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**SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AS A PLATFORM FOR
CONTINUOUS CATECHESIS IN AFRICA --
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES: CASE STUDY OF
OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE, SOUTH B**

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Pastoral Ministry

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DEDICATION

With great love and respect, I dedicate this work to my late parents; Benedict Chimenge and Elia Mwila, who brought me on earth and introduced me into the Catholic faith.

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and it has not been submitted to Tangaza or any other institute for educational award. I have acknowledged all other information that I got from other sources.

Signed:

Name of the Student:

.....

Date:.....

This thesis has been submitted for examination with the approval of the college moderator.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Acts	Acts of the Apostles
AG	Ad Gentes
AMECEA	Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa
ATR	African Traditional Religion
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCL	Code of Canon Law
Cor	Letter to the Corinthians
DV	Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. Dei Verbum
EG	Evangelii Gaudium
EN	Apostolic Exhortation “Evangelii Nuntiandi”
Eph	Letter to the Ephesians
Ex	Book of Exodus
Gal	Letter to the Galatians
Gn	Book of Genesis
GS	Gaudium et Spes
ICC	International Council of Catechesis
Jn	Gospel according John
LG	Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Lumen Gentium
Lk	Gospel according Luke
LS	“Laudato Si” on care for the Earth
Mk	Gospel according Mark

MPM	Master's degree in Pastoral Ministry
Mt	Gospel according Matthew
OLQP	Our Lady Queen of Peace
RCIA	Roman Catholic Initiation for Adults
Rom	Letter to the Romans
SCC	Small Christian Communities

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

From the teaching of the Catholic Church we learn that God created us in love so that we may know Him, love Him and come to live with Him eternally (cf. CCC 1). This means that our first vocation as human beings is the search for the living God. It is this search which leads us to the knowledge and love of God and points us to our final destiny, which is the Heavenly Kingdom. St Augustine stated it very well when he said that our hearts are restless until they rest in God. Meaning that, in the hearts of human beings there is a continuous searching for God, continuous longing for God's love and continuous yearning for being with God eternally.

The Church is the mother that helps her children to come to the full knowledge of God, to develop a true love for God and directs her children on the way back to God. Faith formation begins at birth and ends at death, thus, catechesis is a continuous process as long as one lives. The purpose of catechesis is to bring life to faith and bring faith to life so that the human being may echo in his or her life the words of St Paul which says, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith" (Gal. 2:20-21). Meaning that, Jesus Christ the son of the living God is the centre and focus of catechesis.

Faith formation is the main mission of the Church, as Pope Paul VI puts it, "the Church exists in order to evangelize, that is to say in order to preach and teach, to be the

channel of the gifts of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the mass, which is the memorial of his death and glorious resurrection" (EN, 11). For this reason, the Church strives to bring people to faith in the love of God and to faith in Jesus Christ as their personal savior. The Church also strives to accompany people in their journey of faith so that their faith may grow to maturity and that people may come to the full awareness of the purpose of their life according to the will of God. Therefore, whenever the Church finds that one method of evangelizing is not as effective as expected, she finds another method to complement the old one.

This thesis endeavors to analyze Small Christian Communities as a platform for continuous catechesis in Eastern Africa. The AMECEA region consists of nine member countries namely: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. According to Healey, the region has about 180, 000 Small Christian Communities.¹ The thesis looks at some essential elements that are found in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) which can foster the ongoing formation of faith. It also looks at some challenges found in SCCs that can be hindrances to continuous formation of faith.

In the first chapter, the researcher presents the background of the study and the problem statement. He also presents the research objectives, research questions and the significant of the study. In the collection of data and the writing of this thesis, the researcher used the pastoral cycle methodology which involves four steps namely; insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and action.

¹ J. HEALEY., *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa*: EBook [Accessed on 08/12/2015]

1.1 Background of the Study

O'Halloran defines Small Christian Community (SCC) as “ a group whose members believe in, and committed to Christ and strive to share all aspects of their lives, such as faith commitment, worship, ideas, intuitions, friendship, material possessions and good works (the sharing is holistic; spiritual, intellectual, intuitive, emotional, and practical).”² SCC is a new way of building up a family of God in Africa.

For his Master's Degree in Pastoral Ministry, the researcher did his practicum at Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP) Parish in South B. Our Lady Queen of Peace parish is a Catholic Church in the central deanery of the Archdiocese of Nairobi in Kenya. The parish is run by the Missionaries of Africa and is found just 150 meters from South B shopping centre. According to Fr. Martin Onyango (the parish priest of OLQP), the parish was founded by the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1968. OLQP is an urban parish; however, the majority of Christians come from Mukuru Kayaba slums.

Vatican II states, “the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well” (Gaudium et Spes, 1). The researcher has done his practicum for his Master's Degree in Pastoral Ministry at Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP) in South B. The insertion period had been a time of being with people in their joy and grief and to participate in their hope and anguish. During his practicum, the researcher managed to visit 20 SCCs; some once, others twice, but in the estates he took St Paul SCC and St Annuarite SCC while in the slums, he took St Luke and Mlango wa

² J. O'HALLORAN, *Small Christian Communities: A Pastoral Companion*, 44.

Mbingu SCC as places of his concentration. Thus, he visited these four SCCs frequently. He had seminars, recollections and visitation of the sick and prisoners with them. He had been with them in times of sorrow like funerals and in times of joy like wedding celebrations of their members. Concerning the prayer meetings, the SCCs which are found in Mukuru Kayaba slums meet in one place built for them by the parish and they use Swahili language in the meetings. While those found in the estates do have a rotation of their prayer meetings, so that each member of the SCC has an opportunity to host the meeting.

Our Lady Queen of Peace has a big number of adult catechumens, of whom the majority are those converting to the Catholic Church from other Christian denominations, few of them are those converting from Islam and some are those who have left African Traditional Religion and are seeking baptism in the Catholic Church. In the parish the researcher was involved in the teaching of adult catechumens. Therefore, his experience in the teaching of adult catechumens and that of his involvement in Small Christian Communities forms the basis of his research.

The researcher is a fourth year student of theology at Tangaza University College, who came to Kenya in 2012. The researcher is a Zambia with an experience of how SCCs work in Zambia. Furthermore; he has lived in Malawi for one year and two years in Tanzania in which he was participating in SCCs. Moreover, in his first year theology, the researcher was doing pastoral ministry in Mlango wa Mbingu SCC and in the second year, he was assigned to St Luke SCC. Thus, the researcher is in a good position of analyzing the contribution of the SCCs to faith formation in adults.

1.2 Problem Statement

Catechesis is the formation of faith or the long life journey of giving birth to faith and bringing that faith to maturity. According to Alathara, “the purpose of catechesis is to bring life to faith and faith to life for both the individual and the community.”³ The catechesis of the Apostles is one example of giving life to faith and faith to life. As Alathara puts it, the primary concern of the church in the apostolic period was propagation of faith and missionary activities. It was a time of proclamation of the Risen Lord (Christ). This can be seen in the preaching of St Peter, other Apostles and deacons (Cf. Act 18:25; Lk 1:4; Rom 2:18). In Act 2, we hear that when St Peter preached after Pentecost, his speech touched the hearts of many, such that many people converted and about three thousand people were added to their number.

Catechesis is a process of faith formation that touches one’s heart and brings about a complete positive change in one’s life. As Alathara puts it, “the Church documents teach that catechesis is for faith formation and it should lead the faithful to maturity in faith. Catechesis must be for formation rather than mere information.”⁴ However, the catechetical instructions that are given in class to those following these instructions, in the present time have proven themselves to be less suitable to be called catechesis: they are more of instruments of Christian information and not faith formation.

Many catechumens receive information about Christianity and the Catholic faith, but this faith does not sink into their hearts and continue maturing. That is why we have two major problems in the church in Africa, namely the Eucharistic Famine and

³ S. ALANTHARA, *Introduction to Catechetics*, 2.

⁴ S. ALANTHARA, *Introduction to Catechetics*, 7.

witchcraft accusations. These two problems really made the researcher to ask himself the question like: does initial catechesis really help people to be rooted in Christ?

Eucharist Famine: this is the first indication that the faith of many Christians is underdeveloped, thus a need for the good platform for the continuous formation of faith. Vatican II describes the Eucharist as “the source and summit of the whole Christian life.” (LG.11). Meaning that the Eucharist is the energy on the Christian journey at the same time it points to the heavenly banquet. The Eucharistic Famine can be defined as a situation in which many people are longing for the Eucharist but they have no opportunities to get it due to circumstances surrounding them. In many parts of Africa people are experiencing the Eucharist Famine due to the state of life in which they are living which is contrary to the teaching of the Church. As Cleary puts it, “in many places of African and Madagascar, large numbers of baptized are not able to receive communion because of their marital situation.”⁵

During his practicum for his Master’s in Pastoral Ministry, the researcher encountered one of the baptized Christians of OLQP who expressed her longing for receiving Holy Communion, but since she is the second wife in the polygamous marriage she said “I feel more human to be married as a second wife than remaining single, thus I have decided to remain in a polygamous marriage even if I don’t receive Communion.”⁶ the question may be, “has the catechesis this woman got before baptism helped her to put on Christ and become a new creation.” If the answer is no, the second question might be “after baptism, has there been a continuation of catechesis to help people of this kind to

⁵ M. CLEARY, *Church as Family. Dialogue between African Culture and the Church*, 948

⁶ J. NJENGA, “researcher’s Dossier”

mature in faith, remain in love with Christ and taking the Holy Eucharist as the strength of the weak?”

Witchcraft accusations: this is another indication of the faith that has not yet matured, for it contradicts the wish of Jesus Christ that of unity. In His priestly prayer, Jesus prayed for the unity of His followers saying “Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.” (Jn 17:11). But the belief in witchcraft is a divisive element which is found even in the baptized Christians. Taking the example of Zambia, the most divisive thing in both the society and the Church is witchcraft. In Zambia the belief in witchcraft is a wide spread belief which brings divisions in the families and bring about hatred among the neighbours, in the Church and in the entire society. On 24th October 2014, Zambia celebrated the 50th anniversary of its independence. During this celebration, Fr. Bernard Makadani Zulu, the Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Zambia, spoke of “the spread of witchcraft and Satanism as one of the future challenges the Church has to face.”⁷ In addition to that, Fr. Bernhard in his book entitled “*Unseen World*” explained how his parish got divided due to witchcraft accusation and how some Christians wanted to beat him up and destroy his properties because they thought that he was siding with the person accused of witchcraft.⁸ Witchcraft is not the issue only for one part of Africa but for the entire continent. During his home visitation of families in St Luke SCC of OLQP here in Nairobi, the researcher had a conversation with a Christian Catholic women by the name of Angela Maina aged

⁷ B. M. ZULU, *Post Newspaper*, 7.

⁸ Cf. B. UDELHOVEN, *Unseen World: Dealing with Spirits*, 263-264.

54, who confessed that for her she uses holy water to protect herself and her family against witchcraft.

Witchcraft is a phenomenon in African societies which contradict the unity that Jesus prayed for. However, it has to be understood that not all people who are accused of witchcraft are witches, no. Some people are accused of witchcraft simply because others envy them due to their success in life. Due to this, the conclusion may be that both witchcraft activities and false accusations of witchcraft come about due to jealous, envy, hatred, selfishness etc, which are sources of divisions. Now the question is “if the catechesis people have received has made the Good News of Christ touch their hearts and bring about a complete positive change in their lives, how come that people still turn to witchcraft activities due to hatred and selfish motives? Or how come some people falsely accuse others of witchcraft just because of envy and jealousy?

Since African societies are communitarian in nature, Small Christian Communities can be the best platform of forming the faith and bringing it to maturity. This is because Small Christian Communities have the major elements of faith formation, namely: the Word of God, communal prayer life, community life and communal service, which are also signs of God’s presence among his people and pillars of unity in the church, and can counteract jealous, envy, hatred and selfishness and bring about real love of God and love of neighbor.

1.3 Objective of the Study:

1.3.1 General Objective;

To find out the contribution of Small Christian Communities to faith formation.

1.3.2 The Specific Objectives;

1. To analyze the contributions of the sharing on the Word of God to the formation of faith.
2. To evaluate the importance of communal prayer life to catechesis.
3. To find out the impact of community life on the formation of a Christian way of life.
4. To discover the gifts of communal service in the formation of faith.
5. To bring to light the hindrances of faith formation in Small Christian Communities.

1.4 Research Questions

Below are some of the questions that guided the researcher in carrying out his research:

- a) What are the contributions of sharing on the Word of God to the formation of faith?
- b) What is the importance of communal prayer life to catechesis?
- c) What is the impact of community life to the formation of a Christian way of life?
- d) What are the gifts of communal service to the formation of faith?
- e) What could be the hindrances of faith formation in Small Christian Communities?

- f) What pastoral recommendations can be made so as to make SCCs an effective platform of catechesis?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research paper will be important in the following ways:

- ✓ It will expose the hidden values of faith that are found in SCCs.
- ✓ It will help the pastoral ministers to see the importance of SCCs in faith formation.
- ✓ It will bring out the challenges faced by both ministers and the members of SCCs.
- ✓ It will give motivation to those giving catechesis instructions to put more emphasis on the importance of the SCCs in faith formation.
- ✓ It will help the researcher to develop a broader understanding of the essential elements of faith formation that are found in SCCs, hence making the researcher a true pastor, whose major concern is to bring people closer to Christ.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research will focus on the role that Small Christian Communities play in the formation of faith. The researcher will try to discover different essential elements in Small Christian Communities that bring life to faith and faith to life. The research will try to show how SCCs can be the best platform for continuous faith formation. This research will focus on the Christians of QLQP parish in South B. the researcher chose this place as a case of study because he knows the area very well and he can easily interact with the people and get the required information without much problem. However, the researcher will not limit himself only to OLQP parish or to Kenya, for he will be using some

examples from the countries of AMECEA region like Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania where he has lived.

1.7 Research Methodology

In this thesis, the researcher used the “See, Judge and Act” method. It is on this method that the pastoral cycle format is built. The pastoral cycle method is very important in the sense that it helps the researcher to have an experience of the life of the people he is ministering to. The method also enables the researcher to see the situation from the people’s perspective. This method does not take place on one day, it is a long journey in which the researcher travels with the people and become part of them. The pastoral cycle method is made up of four steps which are: insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and action.⁹

Insertion: this is the first step of the pastoral cycle; it is a moment of initiating oneself into the community where one intends to carry out the research. In the process of insertion, one establishes contact, creates a rapport, and makes himself one with the community; he shares in the life experience of the people and starts dreaming the dreams of the community. Insertion also is the process that enables the researcher to familiarize oneself to the religious, political, social, historical, economical and cultural background of the community. These in turn make the researcher to discover the problem, its root causes and the possible solutions.¹⁰

⁹ Cf. C. BODEWES, *Parish Transformation in Urban Slums* 15.

¹⁰ Cf. F. WISJSEN- P. HENRIOT, *the Pastoral Cycle Revised: A critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, 251- 253.

Social Analysis: this is the second step in pastoral cycle. The aim of this step is to analyze the problem which the researcher identified during insertion. It is a critical examination of the experience of insertion so as to establish the connections between the causes and the effects of the problem. Social analysis helps the researcher to create a link between the causes and effects of the issue which in turn helps the community to understand the problem they are facing.¹¹

Theological Reflection: this is the third level in pastoral cycle. At this level the researcher reflects on his insertion experience in the light of faith. Therefore, theological reflection requires experience and faith resources which include Holy Scripture, culture, tradition, theology and the Social Teaching of the Church. It also requires making of decisions that lead to action.¹²

Action: this is the last level of pastoral cycle. After theological reflection what follows is acting upon what one has reflected on. Action refers to a short or long term alternative solutions given as a response to the issue/problem at hand. The last step therefore, involves planning, implementation of plans and continuous evaluations.

In short, the main purpose of the pastoral cycle is to help the researcher insert oneself in the community. It allows one to feel and experience with the community, so that one can see reality from peoples' perspectives. In this method, faith plays a major role in making the researcher see the hand of God in his experiences. The aim of pastoral

¹¹ Cf. F. WISJSEN- P. HENRIOT, *The Pastoral Cycle Revised: A critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, 251- 253.

¹² Cf. F. WISJSEN- P. HENRIOT, *The Pastoral Cycle Revised: A critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, 251- 253.

cycle, therefore, is to realize the desired change and transformation for the situation of the community in question.¹³

¹³ Cf. F. WISJSEN- P. HENRIOT, *The Pastoral Cycle Revised: A critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, 251- 253.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses and discusses literature related to catechesis and Small Christian Communities. It presents different dimensions of Catechesis, connects RCIA and the Formation of Faith and shows how conversion is the heart of RCIA. The chapter presents also the goals of adult catechesis; it shows the relationship between the Small Christian Communities and the ongoing formation in the faith. Finally, the chapter tries to relate the image of the Church in Africa as a Family of God to Small Christian Communities.

2.1 Different Dimensions of Catechesis

2.1.1 Catechesis: The Service of the Word- Proclamation of Christ

As Alberich and Vallabaraaj puts it, “during the last few decades, a remarkable change has taken place regarding the concept of revelation and the Word of God.”¹⁴ There has been a shift from a predominantly intellectual vision of revelation to a more existential personal and Christological concept that is open to history. It is in the person of Christ that we come to understand the wisdom and goodness of God, since in the plan of revelation, Christ does not represent a word but the Word par excellence of God.”¹⁵ It is for this reason that the Conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* says, “it pleased God, in His

¹⁴ E. ALBERICH- J. VALLABARAJ, *Communicating a Faith that transforms*, 80.

¹⁵ E. ALBERICH- J. VALLABARAJ, *Communicating a Faith that transforms*, 81.

goodness and wisdom, to reveal Himself and to make known the mystery of His will (cf. Eph. 1:9). His will was that men should have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit, and thus become sharers in the divine nature (cf. Eph. 2: 18; 2 Pet. 1:4)” (DV. 11). This clearly shows that our faith in God originates in the person of Christ; it is centered on Christ, it obtains its meaning from the person of Christ and its focal point is Christ Jesus. Thus, catechesis is the proclamation of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God.

2.1.2 Catechesis as an Invitation to Personal Communion with God through Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ being fully human and fully divine brings about the bridge between God and humanity, between the Creator and the created beings. It is through Christ Jesus that God is presented to humanity and humanity is presented to God. As the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern world puts it, “Jesus is the supreme revelation of God to humans and of humans to humans” (GS. 22).

The Word of God made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ brings to culmination the personal dimension of revelation. In Jesus Christ, the Word of God becomes concretely lived in the human person, in space and time, thus, making it possible for people to encounter and be in communion with God. Using the words of Alberich and Vallabharaj, “the encounter with Jesus Christ becomes the sign or Sacrament par excellence of human being’s encounter with God.”¹⁶

¹⁶ E. ALBERICH- J. VALLABARAJ, *Communicating a Faith that transforms*, 83.

Jesus of Nazareth is the essence of catechesis; He is at the heart of catechesis. Therefore, the purpose of catechesis is to be an invitation for encountering and being in communion with God through the person of Jesus Christ. Catechesis is more than a mere communication of systems of truths or events, that is why Alberich and Vallabaraj said, “The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy with Jesus Christ.”¹⁷

2.1.3 Catechesis as an Illumination and Interpretation of Life

Another fundamental aspect of the Word of God is its anthropological significance, in as much as the Word is addressed to humanity, becomes the message of salvation and of liberation. The Word of God is called the Gospel or the Good News for it brings about meaning to human life. As Alberich puts it, “The Word of God has the power of salvation and of liberation.”¹⁸ In this way, the life interpreted in the light of the Word of God becomes the life full of meaning, for it makes one rich in faith, hope and charity. It is very important to acknowledge that there is an intense relationship between the word and the facts. That is why Dei Verbum says “the words, for their part, proclaim the work; and brings to light the mystery they contain” (DV. 2)

2.1.4 Catechesis as a Formation of Faith

The first thing which comes into the mind of people when they hear the word catechesis is the teaching about the catholic doctrines, the teaching of the Church, which include the beliefs, the sacraments, the commandments and the prayers of the Church that

¹⁷ E. ALBERICH- J. VALLABARAJ, *Communicating a Faith that transforms*, 83.

¹⁸ E. ALBERICH- J. VALLABARAJ, *Communicating a Faith that transforms*, 83.

are memorized. However, the true meaning of catechesis goes beyond knowing the doctrine, beliefs, commandment sacraments and the prayers of the Church. The aim of catechesis is bringing faith to maturity or bringing about transformation in the life of a person to the extent that one lives like Christ, thinks like Christ and trust and depends fully in God as Christ did. Thus catechesis is a process in which one is molded in the image of Christ. As the song goes, “Abba, Abba, Father, you are the potter, we are the clay the work of your hand. Mold us, mold us and fashion us into the image of Jesus your son.”¹⁹ Therefore, catechesis is a way or a process in which God in His infinity love molds people into the image of His beloved son Jesus Christ.

As Alathara puts it, “the purpose of catechesis is intended to make the human person’s faith becoming alive, conscious and active through the light of instruction.”²⁰ Meaning that catechesis is not only about acquiring knowledge about the church doctrines, but about knowing Christ as the personal savior and conforming to His own image, for he is the image of the invisible God. As Jesus said, “I am the Way, I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me” (Jn 14:6). Therefore, catechesis helps people to enter into the mind and life of Christ so that they can journey with him towards the full knowledge of the creator. When people are open for change, this full knowledge of the Creator brings about transformation which makes people acquire new life. The end of catechesis is not the acquisition of knowledge but the transformation of life which manifests the reign of God here on earth. When the faith is fully matured it exhibits itself in the way one lives. That is why Alathara said, “The

¹⁹ OLQP CATHOLIC PARISH, *Sing and praise*, 84.

²⁰ J. ALATHARA , *introduction to Catechesis*, 55.

purpose of catechesis is to give life to faith and faith to life.”²¹ That is why for St Paul, “only faith working through love” (Gal 5:6), is the true faith. In line with St Paul, St James said, “faith without good deeds (action) is dead” (cf. James 2:14-17). Which means that catechesis brings about the growth in faith which in turn brings about the transformation of human life.

Catechesis is a lifelong process which entails the continuous growth in one’s spiritual life until one comes to be one with Christ. That’s why Alathara said, “Spiritual growth ends at the moment when all reach unity in faith and knowledge of the Son of God and form the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ Himself.”²² Formation for Christian life entails transformation. That’s why St Paul said to the Romans, “do not model your behavior on the contemporary world, but let the renewing of your minds transform you, so that you may discern for yourselves what is the will of God-what is good and acceptable and mature”(Rm 12:2). A genuine catechesis calls for the transformation of the entire human person, and every human person has the potential for transformation. That is why Alathara adds that, “faith involves a change of life, a ‘metanoia’, that is a profound transformation of mind and heart; which causes the believer to live that conversion.”²³ In short, catechesis is the formation of faith that brings about change which manifests itself in all levels of Christian way of life.

²¹ J. ALATHARA , *introduction to Catechesis*, 55.

²² J. ALATHARA , *introduction to Catechesis*, 57.

²³ J. ALATHARA , *introduction to Catechesis*, 57-58.

2.2 Adult Catechesis and the Formation of Faith

Adults are the focal point of catechesis; this is because most of the adults are capable of responding freely and with an informed faith to the unconditional love of God. Because of their experiences of success and failures, they are able to question the truth and meaning of life, hence, capable of building their faith on the strong foundation. Adult catechesis as a formation of faith needs to be given to people at various stages in the development of their faith. This is because, there are adult Catholics who are practicing their faith and desire to deepen it. There are those who have been baptized but since their faith was not built on the strong foundation they no longer practice their faith, hence, they need to be renewed through an enthusiastic preaching of the word. Moreover, there are still other adults who are not baptized but they desire to be incorporated into the catechumenate, they can go through the stages of Christian initiation and be incorporated into the life of the Church.

As it helps to “bring adults to completeness and full maturity in their knowledge of the Christian faith” (ICC 46), catechesis is necessary for all adults. According to ICC, adults in the Church, that is, all Christians- men and women, lay people, priests and religious – are people who have a right and an obligation to be catechized, just like everyone” ((ICC 47).

The new moment for SCCs in AMECEA religion must be considered in the context of a new and profound catechesis. In the modern world, there is a great need for a well-grounded catechesis based on witness of life which to a great extent is offered in the SCCs. As Christopher Cieslikiewicz puts it, “lack of such formation has been seen as

one of the principal reasons for the fragility of people's faith and why they choose to leave the Catholic Church for other Christian denominations. Lack of ongoing formation has also caused many to revert to ATR in search of answers for healing, witchcraft, and misfortune."²⁴

2.2.1 Conversion as the Heart of RCIA

For Powel and Sinwell, "what is at the heart of RCIA is conversion"²⁵ this means the turning around one's life; metanoia, changing one's heart. The best example of conversion (metanoia) which is required in RCIA is that of the prodigal son (lost son) who stayed with his father but never found meaning in that life with the family. He decided to go and live in freedom where he could do whatever he wanted. But when he suffered terribly where he was, the Bible says "then he came to his senses and say, how many of my father's hired men have all the food they want and more, here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father. So he left the place and went back to his father" (Lk 15:17-20). This is metanoia; the genuine turning of one's heart and the changing of one's total life towards God the Creator. It is in this line that the Holy father, Pope John Paul II said, "Entrance into the Kingdom of God demands a change of mentality (metanoia) and behavior and a life of witness in word and deed, a life nourished in the Church by the reception of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, the sacrament of salvation" (Ecclesia in Africa 87).

²⁴ J. HEALEY-HINTON, J., *Small Christian Communities Today, Capturing the New Moment*,

²⁵ K. H. Powell -J. P. Sinwell, *breaking open The Word of God*, 15.

It is in this concept of conversion or metanoia that the answer to the questions asked in the problem statement of this thesis is found. Why is it that in Zambia and other African countries some Christians are involved in witchcraft and some accuse their fellow Christians falsely of witchcraft just because of Jealousy and envy? The answer is “metanoia” the conversion of the heart. Why is it that in Kenya tribalism is very visible even in the catholic Church where love and unity is preached almost every time? The answer is “metanoia” the conversion of the heart. Why is it that in Rwanda where the majority citizens are Catholics slaughtered each other terribly just because of ethnic affiliations; some being Hutus and others being Tutsis? The answer is “metanoia” the conversion of the heart. Why is it that many people get baptized in the Catholic Church and afterwards they do not have interest in the matters of the Church and they are fade up with anything to do with the Church and the Word of God? The answer is “metanoia” the conversion of the heart.

2.2.2 The Holy Spirit as the Principle Agent of “Metanoia” the Conversion of the Heart

When “metanoia” the conversion of the heart takes place in one’s life, one becomes like the prodigal son whose heart is moved towards God the loving Father. It is this conversion of heart, which makes one to see the image of God in another person and try to promote it, regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation. For Powel and Sinwell, RCIA “is designed for adults who, after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed, consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the way of faith and conversion as

the Holy Spirit opens their hearts.”²⁶ This shows that in the process of “metanoia” the conversion of the heart, it is the Holy Spirit that draws one’s heart to the Father but the individual person has the freedom to cooperate with the Spirit of God in his/her own transformation. Emphasizing on the importance of the Holy Spirit in the work of conversion, the Holy father Pope John Paul II said, “Even the most thorough preparation of the evangelizer has no effect without the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit the most convincing dialectic has no power over the human heart” (Ecclesia in Africa 61). This shows that the Holy Spirit is the principle agent of conversion.

It is the experience of the Holy Spirit that brings people together regardless of their differences in their backgrounds, races, colors and classes. Even in the early Church, divisions existed among the early Christians. This is seen in the community of Corinth, where, because of the divisions which existed in that community, St. Paul responded to this community using the analogy of the body, to symbolize the unity in diversity that has to exist in the Christian community. Paul says, “for as with the human body which is a single although it has many parts- all the parts of the body, though many, still making up one single body- so it is with Christ. We were baptized into one body in a single Spirit, and we were all given the same Spirit to drink” (1Cor. 12:12-13). In the above passage, Paul emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in incorporating one into the body of Christ, which is the Church. Thus, it is not the affiliation of someone to a particular tribal, culture, religious group or religious congregation that incorporates one into the body of Christ, but the experience of the power of the Holy Spirit that transforms one from within and

²⁶ K. H. POWELL - J. P. SINWELL, *breaking open The Word of God*, 15.

moves him/her to put ones gifts at the service of the building of one body; the body of Christ.

2.3 The Goals of Adult Catechesis

According to the International Council for Catechesis, “to become an adult and to live as an adult is a vocation given by God to human beings. This vocation finds its most perfect model in Jesus of Nazareth who was almost thirty when He began His ministry” (ICC 10). Adult catechesis continuously invites and enables adults to acquire an attitude of conversion to the person of Jesus Christ. This attitude views the Christian life as a gradual transformation in Christ, in which the Christian takes on the mind of Christ, trusts in the Father's love, accepts the Spirit's guidance in searching out and obeying God's will, and seeks the holiness of life within the Church. Furthermore, adults Catechesis makes the Christians capable of making a conscious and firm decision to live the gift and choice of faith through membership in the Christian community. It also promotes active participation in the Church as she is realized in families and Small Christian Communities.

As ICC puts it, Adult catechesis make one more willing and able to be a Christian disciple in the world in that it helps to differentiate between good and evil” (ICC 38). By this, Christians as adult Disciples of Christ are able to take up their rightful place in the Church's mission as evangelizers through their witness of life of faith. Adult catechesis opens the hearts of the Christians to hear the cry of the poor for justice; it also empowers them to promote unity among believers, and to bear witness to the salvation won by Jesus Christ for all. It is for these reason that ICC said, “the catechesis of adults promotes an openness of the heart to the mystery of the Lord’s greatness and grace by encouraging sincere reconciliation with the Lord and with one’s brothers and sisters,” (ICC 36).

2.4 Small Christian Communities and Ongoing Formation in the Faith

2.4.1 SCCs as the Backbone of RCIA

The Catholic Campus Ministry Association describes small Christian community as “a group of eight to twelve Christians that gather weekly—ideally in dorms, apartments or homes— for fellowship, encouragement, spiritual growth and evangelistic outreach.” It adds, “While the small Christian community (SCC) actually dates back to the earliest Christians, in recent years the Church has witnessed a renewed appreciation for the values and vitality that they often bring to parish life.”²⁷ According to Nativity Catholic Church, “Small Christian communities (SCCs) are formed to support the on-going need for members of the church to be in intimate and ever-deepening relationship with Jesus.”²⁸ This two quotations point out the importance of the SCC as far as RCIA is concern.

Quoting the words of Father Jim Dunning, Moriarty said, “I see little long-term hope for the Adult catechumenate unless there is connection between Small Christian Communities and the catechumenate *before, during and after* initiation.”²⁹ SCCs are the fertile ground on which RCIA can germinate, grow and bring about abundant harvest of faith. This is because in SCCs there is not only the teaching about faith but also witness to mature faith, hope and love. The first and most important way of catechizing is the witness of the true Christian life that is given to God in communion and given to one’s

²⁷ NATIVITY CATHOLIC CHURCH, *Small Christian Communities*: Online [Accessed on 08-03-16].

²⁸Catholic Campus Ministry Association, *Small Christian Community*: Online [Accessed on 08-03-16].

²⁹J. HEALEY- HINTON. J., *Small Christian Communities Today, Capturing the New Moment*, 55.

neighbor in love. Witness of Christian life is the fundamental element of the SCCs, which is also essential element for RCIA. As Pope Paul VI puts it, “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses” (*EN* 41).

As the International Council for Catechesis said, “To become an adult and to live as an adult is a vocation given by God to human beings,”³⁰ so adult catechesis is very important for Christians since it makes them to live as adults and to realize the image of God in themselves and in other human beings. For the International Council for Catechesis, “the ultimate and unifying goal of adult catechesis is to help the mature Christian to live as an adult” (*ICC* 34).

SCCs becomes the back bone of RCIA as far as it brings people together, provides warmth and love to everyone, promotes equality and solidarity for all. It is for this reason that the Bishops of Zambia in their Pastoral letter entitled “The Church as a Caring Family” said, “Christian life is experienced most strongly in Small Christian Communities. There the members know one another, relate in friendship, support and care for one another and grow in love.”³¹ This is the witness of life that compels one to give oneself totally to Christ. RCIA and SCCs enriches each other. As Moriarty puts it, “Doing initiation in the context of SCCs offers us major opportunities both to strengthen initiation and to challenge small communities to fuller realization of their ecclesial vocation.”³² Payeur agrees with this when he says, “if it is true to say that the goal of

³⁰ INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CATECHESIS, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, 10.

³¹ Bishops of Zambia, *AMECEA Documentation Service, The Church as a Caring Family*, 3.

³² HEALEY, J - HINTON, J., *Small Christian Communities Today, Capturing the New Moment*, 55

catechetics is to establish a relationship between the message and life and between God and human person, then one of the best places to catechize is in the JNNK (SCCs) where the Jumuiya members are trying to get a Christian answer to their daily problems through their weekly Bible and Gospel sharing. This is adult catechetics.”³³

The International Council of Catechesis stresses the importance of the involvement of the Small Christian communities in adult catechesis. This is because these are the communities which welcomes and sustains adults. It adds that, “Adults do not grow in faith primarily by learning concepts, but by sharing the life of the Christian community, of which adults are members who both give and receive from the same community” (*ICC* 28).

2.5 SCCs and Family Catechesis

SCCs are made up of different families that are living in the same neighborhood, they share the Word of God and their experience of the divine power in their lives. This can be expressed in the words of the synod Fathers who said, “the family builds society not as simply the numerical sum of the residents of a particular territory or as a group of citizens of a given State but as a genuine experience of a people united in spirit and, in case of the Church, the people of God.”³⁴ Due to the mutual interaction, sharing and support which are found in the Small Christian community, the SCC becomes the fertile ground of family catechesis, where the families catechize each other. It is for this reason that the synod fathers said, “The Christian Communities refuses to be simply a place to

³³ Cf. Payeur. J. A., *Inculturation through SCCS*, 39.

³⁴ Synod of Bishops, *XIV Ordinary General Assembly: Instrumentum Laboris*, 42.

go for human service; instead the Christian community is a place where families are born and where they meet and interact as they walk together in faith and share ways of growth and mutual exchange.”³⁵

As the pastoral accompanying of different categories of the faithful grows in its importance, the SCC also becomes an importance ground of catechesis since its in this place that those who are in need of pastoral accompanying come from; The sick who are in need of pastoral care, the engaged couples who need pastoral accompanying during their preparations for marriage, couples in their initial year of marriage who need pastoral accompanying. All these people come from SCCs and are known well by the members of their SCCs. The synod Fathers added even those who are married civilly but not sacramentally, as in need of pastoral accompanying. The synod Fathers said, “The Church also ought to accompany those in a civil marriage or those living together in a gradual discovery of “the seeds of the Word” which lies hidden, so as to value them until the fullness of union in the Sacrament might be achieved.”³⁶ In this sense, it is the responsibility of the SCCs to identify those who are in need of pastoral accompanying.

2.5.1 The Church as a Family of God

In 1994 the Synod Fathers came up with the image which is particularly suitable for the Church in Africa, which is “The Church as a family of God”. According to Shorter, the most stirring speech of the African Synod was that of the Nigerian Bishop, Albert

³⁵ Synod of Bishops, *XIV Ordinary General Assembly: Instrumentum Laboris*, 42.

³⁶ Synod of Bishops, *XIV Ordinary General Assembly: Instrumentum Laboris*, 60.

Obiefuna, who declared that in Africa ‘the blood of family and tribe was thicker than the water of baptism.’³⁷ Probably, this was the challenge to the Synod Fathers which made them to apply the image of the family to the Church in Africa.

This shows that the Synod Father did not only talk of inculturation, “but they also made use of it, taking the Church as God’s Family as its guiding idea for the evangelization in Africa.”³⁸ It is true that this image can be traced in the Scriptures, however, “the Synod Fathers acknowledged it as an expression of the Church’s nature particularly appropriate for Africa. For this image emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust.”³⁹

2.5.2 The African Family Spirit

Before applying the image of the family to the Church in Africa, it is important first to understand fully the spirit of the African family. According to Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoum, “the family is a place of reproduction, of transmission and of protection of life, a place of learning and of interiorizing cultural values. It is a place of sharing, solidarity, of support and of fraternal welcome, a place where people live together.”⁴⁰ The family is the fundamental base of the Africans that is why Cardinal Thiandoum said, “African family is a living cell from which the models of the Church and experiences lived in Africa, are found.”⁴¹ In supporting the words of Cardinal Thiandoum, Pope John

³⁷ A. SHORTER, *Family as a Model of Social Reconstruction in Africa*, 30.

³⁸ POPE JOHN PAUL II., *Ecclesia in Africa*, 47.

³⁹ POPE JOHN PAUL II., *Ecclesia in Africa*, 48.

⁴⁰ H. THIANDOUM., *African Synod: The Church as Family of God and Small Christian Communities*, 7.

⁴¹ H. THIANDOUM., *African Synod: The Church as Family of God and Small Christian Communities*, 7.

Paul II said, “The future of the world and of the Church passes through the family. Africa in particular, the family is the foundation on which the social edifice is built.”⁴²

After pointing out the positive spirit of the African family, it is also important to be aware that the African family spirit is not perfect to be taken as it is and use it as a model for the Church in African. It is an imperfect image which needs purification. As Fr. John-Mary Waliggo points out, “the African family whether traditional or contemporary is still very hierarchical: the father figure is much feared by the other members of the family, the wife is not yet given the full rights of dignity and the rights of children are not fully realized and respected”⁴³ it is for this reason that before the image of the family is applied to the Church, it must be liberated so as not to have a Church as a family of God which has a pyramid structure but one with a circular one of communion.

2.5.3 The Holy Family as a Model for all Christian Families.

In liberating the African family so as to make it a perfect image for the Church in Africa Pope John Paul II presents the Holy Family as a model for all Christian families. For John Paul II, “The Holy Family, which according to the Gospel (cf. *Mt 2:14-15*) lived for a time in Africa, is the “prototype and example for all Christian families.”⁴⁴ Pope Paul VI taught the same on his pilgrim to the Holy Land where he said “the home of Nazareth is the school where we begin to understand the life of Jesus Christ. In this home we learn a threefold lesson: of silence, of family life and of work. In the home of Nazareth each one

⁴² POPE JOHN PAUL II., *Ecclesia in Africa*, 63.

⁴³ J. M. WALIGGO., *African Synod: The Church as Family of God and Small Christian Communities*, 1.

⁴⁴ POPE JOHN PAUL II., *Ecclesia in Africa*, 63.

lives his or her own mission in perfect harmony with the other members of the Holy Family.”⁴⁵

Taking the Holy Family of Nazareth as a model for all Christian families because of its circular structure and of its communion nature, makes one to point to the Small Christian Community as a true image of a Church as a Family of God. This is because, as a family in Africa is a place of sharing, solidarity, of support and of fraternal welcome, a place where people live together, the SCC is a place where every member feels at home.

2.6 The Church as Family of God and Small Christian Communities

The SCC is taken as a true model of the Church as the family of God. this is because, in the family of God everybody need to feel welcomed, supported, cared for and loved, and it is in the SCCs that Christian life is experienced strongly, there members know each other very well and journey together in faith. It is for this reason that the Bishops of Zambia when commenting on the image of the Church as the family of God said, “if relationships are at the heart of the Church as Family, then the Christian life is experienced most strongly in SCCs. Here the members know one another, relate in friendship, support and care for one another and grow in love.”⁴⁶

If the Church in Africa is to take roots, it has to be established on the basis of the so called “African communitarianism” in which according to Bishop Silota, “each individual helps all others, all the others helps each individual and everything is shared

⁴⁵ POPE JOHN PAUL II., *Ecclesia in Africa*, 63-64.

⁴⁶ BISHOPS OF ZAMBIA, AMECEA Documentation Service, *The Church as a Caring Family*, 3.

by all.”⁴⁷ This African communitarianism also reflects the life of the first believers of Christ, as we read, “The community of believers was of one heart and mind , and no one claimed that any of his possession was his own, but they had everything in common”(Acts 4:32).

According to Bishop Silota, “the experience enjoyed up to now shows that the SCCs seem to be the only way for the true evangelization and inculturation of the African Church.”⁴⁸ This points us to the importance of inculturation of faith if Christ is to be truly received and accepted in the lives of the African people. Using the words of John Paul II, “a faith that does not become culture is not fully accepted, not entirely thought out, not faithfully lived.”⁴⁹ It is for this reason that the SCCs become important environment for inculturated catechesis so as to form Christians who are fully and joyfully rooted in their culture while joyfully and faithfully living the message of Christ. To make this a reality, Oswald Hirmer proposes the use of Catechumen Communities (as part of the RCIA Program). Catechumen Community is “a specific type of Small Christian Community where the adult catechumens form their own SCC to reflect on the Bible, talk about the Catholic faith and journey together as a community. These may include all who want to renew/deepen their faith and share their faith experience.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ F. J. SILOTA, AMECEA Documentation Service, *Privileged environment for the Incarnation of the Gospel*, 6.

⁴⁸ F. J. SILOTA, AMECEA Documentation Service, *Privileged environment for the Incarnation of the Gospel*, 6.

⁴⁹ J. PAUL II, Address to the Italian National Congress, 2:Insegnamenti V/1 (1982), 131.

⁵⁰ O. HIRMER, *Our Journey Together*, 4.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed and discussed the literature which is related to catechesis and Small Christian Communities. It has presented different dimensions of Catechesis, connected RCIA and the Formation of Faith and has showed how conversion is the heart of RCIA. The chapter has presented also the goals of adult catechesis; it has shown the relationship between the Small Christian Communities and the ongoing formation in the faith. Finally, the chapter has endeavored to relate the image of the Church in Africa as a Family of God to Small Christian Communities.

CHAPTER THREE

PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the practicum experience of the researcher. It does this by presenting the insertion and the researcher's personal experience in OLQP. The chapter also endeavours to analyse the social-cultural setup of the parish by looking at the life styles of both the people of the slums and that of the estates. Finally, the chapter presents the personal integral formation that the researcher got from his practicum experience.

3.1 Insertion

The researcher began his insertion with an informal meeting with Fr. Augustine Sawadogo. By then Fr. Augustine was the assistant parish priest of Our Lady Queen of Peace, who was also in charge of catechesis and Small Christian Communities in the parish. The researcher met Fr. Augustine when Fr. Augustine went to the formation house for his karate exercises. The researcher expressed his intention of doing his practicum at Our Lady Queen of Peace parish. Fr. Augustine assured the researcher that he will talk to Fr. Martin Onyango the Parish priest, and he asked the researcher to go to the parish the next day on 12 January to meet Fr. Martin.

On 12 January the researcher met Fr. Martin who accepted on condition that his practicum does not interfere with the proper running of the parish. He also asked the student to bring the letter from the institute. On the following day the researcher met his

moderator Fr. Joseph Healey and shared with him the stage of his insertion. Fr. Joseph was supportive of the student's choice for OLQP as a right parish for SCCs and catechesis. Then the student went on to see Fr. George Kocholikal, the Director of the Master's in Pastoral Ministry program who gave the letter to the student without any hesitation.

When the researcher brought the letter to the Parish, Fr. Martin Onyango accepted also that himself could take up the responsibility of being the field supervisor and on the same day he gave the pastoral guideline of the Archdiocese of Nairobi and that of Our Lady Queen of Peace to the student to read and follow, which the researcher did. After his meeting with Fr. Martin Onyango, the researcher went home and shared about his move with Fr. Willy Scoof who is in charge of pastoral in the formation house and Fr. Innocent Maganya the rector of the Missionaries of Africa formation, and the two were happy and supportive.

The student started his practicum on the 29th January 2015. On this day he had a meeting with the representatives of the Small Christian Communities, in which he was introduced by the Parish Priest of Our Lady Queen of Peace, South B Parish (Fr. Martin Onyango). The meeting was good and was attended by 29 representatives of which women were 17 and men were 12. Fr. Martin explained the purpose of the researcher's presence in that meeting and urged all the representatives to give him all the support he needed whenever he visited their SCCs. The researcher felt well introduced and welcomed in the parish. On the same day, the researcher was given the list containing all

SCCs, their contact persons with their phone numbers, the names for the patron saints of all SCCs and their days and times of meetings.

On Saturday, 31st January 2015, the researcher had his first class of catechesis. The purpose of this class was to introduce himself to the students and to know where they had reached in their syllabus. The class was lively and students asked him many challenging questions concerning his vocation. From this first class the researcher got a very positive impression of this class. After the class, Charles Maina the coordinator of Catechesis Classes at OLQP Parish took the researcher to the Office of Catechists. He showed him all the necessary books and all materials that are used in teaching catechesis like posters and other materials. The researcher was given the responsibility of journeying in faith with the students of first year Swahili adult catechism class, who meet every Saturday from 2pm to 4pm in the parish meeting room.

Because of the nature of his topic, the researcher did his practicum in two fields: catechesis and Small Christian Communities. The researcher was participating in SCCs on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, while he dedicated two days for catechesis: Saturdays and Sundays.

3.2 Social-Cultural Analysis

The practicum for this thesis for Master's Degree in Pastoral Ministry was done at Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP) in South B. OLQP is a parish run by the Missionaries of Africa and it is found just 150 metres from South B shopping centre. OLQP is an urban parish, though more than 60 percent of the Christians come from Mukuru Kayaba slums.

Our Lady Queen of Peace is a big and busy parish, with a sub-parish known as St Margaret. The parish has 33 Small Christian Communities (SCCs), of which 21 are found in Mukuru Kayaba slums, while 12 are found in the estates. Our Lady Queen of Peace has a big number of adult catechumens, of whom the majority are those converting to the Catholic Church from other Christian denominations, few of them are those converting from Islam and some are those coming from the African Traditional Religion backgrounds, who are now seeking baptism in the Catholic Church. These adult catechumens are divided into four classes as shown in the table in appendix 1. Our Lady Queen of Peace parish has two classes of people: those who are rich and live in the estates and those who are poor and they live in the slums. The social analysis of this thesis is done based on these two classes of people.

3.2.1 Life in the Estate in Contrast with Life in the Slums

The estates are occupied by rich people. In the estates interaction is very limited; most of the people here do not know even their neighbors. Ms. Theresa confessed to the researcher that she does not even know the neighbor who is next to her door, because she is busy, and everyone in the estate minds her or his work. According to Theresa, the only people that she knows and who knows her house are those who belong to the same SCCs where she belongs. Most of the people living in the estates are either in formal employment or are running businesses. Thus, they are really living a decent life.

Though some people are living a decent life in South-B parish, about 60 percent of the Christians are living in Mukuru slums. The people in the slums earn their living through selling food stuff like vegetables; others do some piece works of cleaning in the

estates. Although people in the slums are economical poor, they are socially richer than those in the estates. In the slums although they are over congested, people know each other very well, they interact with one another and they can easily spot a stranger in their midst. Even in the SCCs of the slums solidarity is much stronger than in the estates where mostly each one cares more about his problems and avoids the other for security reasons.

Education: As far education is concern, people in the estates send their children to expensive and private schools. In all the SCCs that the researcher visited in the estates, they use English language in their meetings, which is a sign of a good level of education. Most of the children who come from the estates do their studies in boarding schools, somehow far from their homes. On the contrary, education in the slums is totally different from that of the estates; the level of education in the slums is very low. It is for this reason that in all the SCCs of Mukuru slums they use Kiswahili as a language to conduct their weekly meetings. Many of the schools in Mukuru slums, both primary and secondary are built by the Catholic Church just to help people know how to write and read. Even some of the shelters built for the purpose of SCC meetings are sometimes used as classrooms for children.

Infrastructures: in South-B there are many well built estates for the rich people. Each house in the estate is self contained, and in most cases has a car park. The estates are well protected by big wall fences of which some are electrified; on top of that they have security people trained by security companies. The estates have good road networks, good drainage systems and good and clear water.

As far as infrastructures are concern, Mukuru slums are in a mess. People are over congested, houses are made of iron sheets or plastics and each family has only one room which is divided in the middle by a curtain that is where the parents stay together with their children. In the slums there are no proper toilets and showers. No proper drainages and most of the electricity are illegally connected by people who do not have much knowledge of electricity, so when fire starts from one house, many houses are affected terribly. Moreover, in Mukuru, there is no proper road passing between houses and this has terrible consequences on the life of the people. For example, last year fire started in Mukuru Kwanjenga, it burnt many houses and when the fire fighters came with their big vehicles they could not manage to pass through the houses to reach where the fire was, so they didn't help much.

Health: as far as health is concern, people in the estates appear to be very health. This is due to the fact that they eat nutritious and health food, they have good and clean water, they are well protected from cold at night and in their work places they are not very much exposed to health problems; it is easier for them to take precautions. Moreover, people in the estates some have health insurances while others have money, therefore, when they are sick they can seek good medical attention.

On the other side, health situation in the slums is the opposite of that in the estates. As it is stated above, the drainage systems in the slums are very poor and when it rains very much, sometimes even the dirty water from the road enters the houses. Lack of clean water, poor sanitation, lack of proper housing, over congestion and poor and un healthy food; all these are causes of many diseases making the slums a place un healthy to live

in. Moreover, the people of the slums have no money to seek good medical attentions and they have no health insurance to cover them during their sicknesses. Thus, when one is sick in the slums, the only options he or she has is to seek help from family members, neighbors/friends and to the Church.

3.2.2 Money Contribution a Challenge to SCCs

Almost in all Small Christian Communities that the researcher participated in, both in the estates and in the slums, the contribution of money was the main and challenging issue. For example, in St. Luke SCC after the sharing on the Word of God and choosing of the action of the week comes the time of reports. That is the time when the treasurer announces different contributions that are needed by the SCC itself, by the parish and by the diocese. Also this is the time when people who have contributed in the past week are mentioned so as to encourage those who have not yet contributed. At this point the mood in the members of the SCC changes, they start pointing fingers at each other saying, “This one has not yet paid.”

In 2015 the parish of Our Lady Queen of Peace had a project of buying a big and expensive machine for making bulletins, so the amount of money was divided and each SCC was given its share to contribute. In the same period, the Archdiocese of Nairobi also needed money for the family day, again the parish asked Christians in their SCCs to contribute. At this moment, the researcher was participating in the SCC of St. Paul, and he remembers very well people complaining that contributions had become too much. They complained about this because this is the time when four of their members had lost almost everything in the fire accident in Mukuru Kayaba so they were making

contributions for their suffering members. The researcher also remembers very well that on this issue of contributions, in one of the meetings, members of St. Paul SCC sent the coordinator to ask the parish priest to attend the meeting of the following week so that they can express their feelings, but the following week the parish priest was very busy, thus, he did not show up.

3.2.3 Kamiti Prisons as an Extension of this Practicum

When he expressed his desire to do his practicum in line with catechesis and Small Christian Communities in Our Lady Queen of Peace, the formators proposed that the student should do his diaconal ministry in Kamiti prisons so as to have an experience of the SCCs and catechesis that are found in the prisons. This proposal turned into the real appointment of the researcher which he had to carry out for the full year.

Kamiti Prison is a biggest and most feared prison in Kenya. Kamiti has three prisons in one area. The first one is the Main Prison with prisoners those sentenced to death, those of life imprisonment and those of over 10 year sentence. The second is called Kamiti Medium Prison. This is a prison for those sentenced to below 10 years in prison. And the third one is the Juvenile Prison. This is a prison for children under the age of 18.

During his practicum every Sunday the researcher was going to Kamiti prisons for his diaconal ministry. During that time the main prison had 10 SCCs namely; St. Peter, Our Lady of Assumption SCC, St. Patrick SCC, Maria Consolata SCC, St. John SCC, St. Benedict SCC, St. Joseph Caffasso SCC, SCC of Mount Camel, Mother Theresa SCC and St. Paul SCC. The main prison also had more than three hundred prisoners attending the mass. Thus, all the catechetical instructions, all liturgical preparations and all spiritual

arrangements were done at the level of the SCC. Moreover, in this prison, SCCs work as spiritual support groups and places of transformation.

The medium and the juvenile didn't have SCCs when the researcher started going there, however, when he saw the need for the SCCs in this section of the prison, he discussed with the Chaplain of prisons Fr. Peter Kimanyi, who supported the idea. At this moment Kamiti Medium prison has five SCCs, but the juvenile doesn't have any because there are few children and they only stay there for three to six months then they are taken back to their families.

3.3 The Researcher's Experience

Vatican II states, "the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1). The insertion period had been a time of being with people in their joy and grief and to participate in their hope and anguish. During his practicum time, the student experienced both challenges and opportunities, joys and anguish but the best thing for him is that, in all circumstances of his experience he was picking a lesson to learn from.

The first 50 hours of his practicum was very much challenging in many ways; firstly, the student was trying to understand people and the culture of Nairobi before he could open himself completely and be friendly to the people in SCCs and those for catechesis. This is because; at first he had the misconception that the people of Nairobi are cruel and unfriendly. This was proven wrong after his 50 hrs; he could mingle with people especially those living in the slums freely and be in their homes without any

problem. Secondly, the researcher at first found it very difficult to balance time for community activities, Tangaza activities and the practicum activities. However, after discussing with his Formators and realized that formators were in support of his activities, the researcher was energized and he felt at home with the program. Thirdly, the student was very much worried about his own security since in most of the SCCs they were finishing the meetings very late and in South-B especially in Mukuru slums it is very dangerous to walk at night. This problem did not defeat the researcher's aim since whichever SCC he visited provided people to accompany him up to the formation house and made sure he enters the compound before they could leave.

The other 100 hours of his insertion were a great period of learning and being with the people in all their life situations. The practicum was a period of discoveries, time of self giving to others and to God and a time of transformation for the researcher. He has realized that SCCs are instrumental in faith formation. This is because; the reception of any sacrament begins in the SCC. Also, during his participation in the SCCs, the student and the other members of the SCCs were visiting members of SCCs who were passing through different problems and showed solidarity with them. From this attitude the student learned that SCCs do this so as to show that the SCC is a family of God manifested in love.

The researcher experienced the importance of the SCCs when he discovered that the lay catechists, the people in charge of the sick in the parish, those in charge of social welfare, justice and peace and those who form the parish council are chosen from the SCCs. On top of that, it is the SCCs that animates liturgy in the parish. During his

practicum, the student participated in the animation of the mass with SCCs and saw how people offer themselves at the service of the Church. Due to these insights, he found the SCCs as the family of God in which everyone feels welcome and where people learn to love, to share, to serve and to pray. Moreover, the Word of God being the source and driving force of our faith, it follows that by putting Bible sharing at the centre of SCCs' meetings the main focus is the formation of faith.

One of the most touching elements that the researcher experienced in the SCCs was the faith that people have in God which is express during the sharing of the Word of God in the SCCs. The researcher realized that the lay faithful when they were sharing on the Word of God and connect it with the day to day lives, it was very real and touching and this made the student to see SCCs as the fertile soil for catechesis.

During his practicum the researcher visited Kamiti prisons with St Anuarite SCC. The SCC took some gifts for prisoners and prayed with them. He also went with Mlango wa mbingu SCC and St Mark respectively to Mbagath hospital to visit the sick and pray for them. This visit was a great experience for the student, for it helped him to know that the SCC is a place for putting in practice the words of Jesus who said "I was in prison and sick, and you visited me," this experience helped the student to open his heart to the sufferings of others and to be a person of not only love in words but also in deeds.

On Wednesday the 11/02/15 the researcher participated in the activity of planting trees in the area especially along the road. This activity was organized by St. Mark SCC with the purpose of conserving nature. This activity was tiresome but it was an enriching experience for the researcher, in the sense that the researcher came to realise that through

that activity of tree planting the SCC was teaching the society that the first responsibility that God gave to humanity was to take care of the environment (Gn. 1:26-27). This gave the impression to the student that the SCC is level ground for learning catechesis by doing it.

3.3.1 Personal Integral growth

The experience that the researcher has got from the field work has greatly contributed to his personal integral formation. This integral formation is summarized into four dimensions; human formation, Spiritual formation, intellectual formation and pastoral formation.

Human Formation: the researcher has developed in himself the ability to have healthy and respectful relationships with people and he has come to the full realization of the values of socialization in the SCC and allowed those values to shape his personality.

Spiritual Formation: every day, after field work the researcher was spending at least 20 minutes, meditating upon his experiences and tried to ask himself what the Lord was telling him in those experiences. This helped the researcher to put Christ at the centre of his life at all the time. By participating in SCCs frequently and by participating in the community sharing, the researcher came to develop a personal faith that is lived as a communal faith. Also it helped him to develop love for others and love for the sharing of the Word of God.

Intellectual Formation: in order to sustain his intellectual growth, the researcher consulted many books, online material and specialists in this field; like Fr. Joseph Healey.

This helped very much in opening the mind of the researcher to the reality in which he lives. Moreover, the researcher benefited much from two courses that he took at Tangaza University College, which were in line with his practicum, and these are; fundamental catechesis and Small Christian Communities.

Pastoral Formation: due to his participation in all that people go through, eg, going with them for funerals, visiting the sick and the poor so as to know their sorrows, the researcher has come to develop in himself a heart of love and compassion for the people, following the example of Jesus. In fact this growth has been traced in the comments that different people including formators make about the researcher's health interaction with the prisoners in Kamiti and other people especially the poor and the sick. Moreover, the practicum has enabled the researcher to develop in himself the heart that is ready to render service to others, as a true disciple of Jesus.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the practicum experience of the researcher. It has done this by presenting the insertion and the researcher's personal experience at OLQP. The practicum time was a period of learning, of self giving to others and to God, and a time of transformation for the student. Moreover, the Word of God being the source and driving force of faith, by putting Bible sharing at the centre of SCCs meetings, the researcher realized that SCCs are fertile soil for faith formation. The chapter also endeavored to analyze the social-cultural setup of the parish by looking at the life styles of both the people of the slums and that of the estates. Finally, the chapter has presented the personal integral formation that the researcher got from his practicum experience.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

4.0 Introduction

Theological Reflection is the third level in pastoral cycle. At this level the researcher reflects on his insertion experience in the light of faith. Therefore, theological reflection requires experience and faith resources which include theology, Holy Scripture, culture, tradition and the Social Teaching of the Church. This stage of pastoral cycle prompts one to make decisions that lead to action. When the events that make up our lives call us to decision, it is God himself who speaks to us through those events which call for our attention and responses.

We see the basis of theological reflection in Vatican II document which says, “The people of God believe that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord who fills the world. Moved by that faith it tries to discern in the events, the needs, and the longings which it shares with other men of our time, what may be genuine signs of the presence or of the purpose of God” (GS. 11). We are in the world and since the knowledge of everything has a reference to the world, so the knowledge of God and his purpose for humanity. Basing on this, we presuppose that the reading of the happenings in the SCCs and in RCIA with faith may lead to the comprehension of God’s will for His people.

4.1 SCC a New Model of Being a Church in Eastern Africa

When the researcher talks of the church, the meaning he gives to it is not that of the building where people gather to worship, but that of a community of the followers of

Christ to which Christ is the head and the followers are the members of this body (Rm. 12:5). The disciple of Jesus Christ is one who is called by the Lord to be with Him, to learn from Him and to be sent on the mission of salvation. As St. Mark puts it, “Jesus now went up onto the mountain and summoned those he wanted. So they came to Him and he appointed twelve; they were to be his companions and to be sent out to proclaim the message with power to drive out devils” (Mk. 3:14).

During his practicum the researcher experienced three major important moments in the life of the SCC that manifest the essential elements of discipleship that of; being called to be with Him, to learn from Him, and to be sent by Him. Firstly, in the SCCs when they come together as one family, they open their prayer meeting with the song of the Holy Spirit then a prayer to invite the Trinitarian Family (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) in their midst. Secondly they share the Word of God and thirdly, they go out to witness Christ to others in their lives. These three stages can be reformulated as follows:

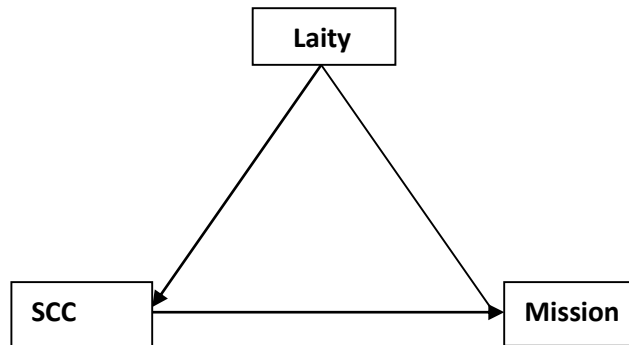
1. **Being with Christ:** the first stage of discipleship; this is a stage of being with the Lord, as it is echoed in the words of Jesus when He said, “for where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them” (Mt. 18:20).
2. **Learning from Christ:** The second stage finds its foundation in the words of Jesus who said, “Shoulder my yoke and learn from me” (Mt. 11:29). This is the stage of sharing the Word of God. At this stage, after reading the Gospel of the following Sunday, each member mentions a word or a phrase in the passage that has touched him or her. This mentioning of a word or phrase comes after a short

time of meditation upon the Good News, thus it becomes the teaching of Christ Himself to His disciples.

3. **Being sent by Christ:** The final stage comes after listening from the Good News of Christ and this Good News moves the disciples in the SCC to action. They ask themselves a question “what must we do, then?” (Lk. 3:10). It is at this stage that the members feel compelled to go for a mission, following the words of Jesus who said, “you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judea and Samaria, and indeed to earth’s remotest end” (Acts 1:8). At this stage the members of the SCC choose what they called the action of the week (*tendo la wiki*) which is the action of witnessing to the love and salvific power of God to humanity through their deeds. After this, the Disciples of Christ in the SCC hold each other’s hands and sing the song of love, peace and unity to symbolize that they are now sent by the Lord into to the world, to proclaim the Good News of salvation, love, peace and unity.

Because of the above three stages of discipleship, which are also the constitutive elements of the Small Christian Community, the SCC becomes the ground, fertile for RCIA. The SCC helps adult catechumens to discover their calling to be with the Lord. Also, through the sharing of the Good News, it encourages them to learn from the Lord, and by the witness of life of the members, the SCC helps adult catechumens to mature in faith and makes them open their hearts to Christ and allow Christ to send them for the mission.

4.2 Small Christian Community: Called and Formed to Be Sent



The triangle above is taken from the class notes on SCCs by Joseph Healey. It represents a community of disciples, who are called and formed for a mission of evangelization. After meditating upon the participation of the lay faithful in the building up of the body of Christ (the Church), the researcher came to realize that the SCCs are called and formed to be sent for a mission, since these communities of believers are commissioned by the Lord to reach out to others. It is in baptism that one is commissioned to be a missionary and an evangelizer, that is why Pope Francis in the “Joy of the Gospel” encouraged all Christians to be actively engaged in evangelization by saying,

“In the virtue of their baptism all members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized” (E G. 120).

The researcher realized that the SCC is the best place in which every baptized individual is formed and encouraged to participate in the mission of evangelization in his or her own way. The SCC is the place in which all the baptized faithful exhibit their baptismal calling and gift regardless of their social status, age, gender or level of education. Pope Francis goes on saying, “Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus” (*EG*. 120). And since SCC helps people to be with Jesus, learn from Him, it becomes an environment conducive for experiencing God’s love and become evangelizers to others.

During the symposium on *Ad Gentes*, in Tangaza, there was a question which stated “since 99% of members of Small Christian Communities are lay people, how are these lay people in SCCs promoting missionary awareness and sharing their faith with others? Below were some of the responses which came from the SCCs Facebook page:

- By holding prayers together and visiting members in their home (home visitation) and encouraging them to read the Bible and pray regularly.
- Encouraging people in the neighborhood who are not Catholics to join the RCIA and go through the steps until being baptized.
- Encouraging those who have lost hope and help the needy and the wounded so that they feel loved also.

These responses are the living testimonies that show that by baptism we are all missionaries; people who are sent by the Lord to proclaim the Good News and establish the Kingdom of God in our neighborhood.

4.3 Small Christian Community a Participation in the Mission of God

From 11 October 2012 to 24 November 2013 the Catholic Church was celebrating the year of faith. In the same year, in the month of June and July, the researcher spent his holiday in the parish of Usagara, in Mwanza Archdiocese of Tanzania. In that place, the researcher realized that indeed that time in that area was the period of evangelization by the laity through the SCCs. The experience was so marvelous that the researcher felt the manifestation of God to him and to the entire society.

During that period people in the SCCs were doing evangelization by moving in the procession while holding a Bible and a cross. They were moving from one house to the next while singing joyful songs. The researcher participated in this exhibition of faith in Jesus and Faith in the Word of God. During those processions of the symbols of faith, many people especially those who are not Catholic were asking the meaning of that and the answers which were given to this made the researcher realized that the cross is the true sign of God's love for all, and the Word of God as the food that sustain his all being.

After moving in all the houses of the members of the SCCs and in the streets with the Bibles and the Cross, many SCCs' members shared with the researcher that the Lord has added new members to their community. They confessed that the number of the active participants in their SCC has increased, even those who never saw the value of the SCC before, after their fellow Christians visited them with the signs of faith, they said, "Truly the Lord has visited us". The sharing of the people after their visitation of families with the Bible and a Cross, moved the researcher to feel in himself as part of the SCC of St. Paul and Barnabas who, "on their arrival they assembled the Church and gave an account

of all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the gentiles” (Acts 14:27).

4.3.1 It is the Mission of God and not of Human Beings

During the faith exhibition mentioned above, in which the researcher participated, the slogans which were used whenever the SCC reached in every family was “we are ambassadors of Christ, we are sent to bring the Good News to all.” This slogan stayed in the mind of the researcher who kept on asking himself the meaning and the origin of this slogan. It was only on the 8th of February, 2016 that the researcher discovered the meaning and origin of that slogan. On this day, Tangaza School of Theology had a symposium on the Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church (Ad Gentes). In this symposium Rev. Clement Majawa mentioned five major elements of the mission, namely; the origin of the mission, the sender, the message, the recipient and the goal of mission. Vatican II locates the origin of the mission of the Church in the mission of the Holy Trinity. The council considers the Church to be missionary by nature since, “it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father” (AG. 2). Therefore SCCs being the new model of the Church are the recipients and messengers of the Good News, they participate in the mission given to them by Christ but the mission itself belongs to the Triune God. This is following the words of our Lord Jesus Christ who said “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me so am I sending you” (Jn. 20:21). It is for this reason that members of SCCs who worthy of the name proclaim themselves as ambassadors of Christ.

4.4 Being a Family of God is about a community

One day one member of St. Luke SCC by the name of Angela Muthoni shared that, what she likes most about her SCC is the relational part of it and added, “the SCC is very important to me for by interacting freely with others I feel more and more that God loves me and accepts me the way I am and He brings me salvation through my community.” The sharing of this member moved the researcher to understand that salvation is not only personal but also communal.

Looking at the Old Testament we see that God elected the people of Israel as a community and made them His own family as we read, “I shall take you as my own people and I shall be your God. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God who freed you” (Ex. 6:7-8). From this passage we discover that it is because God has elected the community, He made Himself part of this community and has manifested His saving power in the community that the community is called the family of God.

The invitation of Jesus Christ “come and follow me,” (Mt. 4:19) is an invitation to relate in an intimate way, and an invitation to build a community with His disciples. That is why from the big crowd that was following Him, Jesus chose the twelve so as to form with them a Small Community. Then at the time of the transfiguration, Jesus formed another very small community with three disciples; Peter, James and John who experienced the manifestation of the glory of God (Mt. 17:1-8). It is from this angle that the researcher sees the SCC as a family of God, which is elected by God Himself, where God dwells and where God manifests His saving power.

4.4.1 SCC a Home of Compassion

Students of RCIA that the researcher interacted with expressed much that they have learnt more of their faith through what they have seen others doing in the SCC than what they have heard in class. One concrete example that was mentioned many times is the compassion and comfort that the SCC members offer to those who have lost their beloved ones. Jesus is the example of compassion, as we read,

“Jesus went to a town called Nain, together with his disciples and a large number of people. When he was near the gate of the town, there was a dead man being carried out, the only son of his mother who was a widow. A number of the town people were with her. When Jesus saw her, he was filled with compassion and he said to her: don’t cry” (Lk. 7:11-14).

Many times during his practicum the researcher participated in the work of comforting those who had lost their beloved ones. One time four members of Mlango wa Mbingu were even assigned to escorted their member to Machakos for the burial of her husband. From his experience in the SCCs, the researcher felt that the people in the SCC put themselves in the shoes of Jesus who looked at the woman, felt compassion for her and said “don’t cry”. In this way, it is evident that the SCC is home of compassion, where the members look at the situation they are living in and repeat the compassionate words of Jesus, “don’t cry”, and therefore, instill a sense of hope in many people who are suffering. Also from this point of view, the SCC becomes a family where adult catechumens learn the compassion of God.

4.4.2 SCC as a Call to Respond to the Suffering Christ

Jesus Christ is present in the homeless, the hungry, the naked, the sick, the prisoners and all who suffer in different ways. The SCC becomes a family that responds to the sufferings of Christ in different ways. On Sunday 15/03/15 the researcher participated in the SCC visitation of four members of St Paul SCC who were affected by fire which burnt their houses and all their belongs in Mukuru Kayaba. These homeless members of the SCC were comforted, provided with shelter, and were given some financial support by the SCC. On Sunday 15/02/15 at 1pm the researcher went visiting the sick in Mbagathi hospital with Mlango wa Mbingu SCC in order to pray for them, give them encouragement basing on the Word of God and give them some material help. Then on Sunday 22/02/15, he went for the visitation of the sick in Mater Hospital with St Luke SCC. Moreover, the researcher went once with St. Paul SCC to Kamiti Prisons to visit the prisoners and share with them the Word of God and material gifts like soap, tissues tooth paste and food. These gestures were very good learning experience for adult catechumens and for the researcher, to respond to the call of Jesus who said, “I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited, in prison and you came to see me” (Mt.25:35-36).

4.4.3 SCC as a Communion of Families in the Neighborhood

Small Christian Communities are made up of a number of families that are living in the neighborhood. It is important to understand that the family is the primary school of Christian values. It is from the Holy Family that Jesus learnt the importance of the Temple

as the house of his Father (Lk. 2:39-50). Therefore, the value of seeking God begins in the family.

The coming together of families helps and challenges each other to evaluate and reformulate the values that each family inculcates in its children. When the members of different families come together to pray, they inculcate and strengthen the value of prayer life in their own families knowing that the family that prays together lives together. When the SCC families come together to show solidarity to someone who has lost his or her beloved one, they promote the family values of love and unity, thus responding to the words of Jesus who said, “it is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognize you as my disciple” (Jn. 13:35). The other value that the SCC inculcates in families is the spirit of eating together as one family. All the SCCs that the researcher visited do eat together as one family on the day of their Patron Saint to show that through baptism they are all one as a family of God.

We cannot forget the value of being responsible in raising children. As the Nigerian saying goes, “it takes the whole community to raise up the child.” Meaning that, in Africa the responsibility of bringing up children to maturity is the responsibility of the entire community, thus, SCC becomes the Christian community that takes up the responsibility of raising up children in Christian values.

4.4.4 SCC as a School for Equality

Small Christian Communities meeting are arranged in a circular way and not in the pyramidal way. The members sit in the circle to show that all the members though have different responsibilities, are all equal to each other and in the eyes of God. In the

SCC all are equal regardless of their gender, age, social status or profession. This equality is based on the fact that every human person is created in the image and likeness of God (Gn. 1:27).

The equality in SCCs is exhibited in the way they carry out their duties and responsibilities. All responsibilities are carried out as services and not as positions of power. There is no chairperson of the SCC but a coordinator, the people responsible for the sick, for the poor, for justice and peace, for accompanying families, for liturgy and other responsibilities of the SCC, all these are considered as services to God and others and not posts of prestige. Thus, because of the awareness of God's image and likeness, the SCC serves as a school of equality to all.

4.4.5 Caring for our Common Home “The Earth”

On Wednesday the 11/02/15 the researcher participated in the activity of planting trees in Balozzi area, especially along the road. This activity was organized by St. Mark SCC for the purpose of conserving the environment. This activity was tiresome however, it was an enriching experience for the researcher, in the sense that the researcher came to realize that, through that activity of tree planting the SCC was responding to the commandment of God, the commandment of caring for the earth. The SCC was also teaching the society that the first responsibility that God gave to humanity is to take care of the earth, as it is written, “Yahweh God took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it” (Gn. 2:15).

The earth is a common home, which everyone is supposed to care for. It is for this reason that Pope Frances said, “whether believers or not, we have agreed today that the

earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone. For believers, this becomes a question of fidelity to the Creator, since God created the world for everyone” (Laudato Si. 93).

CHAPTER FIVE

PASTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND GENERAL CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The third stage of pastoral cycle which is theological reflection prompts one to make decisions that lead to action. This chapter therefore, gives the main findings of the work and provides pastoral recommendations that may help in making the SCC a solid and suitable platform for continuous catechesis. This chapter also provides the general conclusion to this research.

5.1 Main findings

The main objective of this work was to find out the contributions of Small Christian Communities to faith formation. The search for this contributions was done by focusing on the Word of God, community prayer, community life and finally on community service.

The research found out that the Word of God which is shared weekly in SCCs is the most valuable treasure that is needed in faith formation. As the members of SCC share on the Word of God they begin to internalize it, which consequently begins to transform their lives from within. As Isaiah puts it, “the Word that comes from the mouth of God does not return to Him unfulfilled or before having carried out the good pleasure and having achieved what it was sent to do” (Is. 55:11).

The second finding of this work is the importance of communal prayer life to catechesis. It was discovered that prayer in common as a community brings a sense of

spiritual interdependence among the members. Knowing that as a community of believers, all members of this community are on the pilgrimage to the Promised Land thus a need to support each other spiritually.

The third finding of the work is the impact of community life on the formation of a Christian way of life. Solidarity among the members of SCCs is stress more in this work. People are united in times of joy and in times of sorrow thus imparting fundamental Christian values in the members. This solidarity among the members is fundamental to Christian values for it follows the words of Jesus who said, “It is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognize you as my disciple” (Jn. 13:35).

The fourth finding of the work is the gifts of communal service to the formation of faith. This work discovered that a true mature faith is the faith that is at the services of others. People in the SCC strive to reach out to other people by helping those in need, visiting the sick, visiting prisoners and sharing their faith with others. By doing all these, they witness to the love of God in words and deeds. The other gift that the SCC offers to faith formation through community service is the promotion of the common good. As it is indicated on page 65, on 11-02-15 the researcher participated in tree planting activities organized by St. Mark SCC. The aim of these activities was to raise awareness in people about the importance of caring for the environment.

This work did not only deal with finding out the contributions of the SCC, but also the hindrances of faith formation that are found in Small Christian Communities. The major hindrance of faith formation that is found in SCCs is the issue of money. Most of the time, SCCs are used as fundraising arenas for the parish. This brings disharmony in the SCC and make people to lose focus on spiritual matters.

5.2 Pastoral Recommendations

We recognize and support the effort that the Church especially in Kenya makes in ensuring that the Lenten campaign message reaches all the Christians through the SCCs. We also support the initiative of the Church in making the copies of Lenten campaign in both English and Kiswahili so as to make even those who do not understand English get the message in Kiswahili. However, the Church has made no effort in making sure that the major documents of the Church reach the lay people in SCC in the language that people understand. We recommend that the major Documents that empower the lay faithful, such as; Ad Gentes (mission to the Nations) and the Social Teaching of the Church be translated in the local languages and seminars be given to SCCs on how to integrate these documents in the lives of the people.

It was observed that in the SCCs there is a syndrome of contributions, which turns SCCs into fundraising arenas. This is because the bishop needs money for pastoral reasons and the priests need money to run the parish and the Church depends on its faithful for it to run properly. Therefore, it is understandable that the Church needs money. However, it is also important not to allow money prevent the Kingdom of God from being established among the people here on earth. Therefore, we recommend that bishops in collaboration with their priests establish income generating projects in parishes through SCCs which will be for the benefits of all the children of God.

We recommend on-going formation of members of SCCs so that they become more effective and efficient in meeting the challenges of today. This calls for SCCs to

have the ability to look at the challenges or the problems they meet in the light of the teachings of the Church and strive to solve them in the ways that promote effective actions and build solidarity among the people of God. Thus, we recommend that SCCs should evaluate critically their leadership style so as to facilitate full participation, responsibility and cooperation. This is because leadership based on power sends people away, while the one based on service brings people together.

It is noticed that the clergy have very little time to be among the people and attend to all the needs of their faithful. Therefore, we recommend and encourage the empowerment of lay ministers so that they can be fully at the service of their communities, since these are the ones who live among the faithful, they know what every member is going through and can attend to every need effectively.

We recognize the seriousness of the challenges that the families are facing today. We also acknowledge that these challenges can only be solved if we are open to discuss them in the SCCs as one family of God. Therefore, we recommend that Christian family values of which some of them are: faithfulness in marriage, the use of natural family planning and respect for the life of the unborn child must be topics to be discussed in SCCs which is the new paradigm of the family of God.

We acknowledge the importance of SCCs in the life of catechesis, therefore, we recommend that each SCC chooses and educates one or two members whose responsibility is to accompany the adult catechumens in their faith, by guiding them, visiting them and by being with them in joy and sorrow, in suffering and in happiness.

We recognize the importance of the Christian family in imparting Christian values to the children and to the society. We also acknowledge the challenges faced by the families today. We recommend that marriage encounter movement be established in every SCC so as to accompany families in their day to day challenges.

Seeing the importance of deepening faith through SCCs, it is important to borrow the idea of Oswald Hirmer the author of the book entitled “Our Journey Together” the idea of forming Catechumen-Communities. Therefore, we recommend that in all the parishes there be the formation of Catechumen Communities (as part of the RCIA Program). Catechumen Communities is a specific type of Small Christian Community where the adult catechumens in a parish, sub-parish or outstation form their own SCC to reflect on the Bible, talk about the Catholic faith and journey together as a community. This small community can include: the adult catechumens themselves, their Pastoral Accompaniers in their own SCCs, their sponsors for Baptism and Confirmation, catechists and other interested baptized Catholics in the local parish or outstation community who want to renew or deepen their faith. Also, those who want to share their faith experience with others.

5.3 General Conclusion

What is at the heart of RCIA is the conversion of one’s heart and mind. This means the turning around of one’s way of thinking, acting and living, which is “metanoia”. The best example of conversion (metanoia) which is required in RCIA is that of the prodigal son (lost son) who stayed with his father but never found meaning in that life with the family. He decided to go and live in freedom where he could do whatever he wanted. But

when he suffered terribly where he was, the Bible says “then he came to his senses and say, how many of my father’s hired men have all the food they want and more, here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father. So he left the place and went back to his father” (Lk 15:17-20). This is metanoia; the genuine turning of one’s heart and the changing of one’s total life towards God the Creator.

In the problem statement some questions were raised, and to all of those questions there is only one answer given by this research and the answer is “lack of genuine conversion”. For example; why is it that in Zambia and other African countries some Christians are involved in witchcraft and some accuse their fellow Christians falsely of witchcraft just because of Jealousy and envy? The answer is lack of “metanoia” the conversion of the heart. Why is it that in Kenya tribalism is very visible even in the catholic Church where love and unity is preached almost every time? The answer is lack of “metanoia” the conversion of the heart. Why is it that in Rwanda where the majority citizens are Catholics slaughtered each other terribly just because of ethnic affiliations; some being Hutus and others being Tutsis? The answer is lack of “metanoia” the conversion of the heart. Why is it that many people get baptized in the Catholic Church and afterwards they do not have interest in the matters of the Church and they are fade up with anything to do with the Church and the Word of God? The answer is lack of “metanoia” the conversion of the heart.

In order to reach genuine conversion, one needs to go through three stages which are; to be informed, to be formed and to be transformed. When one remains at the level of information, he/she can easily go back to the old way of life, and when one remains at

the level of formation he/she can teach others with words but without giving witness to Christ in his or her life. It is only when one is transformed into the image of Christ that he or she becomes genuinely converted.

Oswald Hirmer likens the period of deepening faith to that of the two disciples of Jesus on the way to Emmaus. For him, “After the disciples of Emmaus recognized the Lord in the breaking of bread, their journey of faith had not ended. They had to continue coming together with their brothers and sisters in the faith who had also experience the Risen Lord. They had to deepen their faith in the Risen Christ”⁵¹ the idea of Hirmer clearly shows that the real period of deepening the faith involves listen to Christ, staying with Christ and sharing with others the peace and love of Christ. This is indeed the main connection between adult catechesis and SCC. The SCC becomes the forum on which adult catechumens listen to Christ, stay with Christ and share with others the peace and love of Christ by living a life of witness to God’s love.

The SCC is a platform of continuous catechesis in the sense that this is a place of self evangelization. It is a place where Catholics pray together and listen to the Word of God, meditate on human problems in the light of the Good News and try to find solution to their day to day challenges of life in line with the teachings of Christ. The SCC is also a platform of continuous catechesis, for it is a place for all Catholics to learn and live the life of responsibilities, service, compassion, solidarity and concern for the neighbors taking the example of the early Christian Community. Moreover, the SCC is a platform of catechesis worthy of the name of the family of God, for it is the place where integration

⁵¹ O. HIRMER, “Our Journey Together”, 3.

of life and faith becomes a reality. It is a place where followers of Christ are committed to living the love of Christ for everybody. Also, it is a place where the unconditional love of Christ which transcends the limits of tribes, religion, race, color and of the natural solidarity of clan is manifested.

We believe and trust that if all the recommendations made in this thesis are implemented, the SCC will grow into a genuine family of God, where everybody feels at home and realizes themselves to be children of God. When the SCC becomes the true family of God, it works as an instrument in God's hands to help people come to the knowledge of God, to love God and to witnessing to God's love in Jesus Christ.

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Appendix I

The class	Day	Time	Numbers
First year adult baptism English class	Sunday	09am – 11am	12
Second year adult baptism English class	Sunday	09am – 11am	18
Second year adult baptism Swahili class	Saturday	2pm – 4pm	24
First year adult baptism Swahili class	Saturday	2:30pm – 4:30pm	16
Total number			70

The Numbers of Adult Catechumens of OLQP parish

Appendix II



Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish South-B

Appendix III



The Researcher with Adult Catechumens after the Class