contacting you because you have been a volunteer catechist for several years and I was wondering if you may be interested in participating in such a study.

There is, of course, a formal letter of consent I would be happy to share with you that has more details. Basically, I am looking to interview individual catechists about their experience as catechists. It’s nothing you would need to prepare for. I would be asking about your own experience. I would come to you – to any location you choose – for the interviews. After the interview, I would also ask you to write a little reflection about two follow up questions to give you a chance to go home and think about your answers a bit. It would not be a big time commitment.

These would all be confidential obviously. You would never be identified as a participant.

I realize there could be many reasons someone may choose not to participate and that is okay. The choice to participate or not is up to you. It will not affect your status as a catechist either way. Of the more than 100 volunteers in the program, I will probably only interview about 5 or 6.

If you think you would like to be part of this study or would like to know more about it, please feel free to email me or call me for further details.

Thanks very much for considering this opportunity.

God bless,

Anne Jamieson

Cell phone # 289-439-3784
Email anne.jamieson@utoronto.ca
Appendix B

Interview Questionnaire with Opening and Closing Dialogue

Opening Dialogue: Thank you again for your willingness to participate in my study. Just to review, I am recording our interview today. Do you consent to this recording? Do you have any questions regarding the recording? I may also take written notes as we speak just to remind me of particularly meaningful or important statements. Do you have any questions about that?

Remember, you are not required to answer any question you don’t want to. Please let me know if you’d like to move on. Let’s begin.

Question 1: How long have you been a catechist in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses (CCC)? Are you a catechist in your own parish? If so, do you work alone or in a team? If not, are you a floater catechist? How many parishes do you typically serve?

Question 2: Think of a typical family and child in the CCC. Describe your work with them over the course of a year.

Question 3: What is the purpose of your work in the CCC?

Question 4: Describe the joys and challenges of being a catechist in the CCC.

Question 5: The best you can, complete the following statement: When I am being a catechist in the CCC, I am ______________________________.

The next series of questions has to do with how you see yourself connected to others.

Question 6: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of the parish?

Question 7: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of other catechists?

Question 8: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of the diocese?

Question 9: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of the world-wide Church?

Closing Dialogue: Thank you very much for your time today. I’m going to give you the two questions for the written reflection now. I’d like to read them with you and you can ask me any questions you have about completing this reflection. (Read the instructions and the two reflection questions aloud.) Please return your reflection to me in this pre-addressed pre-stamped envelope within two weeks. Do you have any questions?
Appendix C

Confidentiality Agreement for the Transcriber

November 15, 2014

I ______________________ agree to provide a written transcription in Word document format of each of five or six recorded interviews of approximately one hour in duration each to Anne Jamieson according to the following criteria:

1. I agree and promise to accept the recorded interviews on a memory stick that will remain in a locked metal drawer in my home when not in use.
2. I agree and promise never to make any other copy of the recorded interviews for any reason and not to transfer the recordings onto any other device for any purpose.
3. I agree and promise never to disclose any of the information shared in these interviews with anyone else.
4. I agree and promise never to attempt to find the identity of the persons who have been recorded.
5. I agree and promise to create a Word document transcription for each interview and to store that document only on the memory stick provided to me. I will never make a further copy of that transcription for any reason.
6. I agree and promise to complete the transcriptions in a timely manner not to exceed three weeks from the time I have received the recording.
7. I agree and promise that this is work on my own time and will not be completed at my place of employment.
8. I agree and acknowledge that I will be compensated at an agreed upon rate for each of the transcriptions as I complete them.

Signed: __________________________  Dated:_______________________
Name: ___________________________ (printed)
Address: _________________________
                   _____________________
Appendix D

Letter of Approval from the Ethics Review Board
PROTOCOL REFERENCE # 30980

December 2, 2014

Dr. John Dadosky
REGIS COLLEGE

Mrs. Anne Jamieson
REGIS COLLEGE

Dear Dr. Dadosky and Mrs. Anne Jamieson,

Re: Your research protocol entitled, “An exploration of the ecclesial nature of the role of the catechist through the hermeneutic of full, conscious and active participation”

ETHICS APPROVAL

Original Approval Date: December 2, 2014
Expiry Date: December 1, 2015
Continuing Review Level: 1

We are writing to advise you that the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics Board (REB) has granted approval to the above-named research protocol under the REB's delegated review process. Your protocol has been approved for a period of one year and ongoing research under this protocol must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

Please ensure that you submit an Annual Renewal Form or a Study Completion Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your current ethics approval. Note that annual renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry.

If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Wakefield, Ph.D.
REB Chair

Dean Sharpe
REB Manager

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Appendix E
Thesis Proposal

An Exploration of the Ecclesial Nature of the Role of the Lay Catechist through the Hermeneutic of “Full, Conscious, Active Participation”

A D.Min. Thesis Proposal
Submitted to the D.Min. Program Committee
Toronto School of Theology
October 28, 2014

Anne Jamieson
860354100

Signature: _____________________________________
Dr. John Dadosky, Thesis Director

Signature: _____________________________________
Dr. Darren Dias, second TST Faculty Member

Signature: _____________________________________
Sally Shaw, Collaborative Learning Group Representative

Signature: _____________________________________
David Dayler, Ministry Base Group Representative
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I. Background and Context of the Applied Research Thesis

As the Director of Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton, I oversee programs for children's catechesis with particular emphasis on sacramental preparation for the sacraments of initiation (i.e. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist). I provide support for over 125 parishes in terms of recommendations of resources, program planning, and volunteer training. I am the liaison with our six Catholic school boards to ensure good collaboration between the parish, home and school in the catechesis of children. In addition, I oversee a catechetical program that serves 1,000 families with the help of 100 volunteers for children who are not in the Catholic school system. I provide consultation, workshops and retreats for Catholic teachers, catechists, and staffs of other Catholic agencies. On any given day, my ministry is to serve any one of the half million Catholics in the Diocese of Hamilton who request my assistance with catechetical issues. The mission statement of my office, as one of the Pastoral Offices of the diocese, is as follows:

Together we serve, by providing essential pastoral resources, to inform, nurture and empower our Catholic Community to witness confidently to Christ.\(^{276}\)

In my personal life, I have wondered for a long time about issues of belonging and participating in the Catholic Church. I grew up in a practising Catholic family. Faith, family, Church, pursuit of education, and Christian duty and service were the foundational values of my family. I was grounded in an understanding that I was loved and called by God. My parents reinforced the belief that, in being called, we are, in turn, responsible to love and care for others for the good of the world and the good of the Church. I have sought to live out that

responsibility as a mother, a wife, a teacher in the Catholic school system, a parish volunteer in a variety of ministries, and now in my work at the diocese.

Over the years, however, I have watched as many friends and family have left the Church outright or have slipped into an apathetic approach to Church and faith life. They seem indifferent to any gift or responsibility that their Baptism may have conferred upon them.

In terms of understanding my own responsibilities, I have wondered what it means to be married to a faith-filled Presbyterian who loves his own tradition and church. There are questions about where we worship on any given Sunday. We have also questioned what church attendance at any church might mean and how we affect one another in a congregation, and indeed in the Body of Christ, by participating or not in worship and ministry in one another’s church.

In coming to work for a diocesan office, I have reflected upon the meaning of my work in the structures of the Church. This has been especially important to me as a non-ordained, lay woman in the Catholic Church. My current participation as the Director of Catechesis would have been largely unthinkable 50 years ago. The work I do today would have been carried out by priests and religious sisters up until very recently. My role is a tangible sign of the development of the understanding of the laity made possible by the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. Central to the teaching on the laity at Vatican II were the assertions of The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church that emphasize the share of all the baptized in the ministry of Christ as priest, prophet and king. The laity form part of the “priestly community” and are called to their participation in the mission of the Church
“by their baptismal character.” The faithful are “as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread the faith by word and deed.” The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People assured the laity of its “special and indispensable role in the mission of the Church.” The laity was urged to “ardently cooperate in the spread of the Word of God, particularly by catechetical instruction” and “to take a more active part, each according to his [or her] talents and knowledge and in fidelity to the mind of the Church.”

The encouragement for laity in catechesis was restated in John Paul II’s Catechesi Tradendae, from the late 1970’s, where he reminds us that

…every association of the faithful in the Church has by definition the duty to educate in the faith. This makes more evident the role given to the laity in catechesis today. We must be grateful to the Lord for this contribution by the laity.

The reality of increasing lay participation in catechetical activity is again acknowledged in the 1982 document “Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith.” Here, the Congregation for Catholic Education recognizes that “[l]ay Catholics … who devote their lives to teaching … have become more and more vitally important in recent years.” The document points to the realities of a decrease in vocations of Religious dedicated to teaching, and to the

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278 Ibid., 11.

279 The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 1.

280 Ibid., 10.

281 Ibid., 6.

282 John Paul II, apostolic exhortation Catechesi Tradendae (1979), 70-71.

theological development in the understanding of the role of the laity. The Congregation acknowledges that this is a new role for the laity which is both “positive and enriching.”

In my current ministry as Director of Catechesis, I am affirmed by Bishop Douglas Crosby’s assurance that my work is a participation in his ministry as chief catechist. Therefore in both my personal and professional life I am mindful of the responsibility to participate and remain focused on the deep theological meaning and potential of that participation. At the same time, I am still very aware that there are many for whom participation in any sense is either difficult or unimportant.

In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI, spoke about the need for the Church to re-imagine the role of the laity, and even to consider what structural impediments may exist that are limiting the full participation of many:

[I]t is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted, with respect for vocations and for the respective roles of the consecrated and of lay people. This demands a change in mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as “collaborators” of the clergy but truly recognized as “co-responsible”, for the Church’s being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity.

Pope Francis echoes the desire for a robust sense of co-responsibility and, indeed, of the mutual dependency of all in the Church. In his recent catechesis “On Belonging to the Church” he says:

We can live this journey [of faith] not only *thanks* to other persons but *together* with other persons. “Do it yourself” does not exist in the Church; “free builders” do not

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284 Ibid., 2-3.

exist. How many times Pope Benedict described the Church as an ecclesial “we”!
How many times have we heard this?286

This co-responsibility for the Church speaks to the need for a deep appreciation of each person’s participation. As Benedict XVI points out, we are responsible not just for the action of the Church but for its very being.

One particular area of responsibility for me in the diocese is in the administration of the Catechetical Correspondence Courses. This program supports parishes in assisting families who require religious instruction for their school-aged children, primarily because their children are not enrolled in the Catholic school system. Families register either directly through their parish or with the diocesan office and are sent books, worksheets and other materials to support them in teaching their children. Every family is assigned a catechist who marks lessons, answers questions and acts as companion on the faith journey for the whole family. For over 80 years, this work was carried out in the Diocese of Hamilton by religious sisters – first by the Sisters of St. Joseph and then the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

In 2008, the SSND advised the former bishop, Bishop Anthony Tonnos, that they could no longer administer the program themselves. I was appointed by Bishop Tonnos as the Director of that program. Not only did this represent a shift in the administration of the program, it also represented a major shift in the makeup of the catechists themselves. In one year, the program moved from a majority of catechists being religious sisters from a single religious community to almost exclusively lay catechists who were scattered throughout the various parishes of the diocese. Of the four religious sisters who remained in the service of the program at the time of the transfer of administration, only two still serve today. The

program now runs thanks to the efforts of 100 lay catechists – 98 women and 2 men; some are retired teachers and principals, some parish secretaries, and some are parents whose children have been enrolled in the program. Many of these catechists are based in their own parish and use drop boxes to swap lessons with families; others serve a variety of parishes by communicating with families via Canada Post.

I support parishes by providing the initial orientation to catechists in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses and administering the ongoing training and formation of these volunteers. While my dealings with people in my ministry are often fleeting – responding to a parent’s request regarding sacramental preparation, for example, and referring them to the local parish, or advising a pastor about resources – I enjoy a much more ongoing relationship with the catechists of the Catechetical Correspondence Courses. My office has frequent phone and email contact with many of them and we offer two diocesan gatherings a year for ongoing formation.

The *General Directory for Catechesis (GDC)*\(^{287}\) names three dimensions in the task of catechist formation – the content of the faith, the savoir-faire of methodology and the being of the catechist.\(^{288}\) While there are a number of training resources that address issues of

\(^{287}\) Congregation for the Clergy. *General Directory for Catechesis.* (Vatican City, 1997). The *GDC* is the normative document of the Roman Catholic Church for all catechesis – defining the tasks and aims and strategies – as well as the broad requirements for catechist formation. It was published in 1997 as a revision of the previous Directory for Catechesis from 1972. The need for revision stemmed from the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, just 5 years earlier. The preface to the document traces its roots from Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, through to John Paul II’s *Catechesis Tradendae* and states that “the threshold of the third millennium is without doubt most providential for the orientation and promotion of catechesis.” 1.

\(^{288}\) *GDC*, 238.
content and methodology, the ‘being’ of the catechist seems to be a more nebulous concept. The GDC itself says only this:

The deepest dimension refers to the very being of the catechist, to his [or her] human and Christian dimension. Formation, above all else, must help him [or her] to mature as a person, a believer and as an apostle.

Maturing as a person and as a believer has to do with personal development. Development as apostles, however, refers to development within the Church as ones ‘who are sent’ by and for the Church.

The Guide for Catechists, published in the 1980’s by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples directed to catechists themselves, states, “It is important for the catechist candidate to recognize …the ecclesial significance of this call.” The GDC echoes the importance of the ecclesial nature of the role of the catechist. It states, “[Catechesis] is a fundamental ecclesial service … it cannot be realized in the community on a private basis or by purely personal initiative.” In considering the formation of the catechists in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses, the issues of belonging and participating in the Church – being co-responsible for the being of the Church and being the ‘ecclesial we’ – coalesce into a concern for me in terms of how I might best be able to assist these catechists in coming to a deep appreciation of their fundamental ecclesial nature.

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289 Three examples of catechist training programs widely in use in the United States are: Into the Fields, by Bill Huebsch, published by Twenty-third Publications, 2007, Catechist Toolbox by Joe Paprocki, published by Loyola Press, 2010, Echoes of Faith, published by RCL Benziger and NCCL, 2004. Although each of these programs refers to a ‘spiritual dimension’ to catechist formation, none of them refers to an ecclesial nature of the role. The spiritual development proposed in all three is entirely personal and individual.

290 GDC, 238.


292 See GDC, 59, 78, and 105.

293 Ibid., 219 (b).
II. Statement of the Research Problem

I observe many situations with lay volunteer catechists in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses that cause me to wonder what they understand about their participation in the Church as catechists. I experience these catechists as good and caring people. Families served by this catechetical program often send notes of thanks acknowledging the service of their catechist. Many catechists, however, seem focused only on the external tasks of the work. For example, some catechists become quite concerned about establishing deadlines for children to hand in lessons and setting cut-off dates for sacramental preparation. These kinds of task-oriented questions prevail even at retreat days for catechists where the day-to-day tasks are meant to be set aside in order to focus on their own spiritual development. Some catechists have difficulty self-identifying as catechists. They prefer to be called “markers” because they see their primary task as the marking of lessons. Many catechists choose not to attend diocesan workshops, formation days and retreats because they ‘only do this work because Father asked’ them; they do not see a value in gathering with catechists from other parishes or in making connections with the diocesan Office for Catechesis. While it may be true that in the busy-ness of modern life, it may be difficult for these volunteers to find time for such gatherings, these experiences do cause me to question whether catechists understand their work as a participation in anything greater than the marking of papers or the doing of a task in their own parish. Do they see their work as having a meaning beyond the surface reality of the tasks? Do they understand the importance of their participation as catechists? How do they see their work related to the work and mission of the broader Church? How effective is my work with them?
In speaking to Directors of Religious Education (DRE’s) in several American parishes, Dr. Jane Regan heard many of the same concerns. Asked to name the greatest challenges in adult formation, the DRE’s reported that one of the major problems in catechist formation was that the catechists themselves “seldom see themselves as part of a larger activity and certainly don’t see themselves within the broader context [of the Church].”\(^\text{294}\)

The feeling among formation leaders was that catechists remain focused on tasks, methods, and sequences of activities. The catechists’ focus was said to be “quite limited just to the immediate content of the session”\(^\text{295}\) without attending to deeper issues and questions.

My interactions with catechists remind me of the gospel story of the rich young man who asks Jesus, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” (Matthew 19:16). In an analogous way to this young man, many lay catechists have a task-oriented question: What must I do? At first, Jesus responds to this focus on the external activity. He tells the young man to follow the commandments. When the man asks for clarification, “Which ones?” (Matthew 19:18), Jesus patiently lists them. But when the man insists he has done these things and now wants to know the further task, Jesus provides a more difficult response. “Jesus said to him, ‘If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me’” (Matthew 19:21). Jesus moves beyond the tasks to speak to the relationship which is essential to salvation. He invites the man into relationship. He has gone beyond necessary knowledge and activity and moved into the realm of being. And it is in this invitation that Jesus is rejected.


\(^{295}\) Ibid.
Based on my experience in my role as the administrator of catechist formation, this gospel image of the invitation beyond external acts alone to something deeper is important in two ways. First, the gospel speaks to my own frustrations in catechist formation. Is it true that the catechists see only the outward activity of their work? Are they walking away from an offer to enter more deeply into an understanding of their own participation? But second, the image also serves as a challenge to me. In this gospel story, I also identify with the rich man standing before Jesus asking about what further task or activity I might plan. There is a great temptation, having observed this apparent lack of understanding on the part of lay catechists as to their true ecclesial nature, simply to teach them or tell them what they need to know. Dr. Regan cautions, however, the “task of leadership is not to generate more programs but to contribute to an environment that supports the learning of all.”

She encourages leaders “not to do more but to take a perspective.” And so, rather than planning and doing more, I intend to find a useful perspective.

The GDC is clear and emphatic regarding the fundamentally ecclesial nature of the role of catechists and suggests that formation should promote the “constant fostering of the ecclesial vocation of catechists by keeping alive in them an awareness of being sent by the Church.” In order to be able to better serve the catechists in the Diocese of Hamilton and their formation needs, it is important for me to know first what they do understand about their participation and how they see their work related to the work and mission of the broader Church.

My research question is:

296 Ibid., 187.
297 Ibid., 160.
298 GDC, 247 a.
How do lay catechists see their participation in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses as having an ecclesial nature?

I intend to explore this question with a small group of lay catechists from the Diocese of Hamilton to see what understandings emerge with the longer term goal of improving the overall catechetical experience for both the catechists and those being catechized.

III. Theoretical Framework and Assumptions Involved in the Study

Theory at Work in the Study

To speak of the ecclesial nature of the catechist is to point towards an ontological reality. Although the GDC is emphatic in the need for catechists to recognize their ecclesial nature it has little to say in terms of how one comes to recognize this. This study will look at how lay catechists see and understand their participation in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses as a way of exploring their understanding of their role. At the Second Vatican Council, the Church spoke of the ideal of lay participation:

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people” (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.299

Whereas this vision of participation was focused on liturgical participation, it has, since the Council, come to be seen as a way of describing lay participation generally. Maria Patricia Utzerath argues:

The words “full, conscious, and active participation” … are paradigmatic for the realization of authentic ecclesial subjects in an authentic Church. When applied to the

299 The Decree on the Sacred Liturgy, 14.
laity, they refer to the participation of the laity not only in the liturgy, but also in the life and mission of the Church.\(^{300}\)

As this theology of full, conscious and active participation has developed since the Council – both within liturgy and beyond – some observers worry that the emphasis is on external task and activity rather than a deeper appreciation of the meaning of participation. Pope Benedict XVI laments what he sees as a tendency to reduce the meaning participation to only the things we do. He longs for a “participation that is something more than external activity, but rather the entry of the person, of my being, into the communion of the Church and thus into communion with Christ.”\(^{301}\)

In a similar vein, Mark Searle, an American theologian active in the liturgical renewal movement in the 1970’s and 80’s, laments the focus liturgical reform had taken in the decades following the Council. He states:

In general, liturgical practise reveals a widespread failure to grasp the *theological* import of the concept of participation. …The profound spiritual meaning of liturgical participation was overshadowed by the problem of how to get everybody to join in the singing.\(^{302}\)

In order to maintain a rich sense of what participation means, the hermeneutic of full, conscious and active lay participation in this study will be explored in terms beyond the narrow confines of external activity.

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\(^{300}\) Mary Patricia Utzerath, “Full, Conscious, and Active Participation: The Laity as Ecclesial Subjects in an Ecclesiology Informed by Bernard Lonergan.” *PhD. diss.* (Marquette University, 2011), 223.


\(^{302}\) Mark Searle, “Renewing the liturgy – again: A for the Council, C for the Church,” *Commonweal* 20 (November 18, 1988), 620. (emphasis in the original)
The question of one’s participation leads naturally to the question: Participation in what?

This study will consider the contribution of Bernard Lonergan in envisioning the Church not as a static reality but as a “process of self-constitution.” Other theologians such as Joseph Komonchak and John Dadosky echo that dynamic aspect of the Church by reminding us that the Church is an “event of intersubjectivity” and a who rather than a what. Exploring an understanding of the Church as a dynamic process allows one to consider how individual members contribute to that process. Thus the ecclesial nature of the lay catechist in particular will be seen in terms of their ongoing participation in the process that is constituting and forming the Church. Komonchak says:

> What God wills to exist when he wills the Church is a human community, a community of people whose constitutive meaning and value are the common human acts of faith, hope and love; … The ontological reality of the Church consists of the common intentional acts of meaning and value of her members.

Once one considers the dynamic nature of the Church, affected by the participation of all its members, it follows that one must consider the issue of membership itself.

Membership in the Catholic Church is achieved through Baptism. The Second Vatican Council emphasizes the foundational importance of Baptism as conferring both gifts and responsibilities on the members. *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, and the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, all speak of the gifts of the laity and their responsibility to participate in the mission.

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305 Ibid., 38-39.
of the Church.\textsuperscript{306} In Baptism we are incorporated into the Church and gifted with charisms.\textsuperscript{307} Baptism is lived out, however, in the lives of millions and millions of people who may never reflect theologically on this reality. That is to say, the fact of belonging or the theological implications of belonging may differ from the feeling of belonging and the resultant behaviour of belonging. In order to address the complex issue of ‘belonging’, one must explore both psychological and sociological contributions to the understanding of belonging.

How members understand or accept the responsibilities of belonging is a complex issue that can be assisted through an exploration of citizenship theory and the concept of participatory democracy. At Vatican II, the Church spoke about the relatedness of the responsibilities of citizenship and the responsibilities of Church membership. “The lay faithful belong fully both to the People of God and civil society. They belong to the nation into which there were born … and they belong also to Christ.”\textsuperscript{308} The document emphasizes that along with making a contribution to their society, the laity are also called to bear witness to Christ and the life of the Church.\textsuperscript{309}

Citizenship theory makes important connections between belonging and participation. It looks at how people understand and choose to participate in terms of their understanding of belonging. Citizenship theory is helpful in considering the dynamics of belonging in the Church in that it brings forward three central notions of belonging. First, there is a way, a

\textsuperscript{306} Although this is a broad theme that is seen throughout the documents of Vatican II, one could look to \textit{The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church}, 33, \textit{The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity}, 4, and \textit{The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World}, 43, which state respectively that “every lay person” has gifts to participate in the mission of the Church, that “each one has received suitable talents … and personal gifts”, and that all the faithful are “called to participate in the whole life of the Church.”

\textsuperscript{307} \textit{The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church}, 11.

\textsuperscript{308} \textit{Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity}, 21.

\textsuperscript{309} Ibid.
process, or a set of criteria by which someone belongs. Second, once one belongs to the group, there are benefits to that belonging. Finally, belonging also carries responsibilities.

In his book *Citizenship: A Very Short Introduction*, Richard Bellamy describes citizenship in terms of membership and participation. Your membership has to do with your allegiance to a State, recognizing yourself as belonging and being recognized as belonging by others. Once you are a member, by your own choice and through the acceptance of others, you gain rights and have responsibilities. For Bellamy, citizenship bears a moral component in terms of the citizen’s decision to choose the common good. Citizenship, at its best, “allows us … to collaborate with our fellow citizens on the basis of equal concern and respect.” However, citizens have to feel and see their actions to be of consequence in order to encourage their participation. When citizenship studies seek to improve member participation in political systems, it moves into the field of participatory democracy and addresses the theories and issues of educating people for greater participation.

Proponents of participatory democracy, such as Daniel Schugurensky, deepen the understanding of participation as they emphasize this notion of participatory citizens who have both capacity and motivation to contribute. In his article, “Citizenship Participation and Participatory Democracy: Limits and Possibilities”, Schugurensky notes that although “many expressions of citizen participation abound sometimes citizen participation becomes an end in itself.” So governments may see and even point to a high voter turnout, for example, as

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311 Ibid., 12.

a positive sign of the health of the democracy without asking the further question: “To what extent [does it] contribute to ‘deepening democracy’?” 313 He cautions, “In some communities it is possible to observe high levels of citizen participation, but such participation does not necessarily translate in improving the quality of democracy.” 314 Participatory democracy theory suggests there can be different meanings of one’s participation in a system and cautions against overly superficial observations of participation.

The psychological and developmental aspects of belonging and participating bring yet another dimension to the discussion. James Fowler’s foundational work in religious development, along with authors such as Ruthellen Josselon, looking at attachment theory and development of responsibility, and Friedrich Schweitzer, looking at faith development in the post-modern context, will be helpful to address how and why people feel they belong and choose to participate in faith groups. In his book, *The Postmodern Life Cycle*, Schweitzer describes the challenges to the process of maturing in the post-modern world. He points to the broad movements of postmodernism that most affect religious beliefs and attitudes – namely, individualization, privatization, and pluralisation – and highlights how each of these movements pose a threat to what is sometimes called one’s sense of embeddedness. Schweitzer uses Carol Gilligan’s concept of responsibility and connectedness as a framework for working with the faith of adults in the face of these post-modern challenges. Instead of a modern concept that equates maturity with autonomy, Gilligan frames maturity as a “deepening awareness of our responsibility for ourselves and others and the environment as

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313 Ibid.

314 Ibid., 51.
we come to see how connected these are."\textsuperscript{315} This idea of connectedness is, for Schweitzer, the “center of biblical anthropology.”\textsuperscript{316} As we are made in the image of the relationship in the Trinity, we are made for relationship – or connectedness – with God and each other.

Finally, Lonergan’s thought on the constitutive function of meaning\textsuperscript{317} and the psychological analogy of the Trinity serves to deepen the understanding participation beyond external activity only. In the same way that Joseph Mudd sees Lonergan as providing a useful hermeneutic to the meaning of conscious participation in liturgy\textsuperscript{318}, one can also see Lonergan’s contribution the hermeneutic of full, conscious and active participation in the broader mission of Church. Lonergan provides important insights that allow for participation to be a rich theological concept that points beyond external activity.

Each of these areas of study will assist the exploration of the understanding of seeing one’s ecclesial nature through one’s participation. The hermeneutic of full, conscious and active participation provides a rich theological lens through which to understand that participation in the Church. The Action-In-Ministry component of this thesis will allow the voices of lay catechists to speak to their own understanding of their participation. This study then, allows one to place the reflection of catechists in current ministry in dialogue with this

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\textsuperscript{315} Friedrich Schweitzer, \textit{the Postmodern Life Cycle: Challenges for Church and Theology}. (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2004), 94.
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\textsuperscript{316} Ibid., 95.
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\textsuperscript{317} Lonergan asserts that acts of meaning have the important function of constituting our institutions such that one is more likely to change a nation, for example, by changing the way people think about it than by rewriting its constitution. \textit{Method in Theology}, 78.
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multi-faceted theoretical framework in order to come to clarify the understanding of the ecclesial nature of the role of the catechist.

Assumptions Operative in the Study

This study involves the following assumptions:

1. That lay catechists in the Diocese of Hamilton have individual and unique experiences of participation but that these experiences also share some common aspects.

2. That lay catechists can identify those experiences and explore them to find the meaning in those experiences.

3. That lay catechists need to be invited to consider the deeper ecclesial nature of their role.

4. That whereas most catechist formation programs clearly deal with the knowledge and ‘savoir-faire’ or methodology concerns of catechesis, the ‘being’ of the catechist is rarely addressed and needs clarification.

5. That full, conscious, and active participation is a rich theological description of lay participation in the Church even beyond the context of liturgy that requires further study.

IV. Ministry-in-Action Component

The Ministry-in-Action for this research is a case study of five or six lay catechists in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses. The study intends to explore the catechists’ understanding of their own participation in this ministry and how they understand their role
to be related to the broader mission and work of the Church. The study will take place over a period of nine to twelve weeks. It will include individual interviews (see Appendix E), observation notes, a reflective journaling activity (see Appendix F) and a post meeting with individual participants to feed back what I have heard them say about participation and verify my understanding of the data.

**Participant Selection**

In *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*, Tim Sensing says that one should choose “information rich cases that can provide depth to [the] data.”[^319] He advocates for maximum variation sampling in order to provide a broad range of perspectives on the issue.[^320] Keeping this in mind, participants will be chosen from among the one hundred lay volunteer catechists of the Catechetical Correspondence Courses according to the following criteria:

1. They must have been catechists for at least four years. This ensures that they have experience over time on which to draw (i.e. they are likely to be information rich) but also increases the probability that they will be comfortable in the role and confident in describing their activities and understanding.

2. They must be volunteer catechists as opposed to parish employees. We do have a small number of catechists in the program who are also parish secretaries or parish ministers. Since they are employees of particular parishes, they will not be invited to


[^320]: Ibid., 84.
participate in order to mitigate any real or perceived power imbalance between the researcher and the participants.

3. They must have attended at least one diocesan formation event in the past four years. This is to mitigate any possibility that a catechist feels they are being invited to participate in order to discipline them or out of a sense of judgement if they had never attended such an event. It also increases the chances that participants will have a certain level of comfort and trust in the process as the researcher is not a stranger to them.

4. The catechists selected will represent as wide a variety as possible in terms of ministry situation, age, and backgrounds. First, I will attempt to have one of each of the varieties of catechists (i.e. parishioner, floater, lone parish catechist, and part of a group) in order to get a spectrum of experiences. Second, I will be conscious of seeking a diversity of educational backgrounds, age, and marital status. (Beyond these factors, these catechists are a relatively homogeneous group in that they are almost all women, they have comparable socio-economic status and they are predominantly white.)

**Process of the Study**

Once participants have been selected and have agreed to participate by signing the letter of consent (see Appendix B), an invitation to the first interview will be sent (see Appendix D). In the first interview, participants will be asked to begin with factual information about how long they have been a catechist and in what setting (i.e. a single parish, a number of parishes, etc.).
Next, participants will be asked to describe their interaction as catechists with a single, typical family in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses as well as to describe themselves as catechists. The rationale for beginning with factual and descriptive questions about themselves and the tasks of their regular daily experience as catechists is to help put participants at ease in the interview setting. It will also allow for later comparison of how they describe their main tasks are and how they describe their understanding of their ministry in relation to the work of the parish. They will also be asked to identify the joys and challenges of being catechists. This beginning portion of the interview offers the participant questions that are non-threatening and allow for description of oneself, one’s activities, one’s purpose as a catechist, and one’s feelings about being a catechist. The next portion of the interview offers a series of thinking questions that target data regarding how participants see their work in connection to the work of other catechists, as well as to the parish, the diocese, and the world-wide Church.

Interviews will be tape-recorded. Participants will be identified by a pseudonym. I will take notes of any issues, reactions, body language, or responses that seem particularly significant. At the conclusion of the interview, we will review the reflection questions for the written reflection together in case the participant has any questions. Participants will be given a pre-addressed and stamped envelope in which to return the reflection. The first reflection question seeks data about how helpful or meaningful the hermeneutic of full, conscious, active participation may be to lay catechists who have had no formal instruction in this area. In the final reflection question, participants will have an opportunity to give feedback about their hopes and dreams for themselves and their fellow catechists. This data may provide insights about how catechists are now thinking about their participation and their need for
connection and how they may see their formation contributing to that. It also allows catechists to benefit directly from their participation in the study by being able to give direct feedback to the formation director.

The interviews will be scheduled no more than two per week which means that the interview period in total will take three or four weeks to complete. Participants will have two weeks in which to complete and return the written reflections. The taped interviews will be copied onto an encrypted memory stick and will be given to a transcriber who has signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix C). Transcriptions will be completed within three weeks of the interviews. By week seven or eight all transcriptions and written reflections will have been received.

Over the next two weeks, the taped interviews themselves along with the transcriptions of the interviews and the written reflections will be studied and re-read often so that the material is very well known. Significant phrases and themes that emerge will be noted. A summary of each participant’s responses, using the participant’s pseudonym, will be created that attempts to capture the over-all themes that have emerged and to note particularly significant verbatim responses.

Participants will then be asked back for a final meeting where I will share with them the summary of their responses. The questions for participants at this final meeting will be:

1. Is this an accurate and reasonable summary of your responses?
2. If not, what needs to be amended?
3. Is there anything you feel you need to add?\(^{321}\)

These meetings will not be tape-recorded but notes will be taken. Participants will be encouraged to write their own amendments directly on the summary sheets at this time in

\(^{321}\) This is the member-checking sequence suggested by Sensing, 75.
order to have a written record of the amendments. Due to the brief nature of these final meetings and the fact that transcription will not be necessary, they may be scheduled within a short time period.

In the following weeks, these summaries, along with the original interview transcripts and reflections, will be studied and compared to see what observations and conclusions can be made about participant understanding of their role as catechists. The interview questions provide several responses that speak to the participants’ understanding of the ecclesial nature of that role. The reflection responses will help provide data as to whether the hermeneutic of full, conscious, active participation is meaningful or helpful for these lay catechists as well as provide an opportunity for direct feedback on formation needs.

V. Qualitative Research Methodology Operative in the Ministry-in-Action

The issue of the meaning and understanding of participation of lay people in the Church is of broad interest and concern. It could be studied in a variety of contexts and in a variety of ways. It would be possible to take a phenomenological approach and to explore deeply the phenomenon with a group of lay persons. The issue could also be investigated using a grounded theory approach to describe factors that enhance or inhibit participation. In order to serve the needs of my ministry, however, it is most useful to consider this issue as a case study of a particular group of lay persons in the context of their ministry so that this thesis may contribute in a direct way to greater clarity for me in my formation efforts and a more meaningful understanding of how catechists currently see the ecclesial nature of their work.
The proposed methodology of this thesis is a case study of five or six lay volunteer catechists in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses in the Diocese of Hamilton. Case study is most often used when the “research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system.”\textsuperscript{322} The purpose of this study is to look at the issue of lay participation in a bounded context of catechists serving in one particular catechetical program within a single diocese. Within this bounded case, there are a variety of potential participants (i.e. catechists who are associated with a several parishes, catechists who are parishioners of the parish where they serve, catechists who work alone, and catechists who work in teams because of the size of the program in their parish). Through purposeful selection of participants representing each of these different situations, the study can provide a variety of perspectives on the issue.

As Creswell notes, a multiple case (or collective case) study can improve the trustworthiness of the findings where the researcher replicates the same procedure for each case.\textsuperscript{323} Using a scripted interview and scripted reflection activity with each participant individually allows participants to answer independently but also ensures each participant will have an opportunity to answer the same questions in the same order. Robert Stake adds that studying multiple cases “leads to better understanding and perhaps better theorizing about a still larger collection of cases.”\textsuperscript{324} As case study always involves multiple sources of data collection,\textsuperscript{325} this study will include personal interviews, the reflective homework

\textsuperscript{322} John Cresswell. \textit{Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among five Approaches}. 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (University of Nebraska: Sage Publications, 2007), 73.

\textsuperscript{323} Ibid., 74. Here, Cresswell is pointing to Robert Yin’s theory of replication.


\textsuperscript{325} Cresswell, 75.
assignment, and the participant response to the data summary. The final meeting to look at the data summary serves as both an instrument of verification of data as well as a final opportunity for participants to provide further data.

Case studies are meant to research issues that “are complex, stated, problematic relationships.”\textsuperscript{326} In this case, the issue is how catechists understand their ecclesial nature. It involves the complex issues of lay participation generally in conversation with Church’s teaching regarding the ecclesial nature of the catechist in particular. The study recognizes the apparent disconnect or lack of understanding of this fundamental nature and also proposes the hermeneutic that may assist in this understanding. As Stake says, case studies “pull attention both to ordinary experience and also to the disciplines of knowledge such as sociology, economics, ethics and literary criticisms”\textsuperscript{327} as well as ecclesiology and catechesis in this instance.

The data collected in this case study will be looked at for common themes as well as areas of discord. As Sensing observes, there are three analytical frames through which the data may be viewed:

1. Areas of overlap, themes and patterns.

While I expect some commonalities between the experiences of catechists, I am seeking the greatest variety of catechists possible within this bounded case. Lincoln and Guba suggest that this is useful when searching out

\textsuperscript{326} Stake, 124.

\textsuperscript{327} Ibid., 125.
common themes. When a pattern emerges from a small sample of a heterogeneous group, then the value of the information increases.\footnote{Sensing, 84.}

2. Areas of disagreement.

It is important to allow the data to speak for itself and not impose false patterns for the sake of tidy conclusions. Searching for the disagreement keeps the researcher from the temptation of over-generalization.\footnote{Ibid.}

3. Realities not represented in the data – the silences.\footnote{Ibid., 192. This is the source of the list of all three areas of data review.}

Often what is not said is just as important as what is said. There may be a variety of reasons for participants to omit information. Attending to issues not raised is also a way to check for researcher pre-suppositions as it calls for attention to what was expected but not articulated.

The analysis based on these frameworks will serve as the basis for the data summaries completed in anticipation of the final participant meeting. Here, the study participants themselves will make an important contribution to the analysis through their reflective confirmation of the data summaries presented. Sensing encourages this type of member-checking as yet “another opportunity to hear from your participants” and an opportunity for participants to “generate new ideas, patterns and interpretations that you missed.”\footnote{Ibid., 221.} This meeting at the end of the study period is an important contribution to the credibility of the study and the validating of results.\footnote{Ibid., 75.}
VI. Ethics Review for Research with Human Subjects

Following the acceptance of the thesis proposal, the application to the University of Toronto Ethics Review Board will be forwarded to the DMin. Director for submission. There will be careful consideration of both participant privacy and data security.

Participants will be asked to sign a letter of consent (Appendix B) that outlines the purpose of the study and the activities (i.e. the interview, written reflection and final meeting) that participants will be asked to complete. The letter will explain that privacy and confidentiality will be assured by using pseudonyms for participants and by removing personally identifying information as well any information that could identify any other person or parish mentioned.

Recordings of interviews and transcripts will be stored on two separate electronic storage devices (Kingston Data Traveller Vault Privacy USB3.0) that have encryption technology. The first will remain in a locked metal cabinet in my home office at all times. The encrypted interviews will be given to the transcriber on the second memory key. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix C) stating that she will store the memory key in a locked metal drawer when not in use and will not make or store further copies of the recordings or transcription. She will save the transcriptions onto the memory key provided by me and return it to me when all transcriptions are complete.

The post-interview reflections will be submitted to me via Canada Post in pre-paid pre-addressed envelopes. There will be no electronic copy of these reflections. The paper copies will be stored, along with the electronic storage device, in the locked metal cabinet.

Following the successful defense of the thesis, the data collected can be destroyed by erasing the memory keys and shredding the paper documents.
VII. Risks of the Study

The risks of this study are relatively low as participants are being asked to describe their own experience and understanding of being catechists. Maintaining strict confidentiality, that is, never using information that can identify the participant, his or her parish, or his or her pastor, will be important so as not to cause embarrassment or negative social repercussions for the participant having openly shared his or her opinions. In the unlikely event that an interview participant reveals a situation with their parish or the Church that has caused or is causing pain, participants will be referred to counsellors who have agreed to assist in this way. Participants will have the option not to answer any of the questions they choose not to and to withdraw at any time from the process.

There is the risk, as for all research, that I may impose my own understanding and experiences onto the study participants which could colour their responses. The purpose of the final meeting with participants is to verify my understanding of participant responses and allow for participant corrections. This process of verification and correction will mitigate the risk here.

There could also be a risk that catechists may try to respond as they believe I would like them to respond. This risk is mitigated in three important ways. First, by selecting seasoned catechists who have several years’ experience, they are more likely to be confident in their own knowledge and less likely to require approval from the researcher. Second, because of their years of service, there will already likely be a relationship of trust between myself and the participants. Third, participants are not directly responsible to me in the same way an employee is responsible to an employer; they serve the parish primarily. I cannot, for
example, fire them or have them fired. Therefore, there is no real power imbalance between researcher and participant.

VIII. Limitations of the Study

Due to the small sample size in this study, results cannot be overly generalized and may not be applicable in other catechetical ministries or in other dioceses. The findings of this study may not, for instance, speak to the experience or understanding of paid catechists who are employed by their parish.

IX. Contributions of the Study

I foresee a variety of contributions as a result of this study. First, I believe this study will inform my own ministry as director of the formation opportunities for lay catechists in the Diocese of Hamilton. Solid principles of adult education and transformative learning emphasize that adults have to see the need for the proposed education. In contrast to most pedagogy, which often prescribes the required content of learning, andragogy\textsuperscript{333} values the unique experiences of the adults and begins in that experience to identify learning needs.\textsuperscript{334} As the GDC states, catechists must receive formation that goes beyond simply communicating the content of the faith or the methodology of catechesis. Catechists must have formation in the ‘being’ of the catechist. Through this study, I will be able to identify the learning needs in this group of catechists in this area of their being and the ecclesial nature of that being through their own articulation of their experience and understanding.

\textsuperscript{333} While the word ‘pedagogy’ is often used to describe all methodology in teaching, it does relate technically to the teaching of children. ‘Andragogy’, on the other hand, is the technical term for the methodology of teaching adults.

\textsuperscript{334} Anne Walsh, \textit{On Good Soil} (Ottawa: National Office for Religious Education, CCCB: 2011), 124. The concept of beginning with one’s own experience is widely understood as a principle of adult education but is identified, for example, in this important Canadian Catholic Church resource as a “Best Practice” for catechist formation.
Second, this study may be of assistance to the other Pastoral Offices of the Diocese of Hamilton (i.e. Liturgy, Family Ministry, and Discipleship) that all offer training and formation to lay volunteers in various ministry capacities. It is my intention to share the observations and conclusion of this study with my colleagues in the Diocese of Hamilton and, indeed, with other diocesan directors in similar positions. This will be particularly the case in the Diocese of St. Catharine’s where I will begin to teach in their lay formation program for leadership in parish ministry in 2015 and in the Archdiocese of Toronto where I participate in their catechist training.

Third, I believe this study can shed light on how lay people understand themselves as ecclesial subjects by having this particular group of lay catechists consider the ecclesial nature of their role. Applying the language of “full, conscious and active participation” in this new way provides a lens through which to view the problem of the “change in mentality” required regarding lay responsibility in the Church to which Pope Benedict XVI refers. The implication of Lonergan’s concept of the constitutive function of meaning is that a lack of attention to and reflection on the catechist’s role can lead to the inadequate or inauthentic constituting of the Church. The case study proposed here may be of assistance to others who seek to study the meaning of lay participation in the Church in other contexts and with diverse populations. I look forward to publishing or sharing the results of this study at conferences so that this research can contribute to the discussion already in progress about the value of and issues with the hermeneutic of ‘full, conscious, and active participation’ as a description of lay participation in the Church generally.

Finally, I believe this study will be of benefit to the research participants themselves. As they are encouraged to become more attentive in reflecting on and exploring the meaning
of their own participation, it allows them to begin the process of evaluating their own decisions and actions. It also allows people to feel more empowered. As Clemens Sedmak affirms, “It is wonderful to have mindful people who see the world with ever new eyes.”

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X. Bibliography


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Appendix A: Letter of Support from Bishop Douglas Crosby, Bishop of Hamilton

July 8, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Anne Jamieson

Anne Jamieson, a member of the faithful in the Diocese of Hamilton and a student at the University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto, is also an employee of the Diocese of Hamilton — the Director of Catechesis. She is currently working on her Doctor of Ministry degree through the Toronto School of Theology. Anne intends to study the catechists’ understand of the meaning and implications of their role in terms of both the local and universal Church. She intends to explore the expression from the Second Vatican Council — “full, conscious, and active participation” — as a way of understanding the role of the lay catechist.

By this letter, I wish to confirm that Anne Jamieson has my support and permission to carry out this study in the Diocese of Hamilton. She will interview a variety of lay catechists involved in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses to ask them about the tasks they perform in catechesis and to have them reflect on their own understanding of how their work relates to the work of other catechists in the Diocese of Hamilton, to the work of their parish, the Diocese of Hamilton, and the mission of the Church universal. These interviews will be conducted with catechists who have given their consent.

I believe that the work being done through this study will benefit the Diocese of Hamilton, specifically our Pastoral Offices (which includes the Office of Catechesis). If I can be of further assistance, please contact me through the coordinates below.

Yours truly,

*Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton

(ed)
Appendix B - Letter of Consent for Participants (Note: This letter is to be printed on TST Letterhead as required by the Ethics Review Board.)

November 15th, 2014

Dear

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research study. I am interested in studying how lay catechists in the Diocese of Hamilton understand their participation as catechists in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses. Although I hope this study will be valuable to my role as Director of Catechesis in the Diocese of Hamilton, I am conducting this study in my capacity as a Doctor of Ministry student at the University of Toronto. I have his Excellency Bishop Crosby’s support in conducting this study.

Your participation in my study would consist of three components:
1. First, we would have an interview of no more than one hour. I am looking for your own experience as a catechist in this ministry. There is no prior knowledge or education you would need to be able to participate. You have been chosen for this study because you have been a catechist for several years now and have lots of experience that you could share. You may choose at any time to skip a question for any reason. The interview will be voice recorded. I will ask a transcriber to create a written transcription of our conversation so that I have a clear record of our conversation. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement so that she cannot make copies of our conversation and she can never tell anyone about it. She will not know your real name.

2. Following the interview, I will ask you to answer two questions in a one-page written reflection that will be mailed back to me within two weeks of our interview.

3. Two to three weeks later, I would ask you to return for one final meeting of not more than 30 minutes. I will have prepared a written summary of what I have heard you say so far and I’ll ask you to verify that the summary is correct and describes accurately what you wanted to say. You will be able to correct the summary if there are errors or omissions.

The entire process should take four to eight weeks beginning this winter. We can schedule interview times and places that are convenient to you. You will not be offered any compensation for your participation in this study.

Your privacy and confidentiality are of the utmost concern for me. Your real name will not be used. I will refer to you by a pseudonym. I won’t identify your parish or your location or anyone else you might mention. Any notes I may take, in writing or electronically, any voice recordings from our interviews, and any written responses you provide will be stored safely in a locked cabinet in my home. The electronic data will be stored on an encrypted memory key so that it cannot be accessed by others. All these records, papers, and recordings will be destroyed following the publication of the thesis.
At any time during the process, if you feel you cannot continue or do not choose to continue to participate, you are free to withdraw. We would negotiate upon your withdrawal what the most appropriate action was for any data that had been collected to that point.

I hope this study will benefit catechists and others who work with catechists in the Catholic Church. I intend to share this research after the publication of the thesis at conferences and with other dioceses. You will be able to have a copy of the completed thesis, after its publication, if you so choose.

By signing this consent, you agree to these conditions of participation in the study.

Please feel free to contact me by phone or in writing if you have any questions or concerns.

Anne Jamieson   cell: 289-439-3784   email: ajamieson@utoronto.ca

You may also contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273 if you have any questions about your rights as participants in this study.

I ______________________________ consent to participate in Anne Jamieson’s research study to be conducted over several weeks in the fall and winter of 2014/2015. By signing this consent I agree to the conditions of participation as set out in this letter of November 15th, 2014.

Signed: _______________________________ Dated: _______________________________

Please return this letter in full. You will receive a copy of the letter for your records.
Appendix C – Confidentiality Agreement for the Transcriber

November 15, 2014

I ______________________ agree to provide a written transcription in Word document format of each of five or six recorded interviews of approximately one hour in duration each to Anne Jamieson according to the following criteria:

9. I agree and promise to accept the recorded interviews on a memory stick that will remain in a locked metal drawer in my home when not in use.
10. I agree and promise never to make any other copy of the recorded interviews for any reason and not to transfer the recordings onto any other device for any purpose.
11. I agree and promise never to disclose any of the information shared in these interviews with anyone else.
12. I agree and promise never to attempt to find the identity of the persons who have been recorded.
13. I agree and promise to create a Word document transcription for each interview and to store that document only on the memory stick provided to me. I will never make a further copy of that transcription for any reason.
14. I agree and promise to complete the transcriptions in a timely manner not to exceed three weeks from the time I have received the recording.
15. I agree and promise that this is work on my own time and will not be completed at my place of employment.
16. I agree and acknowledge that I will be compensated at an agreed upon rate for each of the transcriptions as I complete them.

Signed: ____________________________  Dated:_______________________
Name: ____________________________ (printed)
Address: __________________________
__________________________________
__________________________________
Appendix D – Welcome Note prior to the First Interview

Date: _________________

Dear __________________,

Thank you for agreeing to be part of my research study. Again, I am interested in your experience as a lay catechist in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses. You do not need to prepare any material for our interview.

Our interview will take place on ___________________(date) at _____________(time) at ___________________(location).

I look forward to our discussion!

If you need to contact me at any time, please use my email ajamieson@utoronto.ca.

Sincerely,

Anne Jamieson
Appendix E – Interview Questionnaire

Opening Dialogue:

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in my study. Just to review, I am recording our interview today. Do you consent to this recording? Do you have any questions regarding the recording? I may also take written notes as we speak just to remind me of particularly meaningful or important statements. Do you have any questions about that? Remember, you are not required to answer any question you don’t want to. Please let me know if you’d like to move on. Let’s begin.

Question 1: How long have you been a catechist in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses (CCC)? Are you a catechist in your own parish? If so, do you work alone or in a team? If not, are you a floater catechist? How many parishes do you typically serve?

Question 2: Think of a typical family and child in the CCC. Describe your work with them over the course of a year.

Question 3: What is the purpose of your work in the CCC?

Question 4: Describe the joys and challenges of being a catechist in the CCC.

Question 5: The best you can, complete the following statement: When I am being a catechist in the CCC, I am ______________________________.

The next series of questions has to do with how you see yourself connected to others.

Question 6: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of the parish?

Question 7: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of other catechists?

Question 8: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of the diocese?

Question 9: As a catechist in the CCC, how do you see your work connected to the work of the world-wide Church?

Closing Dialogue:
Thank you very much for your time today. I’m going to give you the two questions for the written reflection now. I’d like to read them with you and you can ask me any questions you have about completing this reflection.
(Read the instructions and the two reflection questions aloud.)
Please return your reflection to me in this pre-addressed pre-stamped envelope within two weeks. Do you have any questions?
Appendix F – Post-Interview Reflection Questions:

Please write a short reflection for both of these questions. You may respond on this page or attach your responses on a separate page. Your answers should not be more than one page for each question. You may hand write or type your response, as you prefer. Once you’re done, please mail it back to me in the pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope provided. I will be in touch after I receive it in order to plan our final meeting. Again, many thanks for taking the time to respond.

Reflection Question 1:

At the Second Vatican Council, our Church called lay people to “full, conscious and active participation.” These words were used to describe our participation in liturgy, that is, the Mass. Some authors since then have suggested that these words “full, conscious and active” could describe the participation of lay people in the Church outside of the context of Mass.

How do you respond to these words as a description of your own participation in the Church in terms of your work in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses?
Reflection Question 2:

*Now that you have spent time thinking about your participation in the Catechetical Correspondence Courses, what are your hopes going forward for you and/or your fellow catechists?*