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**THE IMPACT OF THE CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES ON YOUNG
PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TODAY: A
PASTORAL CONCERN OF OUR LADY OF VISITATION NABBINGO
PARISH, KAMPALA ARCHDIOCESE-UGANDA**

Supervisor

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A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the

Ecclesiastical Degree of Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Sacred Theology (STB) with specialization in Pastoral Theology. It has never been submitted to any other university or collage for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed.....

Name of the student: **NSIBAMBI GONZAGA**

Date:.....

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the collage supervisor.

Signed.....

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Date:.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother Namagembe Caroline, and my aunt Namukwaya Gorreti, for their sacrifices, prayers and pieces of advice to ensure that I acquire all my basic needs as a human being. Also my siblings; Kitumba, Lutaaya, Kaggwa, Babirye and Nakato for walking with me though this journey.

May the almighty God bless you abundantly

EPIGRAPH

“The future of the world and the Church belongs to the young generation...Christ expect great things from young people.” (*Tertio Millennio adveniente*, 60)

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May God bless you all

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church.
COR	Corinthians.
CV	Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation <i>Christus Vivit</i> , pope Francis, 2019.
Deut	Deuteronomy
EA	Apostolic Exhortation, <i>Ecclesia in Africa</i> , Pope John Paul II, 1995.
EN	Apostolic Exhortation, <i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> , Pope Paul VI, 1975.
EWTN	Eternal Word Television Network.
Exod	Exodus.
FC	Encyclical Letter, <i>Familiaris consortio</i> , Pope John Paul II, 1983.
FR	Father.
Gen	Genesis.
GS	Second Vatican Council Document, <i>Gaudium Et Spes</i> .
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus.
IL	Apostolic Exhortation, <i>Instrumentum Laboris</i> , Pope Benedict XVI, 2010.
Josh	Joshua.
Lk	Luke.
MM	Encyclical Letter, <i>Misericordia et Misera</i> , Pope Francis, 2016.
MR	Mister.
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services.
Num	Numbers.
Prov	Proverbs.
Sam	Samuel.
SCC	Small Christian Community.
Tim	Timothy.
YCS	Young Christian Students.
YCW	Young Christian Workers.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

During my apostolate in Our Lady of Visitation Nabbingo parish, I discovered that young people are granted excessive freedom which has impacted their social-economic, psychological, physical and religious lifestyles, by contributing to their fixation, and undesirable behaviors like gambling, vandalism, stealing, drugs and even prostitution in order to quench their immediate needs and desires and quit the life of God in their daily ways of life. And so despite the efforts done by the Parish to attract and engage young people in Church activities, there is still lack of interest, involvement and active participation of young people in the Church. The continual disengagement of young people, may lead the future Catholic Church into crisis of the faithful members. It is due to this observation from different parishes that I chose this topic so as to investigate on how pastorally the Church can make them understand the importance of God in their lives, help them to overcome the mushrooming obstacles they encounter in life, and suggest possible ways of making them quest for God and be actively engaged in all Catholic Church activities.

Statement of the Problem

The research problem addressed in this study is the decline of young people's engagement in the Church particularly in Our Lady of Visitation Nabbingo parish. Despite the efforts done by the Parish to attract and engage young people in Church activities, there is still lack of interest, involvement and active participation of young people in the Church. This is due to the presence of the modern culture by the

contemporary forces of urbanization which has become standards for their behaviors, hence leading to their lack of interest in the Church. This raises a lot of concern, and it is by this, that we intend to examine the challenges, factors and the impacts of the problem among young people particularly in Nabbingo Parish, which is at the very heart of Kampala city in the realm of the role of the Church to help young people quest for God.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study, standing on grounds of Synodality, aims at examining the root causes, of young people's disengagement in Nabbingo Parish, in an effort to find strategies for effective engagement and retention of young people in the Church. The implication of this research is to influence the development of the strategies for the implementation of youth ministries to engage and retain the attention of young people in the Church. I strongly believe that this research study is beneficial to different groups like the Church leaders, youth chaplains, Kampala Archdiocese, the Catholic Church at large, the government of Uganda, young people themselves who are the victims, as well as the different scholars and academicians who will go deeper to investigate the complexity of this matter.

Objectives of the Study

- To explore young people's disengagement in Nabbingo Parish and identify the challenges they face.
- To analyze the factors contributing to young people's disengagement in Nabbingo Parish.
- To assess the Catholic teachings on young people's accompaniment in the Church.

- To suggest the suitable pastoral measures and approaches of accompanying young people in the Church today.

Research Questions

- What are the contemporary challenges young people face today?
- Why is there a decline in young people's engagement in the Catholic Church?
- How can the Catholic Church participate effectively for the retention and active involvement of young people in the Church?
- What can we do to retain and engage young people in Church activities today?

Justification of the Study

In my five years as a youth leader in Nabbingo Parish which is situated at the heart of Kampala city, I observed that many young people in their concrete situations of life encounter a lot of crisis of growth which teach them hard ways of struggle for their lives, hence rendering them destructive and vulnerable evil forces which lead them to evade God in their lives. And despite the efforts done by the Nabbingo Parish to attract and engage young people in Church activities, there is still lack of interest, involvement and active participation of young people due to the modern culture. A good number of people have given advices on how a human being can be natured and formed, but there is no known current work that treats this topic of the disengagement of young people in Our Lady of Visitation Nabbingo Parish. Given this fact, I have seen it necessary to make a study of the problem, to awaken the Catholic Church with a special emphasis on Nabbingo Parish about its evangelization on the quest for God among the young people, by focusing on Pope Francis' call for Synodality to accept with their free will to let the standards of Christianity reign in their lives as Christian young people in their deeds, actions, attitudes, conduct and other gospel values, and finally come up with

possible pastoral and practical means of journeying with our young people so as to build the future of the Catholic Church.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research study is limited to the young people between the fifteen and thirty-five years of age, with the focus of Our Lady of Visitation Nabbingo Catholic Parish, Kampala Archdiocese context, with a universal call to the whole world, given the fact that, challenges affecting young people's engagement in the Church cut across the Church worldwide.

Research Methodology

To achieve this, the study engages qualitative research, interviews, focused group, review of the prior literature so as to gather relevant information. This research uses a pastoral approach of the pastoral cycle method, of insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and possible practical approaches with different materials so as to achieve its objectives. In this research, both field and library input, has been used, interviews with the young people has been made on how they experience their lives in the Church, as well as different priests and people, and references to relevant scholarly text books. Having been a teenager and youth leader, personal experience was also being used. This implies that the study has implored a descriptive and analytic methods to analyze data and to propose some solutions to the problem of young people's disengagement in Nabbingo Parish and the entire Catholic Church.

Structure of the Study

This research study is divided into four major chapters which explicate the topic of young people's disengagement in Nabbingo parish. The first chapter deals with the contextual background of the challenges of young people's engagement in Nabbingo

Catholic parish. The second chapter concentrates on analyzing the factors contributing to the decline of young people's involvement in the Catholic Church in addition to that, the research gives an assessment of Church teaching on young people in the catholic church basing on scripture, magisterium as well as local church teachings. Finally, gives the possible strategies for effective engagement and retention of young people in the Church.

CHAPTER I

THE CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND OF THE CHALLENGES OF YOUNG PEOPLE’S ENGAGEMENT IN NABBINGO CATHOLIC PARISH

1.0 Introduction

This chapter is arranged in the following sequence. The first part presents the description and background of Nabbingo Parish in Kampala-Uganda. That is, the demographic nature, economic life, social-cultural situation, and religious composition of the parish, In the spirit of this research, which draws upon empirical information as a way of clarifying and justifying the broader search for the challenges of young people’s engagement in the Catholic Church, a particular attention will also be put on the reality of young people and their contemporary challenges, and at the end of it a conclusion will be given.

1.1 Overview of the Description of Nabbingo Catholic Parish

Nabbingo Parish is one of the sovereign Roman Catholic parishes in Kampala Archdiocese. It is historically reported that, it was among those parishes that started as small communities during the coming of the missionaries in Uganda. In 1940, at the presence of a Mill Hill Priest Pere Bec, a small chapel was constructed and having gathered and converted a good number of people, he was able to construct a big Church, the presbytery, and the office block which enabled the small community to be elevated to the level of a Parish in 1942, and it was under Kampala Diocese. Since then, until date, the parish has kept growing socially, spiritually, economically and culturally. This

parish is located nine kilometers from Kampala city, and it is one of the highly populated, due to the fact that it is embarked with different businesses engaged by the people in the city.

1.1.1 Demographical Nature of the Parish

The demography of Nabbingo parish has become increasingly diverse, due to the fact that it is in the capital city of Kampala. The increase in population is due to the rural urban migration whereby, people come to search for jobs and other better social services. The major ethnic groups in the parish include the Baganda, Banyankore, Basoga, as well as other small groups. These groups are culturally and linguistically harmonized under the dialects of Luganda, Runyankore, and Lusoga, with other minor languages. Nabbingo Parish is composed of men, women, young people, youth, old and young.

People in Nabbingo are of different categories, some are highly skilled in various professions and they are engaged in different types of businesses. Due to the availability of Schools, most of the young people are monitored to pursue formal education, while those who have not got chance to study, and others like the unskilled are also engaged in various types of works like farming, and others.

1.1.2 The Economic Life in Nabbingo

The geographical location and the technological influence plays an important role in shaping an economy of any place. Economically, Nabbingo is gifted with economic might in a way that, due to its strategic location, there is always enough rainfall, the soils are fertile to facilitate agriculture, where most of the people engage in growing different cash crops like Matooke, beans, cassava, vegetables with the availability of modern methods of farming, carrying out poultry, animal farming and others which are sold in and out of the country.

In the same line, due to the high possibilities of education, with skilled manpower, a good number of factories, industries, and other financial businesses have been put in place, with the support of the government through the system of NAADS, for the support of agricultural products. This has given a great chance to the young people to engage in different types of businesses for their own survival. However, the main challenge here is that, given the fact that some have been unable to attain education, a good number of the young people are not educated and this has in one way affected their economic life because they end up on streets, and joining other types of criminal cases of theft, robbery and murder at times, so as to get their daily bread.

1.1.3 Social-cultural Situation of Kampala People

Given the increase in population, there is an increased intermarriage between different tribes due to migration resulting from trade, the search for job opportunities, and other better services like education, better housing among others. The Baganda, occupy the greater part of the parish due to the fact that the parish is located in Buganda Kingdom, and among the activities done are, trade, and agriculture. The ethnic makeup of the parish is in a state of change, since migration is not restricted due to the freedom of movements within the country. Many people from across Uganda and outside the country have taken residence within the parish.

It is said that, human beings must socialize and interact in the society. The evidence of this is exhibited in the rate of development in Kampala where all these people in a mixed way, maintain their social influences and give respect to all other social and cultural practices of different cultures. By this, tribal differences are not granted much attention in this parish ministry because of the religious tension of collaborative ministry by the parish that unit all of them and are granted services in harmony. As a city parish, it has a large population of people from all over the country

who come to Kampala to stay, for tourism, for jobs, for marriage and also search for better opportunities of life.

1.1.4 The Religious Composition of the Parish

Nabbingo Parish is religiously composed in a way that people leaving in it include, Catholics, Anglicans and Evangelicals, as well as Muslims, Seventh Day Adventist and those who profess African Traditional Religions. The jurisdiction of Nabbingo Parish according to the book of records, “700,430 are Catholics, out of 1,330,305 people of the general population of Nabbingo” (*Parish records*). The parish is composed of fourteen Sub-Parishes, seventy-two small Christian communities, and three acting priests. It has both indigenous, religious and secular priests, nuns and brothers. The pastoral organization of the parish is decentralized with a Parish executive, Parish Pastoral council, Sub-parishes, small Christian communities, different apostolic groups like, youths, Catholic women’s Gild, Catholic Men’s Guild, young Christians among others.

Given that the parish is surrounded by hospitals, malls, supermarkets, and other small markets as well as businesses, it has Masses from six in the morning for those who are going for work, 7:00am, and 9:00am while those who cannot manage, they come at 1:00pm and 5:00pm. Other services like counseling, visiting the sick, seminars and other apostolic duties are done. This implies that most of the services are attended too by people, although some are not quasi domicile from that parish. The challenge is that the number of young people who engage in these services is low due to the fact that they are immersed in different activities of the day and even night like prostitution, hard work, stealing and others. However, a few who embrace Christ do attend.

1.2 Understanding of Young People

The term ‘young people’ refers to the period of life from childhood into early adulthood that runs from 13 years to 35 years of people who are heterogeneous with age as their common denominator. According to Pope John Paul II in his document, *Tertio Millennio adveniente*, “the future of the world and the Church belongs to the young generation...Christ expect great things from young people”¹ This acknowledges young people as the future of the Catholic Church.

These young people today are found in in their own homes, jobs, streets, discos, schools and families. The transition of young people is always marked by being fully grown, finding one’s identity, being able to support oneself and forming one’s own family. By life phase perspective, it is the period of freedom of, “age brackets which differ from country to country and from one culture to another.”² They are characterized by a good number of life choices, freedom, and they engage in various adult roles, but looking for life partners, having children is usually the last step in their establishment process of life.

1.2.1 Young People and their Daily Life

Young people today are categorized into different groups that is adolescents from 10 to 19 years, young adult from 15 to 24 years, and later adults from 25 to 35 and above who ought to be under accompaniment. Young people today journey in a situation in where there is no protection, supervision or direction due to the current modern culture of permissiveness, and they have become the center players of their daily life. The life of young people is characterized by both positive and negative

¹ John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente: On Preparation for the Jubilee of the Year, 2000* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1988), 60.

² Balogun A., “*The Social life of the Youths*”, In: Ogunsanya A. (Ed.), *Youth’s Social Problems: By-Products of the Society*, (Decency Publishers, Ilorin 1999), 7.

contemporary tremendous challenges of being exposed to all types of lifestyles, and modern technology which have driven them to the evasion of God in their lives.

When one gets a chance of staying in Kampala, he will come to discover that the young people among others are the major targeted victims of the impacts of the current changes of life in a way that, boys are joining practices of homosexuality, and girls become lesbians, their time is spent on phones, discos, gossiping and, passive leisure which has become the order of the day. Gambling like sports betting has become a job and amidst all these, young people gain nothing. When it comes to the dressing codes where male boys put on tight jeans, and tie them under the buttocks, girls moving half naked, hairstyles, piercing their different parts of the body like ears, mouth, and nose. It is in this generation that young people are decorating their bodies with different tattoos at different parts of the body.

1.2.2 Young People's Approach to Realities of Life Today

Young people are understood by the signs of the time, as the future of the world of tomorrow. This is because the future is taken to be lying in their hands. By this, they are full of energy and are always ready to have fun day after day. They take life to be for parties, enjoyment, and they are ever connected with technology which has taken the all their time.

Young people enjoy life to an extent that they do not have any space for worries or sadness in their precious life. They spend their time listening to music, playing games, leisure activities and make their own decisions. Sometime, young people accept advices, but they hate being controlled. They are technology addicts who are ever up to date with mobile phones. The reality of their life is a fashion in its entirety; needless to say, a continuous inevitable orientation, change styles like water.

1.2.3 Young People's Engagement in the Various Groups of the Parish

Pastoral ministry of young people is a branch of the Lay Apostolate in Nabbingo Parish, which is headed by the priest chaplain appointed by the bishop. This ministry is composed of two coordinators male and female, together with two adult lay persons to help in their daily activities of the ministry. The team under the directives of the diocese, mobilizes young people into different groups those in school and outside school for different pastoral activities.

The majority of the young people in Nabbingo Parish who actively participate in different activities in the Church are of the age bracket of 15-25 years followed by the younger ones below 15 years in the pontifical missionary group of “*Bannakizito*,” It is named “*Bannakizito*” due to the young Ugandan martyr by names of “Kizito.” that is, it is also noted that those between the age of 26-30 year also participate in the apostolate.

1.2.3.1 Xaverian and Scout's Movement

This is a movement of both boys and girls. This movement centers on the spirituality of solidarity, development of different personal talents, skills and Christian character formation of an individual. Whatever is done in these movements aim at making young people to become mature, responsible persons, good and responsible Christians with an active prayer life as well as being good citizens who actively participate in the development of the Catholic Church and the entire country through their particular initiatives and service as scouts and xavelians to the society.

These movements, struggle to cultivate among young people the virtues of honesty, kindness, generosity and courtesy to exercise participatory leadership in their daily activities based on teamwork, so as they may assist, and guide young people to actively participate in the practice of prayer, liturgical celebrations and sacramental life

as well as Bible study. Those who engage in these movements, are trained to act as archers during liturgical celebrations. This helps them to develop spiritually, morally, socially as well as offering their skills of solidarity. It results at focusing on the holistic growth and development of young people for the service of the Church and the entire country.

1.2.3.2 Young Christian Students (YCS) and Young Christian Workers(YCW)

These are two groups which are found in the entire universal Catholic Church. YCS, is an international group for all the young people who are in school, universities and colleges, it is a powerful group in Nabbing parish that aims at integrating classroom education with the outside realities by making the students aware of the current world issues like justice, leadership, faith, religion, peace, among others.

The second group is known as YCW, for those who are under the youth age gap but they are outside school either professionally working or school dropouts but are working. This group mainly emphasize almost the same values as the YCS, but it particularly emphasizes some different teachings of life that are centered work and its virtues. Both groups almost share their beliefs with a common aim of making the life of young people enlightened for the church and the society in the most important areas of spirituality, integrity, leadership and commitment, responsibility and the entire human developments so as to be good and responsible citizens and Christians.

1.2.3.3 Church Choirs, Sports

The young people are engaged in the youth choirs of these movements (YCS and YCW), Activities done in these forums give young people a platform to meet and interact such that they may build the communion as Christians. Despite the fact that some downplay these important activities, they are greatly useful for entertainment,

communion, avoid stress, and help them to incorporate the Christian virtues that are projected by the entire group.

Through Sports and other entertainment programs that are done by the young people at the parish, it helps them to learn how to control their temper especially when it comes to sports activities where competition may be stiff, and attend of the day they end up assimilating the good behaviors of being good people as they continue discerning, as well as guiding each other. This also help their bodies to be physically fit due to the exercise they do in sports, such that they may avoid some sickness like diabetes, pressure and others. In the same line, they gain skills which in one way or another may be their future talents which may accompany their future life to be fruitful like when they become good foot or net ballers. The also gain friends for their journey.

1.2.3.4 Legion of Mary

In this devotional group, young people are oriented to the devotion of the Blessed Virgin Mary which is a popular devotion to the entire church. From the discipline of this group, young people acquire the habit of punctuality, administrative skills as well as being committed.

From actively performing legionary work, young people learn humility, self-service and piety and they are always instructed to on how to pray and to prepare for the sacraments and mass. Given the fact that Eucharist is the center of all religious groups, and so Legion of Mary, young people who engage in the group, are taught how to revere and love Jesus Christ by following the Mother Mary as the example.

1.2.4 The Decline of the Young People's Involvement in the Catholic Church

Today it is vividly observed that the young people's involvement in the Church has greatly declined. This declination of young people's engagement in the Church is a global problem where by, even as they drop out of the Church, it has become a serious

current failure to return them back. The main problem of this is lack of family involvement in the upbringing of their children at the tender age, because a family is the first catechetical school and it is a community which transcends to the bigger community the church.

The realities of our time indicates that in the precious future, the church may lack followers, and so it needs a general approach, and due to the fact that we are all witnessing in the current trend, we ought to come out and accompany our young people amidst their challenges with right disposition. It is quite absurd that many young people have lost their destiny which is a reason as to why they were created by God. Thus it is a universal need to the world to come up and address the contemporary challenges together with the young people in order to secure their destinies and the future of the Catholic Church.

1.2.5 The Progressive Evasion of God among Young People

It is well known that the devil among young people is acting very fast and using all possible ways to drive as many souls as possible to hell. Besides the disengagement of young people in the church, a good number of them have also completely evaded God in their lives. “*Evasion of God*” mean’s turning away from God. By this, we clearly see that the trends of evasion of God among young people is rising at a hyper rate in the sense that, young people no longer consider God neither respond to His requirements in their daily life and behavior.

In addition, the presence of the possibilities of life among young people has become a challenge in the sense that, the way young people conduct themselves completely reflect that they are completely doing whatever they do without God in their lives. This is evidenced in the way some sinful activities like murder, fornication, abortion, gossiping, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism among others, are increasing and they

are pushed to be legalized, knowing that they are contrary to God's eternal call and cause of nature.

1.3 The Contemporary Challenges Encountered by Young People Today

The young people today encounter daunting challenges due to the social, cultural economic and religious shifts and serious obstacles such as disease, poverty, and ignorance, which affect their life and end up making them hate themselves and also decline in their involvement in the church.

1.3.1 Presence of Social Media

Through the presence of social media, young people are able to get virtually any information, good or bad, they want, with a just click of a computer mouse or a tap on a smart phone, I-Pad, or any other gadget. The challenge here is that, given the fact that young people today have easy access to internet and they are ever connected, they are able to even get pornographic sites where ladies of easy virtue pose nude or even in the very act of fornication and sex practices, the outcome of this is the immorality and deterioration of human values and norms mainly among young people. Additionally, rape and defilement cases have become common among young people. Thus it is becoming increasingly difficult to find virgin girls and boys among even among young catholic Christians.

Chatting through text messages on other social media like Facebook, whatsapp, twitter, among others are cheap and fast ways of communication. Our young people today make use of these media platforms to pass immoral and worthless messages to their fellow friends which sometimes lead them into different vices like boy-girl friend romantic relationships without any physical knowledge of their parents or guardians, and what surprises is that sometimes they may not even know each other physically.

The dangerous thing is that, it is vividly see that around the clock, young people spend most of their hours opening their eyes chatting, mainly on whatsapp and Facebook,

watching televisions, playing online games, watching football among others. The challenge here is that a lot of the valuable time of the young people which would have been used to study and equip themselves with useful knowledge and increase their spiritual life through engagement in church activities, it is being wasted without any gain. A critical look of this, has resulted to destructive imported version to the young people leading to their decline of their engagement in the church activities like prayers and reading the word of God, and poor academic performance as well as lack of physical relationship.

1.3.2 Entertainment Industry

This industry today poses a great challenge to our young people today, where by, the invention of Television, home videos, and music concerts have been proved to poses a strong effect on young people, pulling them to evade the activities of the church and their spiritual life. These current entertainment possibilities, have led to erotic audios and videos materials which have immorally polluted the mind of the lives of our young people and they become psychologically fixed.

A critical challenge here is that the availabilities of these have made young people to become slaves of the sin of masturbation, lust, incest, homosexuality, lesbianism among young people, and slowly drive them away from sacramental life and their spiritual life.

1.3.3 Availability of Modern Technology

The life of the young people today is under threat and trial due to the availability of advancing modern technology. Today, Televisions, radios, phones, computers and different pornographic films are progressively growing in popularity, but their misuse have been proved with a lot of negative effects in the lives of young people.

According to Fr. Julius Kiyaga, “the importance of mass media in this modern world cannot be emphasized enough as a source of information and development. But misuse of mass media has contributed to the decline of moral formation in the young

people today”³ However, this easy access of technology has downside, particularly to our young people, because mostly due to the misuse, it has contradicted the human values as well as the message of the gospel.

The types of movies exposed to young people are of Hollywood productions which epic violence, promote promiscuous sexuality, alcoholism, addiction to drug abuse, as well as encouragement to self-gratification. Most of these films do not present the good messages of respect for self and others as well as sacrifice as healthy means of achieving their goals. Those who normally attend to these movies spend their time that would have been productively used on productive work for the support of their families and involvement of the church activities.

1.3.4 Unemployment

Among young people, it is vividly becoming increasingly difficult for them to obtain what we call white collar jobs for educated people. Almost every year, different universities and colleges produces graduates, and a good number of young people with potentials succeed and accomplish their studies, but the challenge here is that, most of them search for jobs for years without being employed.

Challengingly, most of our young girls who search for these jobs, face challenges of being tempted to be sexually used before they get their jobs or if they are working to secure their jobs. By this they end up contaminating diseases like HIV, getting unwanted pregnancies, abortions, being raped or if they refuse they might be sent away from work. In the same way, boys also face the challenge of giving bribes so as to secure their jobs or be granted a vacancy. This end up making our young boys think that whatever one ought to get he has to pass through corruption.

³ Julius Kiyaga, *Homily on holy childhood day in Nabbingo Parish*, December 28th 2020

1.3.5 Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Another great challenge among young people today is alcohol and substantial abuse. The usage of substance abuse has opened a lot of doors to the evil practices of sexual immoralities like rape, defilement masturbation, homosexuality, prostitution. What is surprising is that, when a person has not abused any substance, it becomes hard for them to do such things. But it is always after the excessive use of these substances that young people feel they have the energy to do whatever they want. The misuse of these substances have resulted into a lot of physical, psychological, social and sexual abuse.

Today, the prevailing circumstances indicate that, the menace of drug abuse especially among the young people has become an emerging threat. In the sense that drug abusers are mostly adults and adolescents between the ages of 15 and 35 years. It is the age when an individual develops his future ambition and works for his society. But if a young person is a drug addict within this age, he or she may not be able to develop him or herself. Drug abuse can have adverse effects on the individual's reasoning ability, and in this era, the min challenge here is that it has led to the turning of young people into a radical and violent people in a society.

1.3.6 Political Challenge

It is unfortunate that in Uganda when the election time come, each political party come up with its manifesto and sell it to their supporters who are to vote for them and the young people especially those at the age of 18 are engaged. It has been observed that young people are the ones used for complaining, making ladies, and moving here and there to look for votes of the candidates contesting. However, the negative part of it on the life of the young people is that when these candidates are voted in, instead of supporting the young people in their lives, they just step on them and finally forget.

This is a challenge to the young people in the sense that, most times at the end of these elections most of the young people create enmity, anger, stress and other

diseases engaged, but at the end of the day they are not helped and supported by these politicians to grow and develop. Another challenge is that, despite the fact that the young people help to look for the votes, those young people who come out to contest are at times discouraged. This makes them not to be visible and their views and opinions not to be taken to the parliament for discussions

1.3.7 Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation

Prostitution in Kampala is also noticed that it is a business where some elderly ladies rent houses for them, collect them from their houses in the name of getting them jobs, and end up training them how to prostitute. By doing this, it is observed that in connection with the night bars pimps, clients get into contact with the owners of the bars with in identifying the best girls fit for their satisfaction in sex for the moments they want.

These sex workers, when they get the money after their work they take it to the one responsible for them to provide them with their necessities. What is surprising here is that, they are used as sex objects, using their bodies for business. The main challenge in the society is that, the practice of this immoral exercise of prostitution is attributed prevalence to the availability of condoms which block pregnancy to take place hence violating human dignity and rights.

1.3.8 The Negative Peer Pressure and its Effect

Peers are people who are part of the same social groups. Precisely so the term peer pressure refers to the influence that people of the same social groups can have on each other. Young people today tend to journey without the accompaniment and companionship of their parents and guardians, hence absorbing a lot of information about the new culture and social values from their peers which often make them confused where by some of these values are dangerous to their future. These peer groups today encourage vices of theft, gossiping, inappropriate language, smoking and

drug abuse, violence as well as other antisocial behaviors which dissociate them from their involvement in the church due to their appearance.

In their life, they tend to conform to the behavior, dress and attitudes of their peers in order to achieve and maintain a sense of belonging. Peer groups of young people can be positive and supportive, however, on the other side, it can also most times the pressure becomes negative and result in serious problems which they in return fail to admit or recognize. In the life of the young people today, peer pressure has become a major channel through which the current floods of evils rotate in the ideas of young people hence sweeping all their Christian identity. The current observation today is that they value the opinions of their peer than that of their guardians, parents, pastors and teachers. Hence leaving an unguided life which make them unhappy at the end and decline in their engagement in the church.

The most challenging point is that, the rapid changes of modernity in our society today are without guidelines and programs to assist young people to cop up with peer pressure and appreciate their self-worth. Even those few young people who are actively involved in church activities and remain committed have difficulties to find appropriate programs that can consummate with their adolescent needs as modern young people.

Conclusion

On the basis of the contextual background laid, the chapter has explored the contemporary challenges faced by young people. With a crucial indication of Social media, entertainment industry, Modern technology, gambling, unemployment, alcohol and substantial abuse, politics, prostitution, and peer pressure as crucial challenges, but they are not limited to only those discussed in this chapter. The above mentioned challenges provide the study with the necessary impetus to critically analyze the causes that leads to disengagement of young people in the church in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DECLINE OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

2.0 Introduction

This chapter ought to analyze, the factors that influence the involvement of the young people in the Catholic Church. It is astonishing that the world we live in today has brought a lot of changes in human life causing great varied effects to many young people and their faith. This is due to the fact that, young people are taken up by worldly affairs, it is greatly conceptualized that, wrong mentality, post-modern way of life, identity crisis, and the activities of the modern culture have spiritually drained the social, moral, psychological and spiritual, life of young people, and it has directly and indirectly affected their life and understanding of nature and God.

Various studies have pointed at different factors that are associated with the disengagement of young people. During this study, it was discovered that, there are tremendous factors contributing to young people's disengagement in the church which most times are taken for granted where one may hardly recognize that their emanating negative effects on the life and faith of the young people yet they do. These factors are individual, social, and economic factors.

2.1 Individual Factors

As young people strive to find their position in the Church and society, there are factors that affect them individually, which lead them to evade the Church. Below are some of the individual factors that contribute to the disengagement of young people.

2.1.1 Sexual Immorality

The world of today for the young people have become so unimaginable due to sex education and availability of easy access of pornography and the like, a lot of young people have been exposed to sexual practices and this has led to sexual weakness among them in a sense that they have reached at a time when they can no longer control and handle morally their feelings and emotions and eventually engage in fornication, homosexuality, bestiality, prostitution and pre-marital sex. The practices of sexual immorality are not only practiced by young people, but also by some married people who engage themselves in adulterous acts day by day.

Through practicing sexual deviations which are against the divine intention of God for sexuality, young people today engage in such acts which defile their image of God. It is unfortunate that, during these immoral acts, many young girls have contracted early pregnancies, and diseases like, HIV/AIDs that affect their health, wealth and joy. When they become pregnant, this leads them to feel shame and guilt whereby they find themselves not able to associate with their fellow friends in their youth groups. Eventually, due to that, now due that such girls find themselves disassociating themselves from the church activities however much they may have been active before and at the end of the day end up disengaging themselves from the church.

2.1.2 Grief from Past Sinful Life

It is unfortunate that, a lot of young people's conception on a joyous eye always lead them into grievous sins like getting unwanted pregnancies and end up engaging themselves in abortion, child sacrifice, witchcraft, and desire for wealth. At the end of the day, they feel that they have committed a number of sins and crimes to the extent that they cannot be forgiven, hence becoming secular in their moral failure.

In addition, according to the teaching of the Church, it is clear that when people engage in sexual activities and they start living together or they give birth to children,

they are not supposed to receive sacraments until they go for official wedding in the Church through the sacrament of marriage. In such a situation, many of our young people find themselves in such a situation where they feel that their sinful life is itself a whole and blockage from the reception of the sacraments, so they see no need of coming to Church because they cannot even be engaged in anything. Thus, this has led a good number of them deciding to stay at home, or to join the society activities that enhance their foreseen interests in the world hence a decline in their involvement in the Church.

2.1.3 High Expectation from the Church

Some of our young people have disengaged in the church because they come to engage in church activities, with high expectations of obtaining some material benefits, like education, money, health assistance, jobs and other tangible assistance. Thus failure to obtain their expectations, because of their proof that whenever they come with this primary mindset, they often concentrate to their expectation only in activities of prayer, praise, and worship, charity and other youth activities, they feel disappointed due to the feeling that these activities are just time consuming without any material gain or assistance. Hence they slowly by slowly withdraw from their active participation.

In the same line, having engaged themselves in church activities, according to them, they state that, Christian teaching have no solution for their immediate problems. As it is clearly known that, young people, encounter many challenges of childlessness, illness diseases, poverty, and unemployment, just to mention a few which they come thinking that God will answer their prayers. Thus, despite their commitment and engagement, they tend to feel after some time that God seems to care less about their problems and so they quit from their active involvement or at times join other religious sects where they expect thing to work as easily as they want.

2.1.4 Influence of Formal Education

The world of today is struggling to be acquitted with social, psychological, philosophical, economic, geographical, and other disciplines of knowledge. This is good however, the more the further they have gone in intellectual capacity due to formal education, the knowledge that has been acquired has become a barrier to their faith in the existence of God in their lives.

In a similar situation, the influence of formal education has greatly led young educated people to be critical on the Christian teachings and as a result they end up basing their lives on acquired knowledge to drive them hence decline in their involvement in the Church or even evasion of God.

2.2 Social Factors

For a good number of years, society has been concerned about the progressive life of young people, and their social connection both with the church and society. There are registered social contemporary factors that have influenced the social life of young people leading to their disengagement in the Church.

2.2.1 Increment of Mixed Marriages

According to the Bible and Christian tradition make marriage and the family are not human conventions based merely on a temporary consensus and time-honored tradition. Instead, Scripture teaches that family was God's idea and that marriage is a divine, not merely human, institution (*GS, 12* and *CCC, 1602*). Therefore, marriage is far more than a human social contract; it is a divinely instituted covenant. For this reason, it is not self-interest, human advantage or an unfettered commitment to personal freedom that governs the marriage relationship, but the husband and wife's joint commitment to conduct their marriage based on God's design and sovereign plan.

Today's society, there is a lot of mixed marriages and are viewed as social conventions that can be entered into and severed by the marital partners at will. In the mind of today's young people, marriage is like a relationship where by one or both partners may decide to break up the marriage and enter a new, or even worst marital union. By doing this, they feel that they are discovering their self-interest, self-realization, and self-fulfillment. By this we see that many young boys and girls have entered marriage with people of different religions making an increment of mixed marriages. And they feel that they are free to move out of such marriages, and nothing should hold them back.

Furthermore, in Nabbingo Parish, many young people have a secular view of marriage based on self-interests which is divorced from the original will of God, thus making Christian marriage a challenge. Due to permissiveness, some young people especially girls just get partners and are just taken by men without any proper knowledge of their religious background after a given time, they come to discover that they are engaged with Muslims, Adventist, Orthodox among others mainly during the time when they are already pregnant. This has limited their active engagement in the Catholic Church in a way that when they get husbands of such religion, the first thing they do is to instruct them to abort their beliefs, teachings and follow the religion of their partners.

2.2.2 Lack of Parental Commitment

The present decadence of spiritual, moral, and psychological growth in Kampala today according to Justine Kaddu, the senior woman of Nabbingo parish, is attributed to the, "careless attitudes of parents who neglect the aspect of giving proper training to their young ones."⁴ Most parents these days are too busy to give quality time and

⁴ Justine Kaddu, *Parent's Seminar at Nabbingo Parish*, November 22nd 2021.

attention to their children for first initial teachings of catechism, like making a sign of the cross, simple family prayers as well as other social ways of human growth.

It is strange that, due to the unavailability of parents in the lives their children, they pay teachers and nannies to play their roles while they spend long hours out of the home in the name of looking for money and support for the family. At the end of the day, when children notice that their parents are not active even in church activities because they are tired throughout the week and it is only on Sunday that they get enough time to rest and refresh, they copy the same and end up growing without engaging in the church activities even missing important stages of studying religious instructions when they are still growing.

Justine Kaddu is of the opinion that, “parents should talk to their children, answer their questions, go on site-seeing with them, tell them stories and give them a sense of security and confidence.”⁵ However, in shaping the lives of the youths, we dare not leave the bulk of the work in the hands of the school authorities, the church or social influence or foster parents.

In an Interview with the chaplain of young people in Nabbingo Parish, Fr. Ssendi Joseph reported that, “the present problems that the young people are going through today are as a result of the negligence of child training by past generations of parents.”⁶ The past generation of parents tried their best to training their children in all aspects of life including their religion. In addition, he said that, the role of the mother here is to spend quality time with their children so as to be able to know their areas of interest and make them involve in church activities. When parents have the knowledge of the areas of interest of their young people, only then will they be able to guide them in their

⁵ Justine Kaddu, *Parent’s Seminar at Nabbingo Parish*.

⁶ Joseph Ssendi, *Parent’s Seminar at Nabbingo Parish*, November 22nd 2021.

areas of interest towards helping them to develop spiritually and be good Christians fully engaged.

2.2.3 Permissiveness and Secularization

The post-modern vices of permissiveness and secularization, have impacted the engagement of young people in the Catholic Church. Permissiveness is defined as, “an interpersonal style or approach that involves giving a wide range of freedom and autonomy to those with whom one has dealings or over whom one has authority.”⁷ Besides this, according to Steve Bruce, a sociologist, secularization is defined as a “social condition manifest in the declining importance of religion for the operation of non-religious roles and institutions such as the state and the economy... and a decline in the extent to which people engage in religious practices, display beliefs of a religious kind, and conduct other aspects of their lives in a manner informed by such beliefs.”⁸ Secularization is by no means merely theoretic, it is the process responsible for what philosophers and theologians have called the ‘post-Christian era’ and it frequently leads to desacralizing process in the lives of people and culture.

The Permissiveness and secularizing processes have manifests themselves in the progressive separation of faith and culture of young people. These have influenced young people in a way that, they experience a big distance from the sacred and spiritual life on the practical level. A practical example is the contemporary culture of individualism, exaggerated freedom and pleasure that militate against permanence, where many young people today prefer spending time on social media and other social gadgets than involving themselves in prayer, worship and formative reflection on the Scripture and Church’s teachings. This has affected the church and the young people in

⁷ <https://dictionary.apa.org/permissiveness>.

⁸ <https://revisesociology.com/2018/08/21/what-is-secularization/>.

a way that, many young people are continuing to live in a climate of increasing unbelief and religious disengagement.

The youth coordinator at the parish level in his speech on the parish youth day stated that, secularism is one of the major factors affecting young people. In his observation, he reported that, “nowadays some young people because of secularism do not take their religious values and church teachings very serious...the wide spread of secularism, relativism and religious pluralism have led to a disorientation of minds of the young people about certain practices that are abominable in the Catholic Church such as homosexuality, abortion and bestiality.”⁹ Today many young people are engaging themselves in worldly activities which have made them to be too busy outside their baptismal calling.

2.2.4 Mass media

John Mukwaya, in his view said that, mass media is the primary means of communication used to reach the vast majority of the general public. The most common platforms for mass media are radio, newspapers, television, magazines, and the internet. mass media is generally known to have given us a platform to voice our opinions on the social, economic, political, religious and above all moral issues and share information with one another. It has brought out easy, “ways of communication and provided us with easily accessible means to reach out to people in various parts of the world.”¹⁰ Thus, in this way it is advantageous.

A good number of people including young people in school and outside school, typically relies on the mass media to provide information regarding spiritual, social, moral, political, academics and entertainment issues. This is concretized in a way that, mass media as, “channels of communication that involve transmitting information in

⁹ John Mukwaya, Youth Coordinator, *Speech on Nabbingo parish youth day*, October, 04th 2021.

¹⁰ John Mukwaya, Youth Coordinator, *Speech on Nabbingo parish youth day*.

some way, shape or form to large numbers of people.”¹¹ Given that mass media is a fascinating term in Kampala, and the internet being the chief host of media sites, it has made young people in Nabbingo to become fulltime clients.

Fr. Ssendi, the chaplain of young people at the parish, in an interview said that; “the media has increased social and moral awareness of the young people, and it has served as an information provider, with an exposure to the world outside our comfortable homes.”¹² This is true since the media today has resulted in an exchange of views on a variety of subjects of a wide variety of people from all around the world, thereby leading to a global exchange of information and knowledge in various aspects of life where all “the rich and poor, educated and illiterate, young and old, Muslims and Christians now enjoy the services of the media. But the young people are the major players in this sector, as they have been tagged as the digital age.”¹³

A good number of sociologists have studied mass media to critically analyze how it shapes people’s values, beliefs, perceptions and behavior. Despite its productive aspect, social media has antagonized with the lives of our young people in a way that, they are able to easily access pornographic films and visit corrupt web pages on the internet. Young people today spend most of their time listening and watching television, videos and different films. The growing electronic entertainments have glued both adult and youths to television and radio for hours where by, television programs today encourage young people to imitate crimes, wrong dressing and behaviors seen on the screen. Most of these actions or behaviors are done under the influence of intoxication.

Continually, these electronic media such as television and internet have also influenced people’s views of morality and exposed them to new ways of experiencing

¹¹ John Mukwaya, Youth Coordinator, *Speech on Nabbingo parish youth day*.

¹² Joseph Ssendi, Chaplain, *Interview on Nabbingo parish youth day*, October, 04th 2021

¹³ Joseph Ssendi, Chaplain, *Speech on Nabbingo parish youth day*, October, 04th 2021

dating, sex lottery or gambling through the internet. These have influenced young people's activities which are contrary to religious values, and have contributed enormously to the degradation of human dignity in our generation. This is due to the fact that, young people today have placed their faith in science and technology with belief that technology can solve all their current problems. This has increased cases of sexual immorality, corruption and atheistic tendencies.

Furthermore, it is observed that some of the active young people in Nabbingo have been affected by mass media by adopting to violent actions which they watch from movies and start to practice them. Aggressive behavior is the first example of violence in the media. Many young people who watch violent movies end up behaving in an aggressive way towards others for example bullying and fighting in schools and in society and when they are arrested, they stop appearing to church. This is one of the greatest danger in the lives of young people where their lives are put at high risks of developing into aggressive behavior that may last to adulthood if they are not being supervised on what they see. This shows clearly Christian virtues start to vacate from such young people hence becoming terrorists or even rebels in the world.

In the homily given by the parish priest on the youth day of Nabbingo Parish, Fr. Kiggundu stated it that, "the media in itself is so addictive that once glued to it, one tends to forget everything else, when you are not watching television, you are surfing the internet, when you are not on the web, you are reading newspapers, when you are not reading anything; you are listening to something. Thus, all the time, you are glued to some form of media."¹⁴ This according to him has created room for majority of the young people to give enough space for the devil. This is observed in the sexual immoralities which have become the talk of the day in the resulting into pre-marital

¹⁴ Charles Kiggundu, Parish Priest, *Homily on Nabbingo parish youth day*, October, 04th 2021.

sex, homosexuality and lesbianism as vices among our young people leading to destruction of human dignity and disengagement of young people in the Church.

2.2.5 Peer Group Influence

This has to do with an individual associating with his/her age group. One of the functions of the peer group is that it makes youths more independent of parents and other authorities. When the young is left more with peers than parents, they become peer-dependent, and whenever the impressionable young mind is given to unchristian peer values, it results into low self-esteem and low respect for parents. The influence of friends' ranks as number one in influencing the moral, social and spiritual life of young people in Nabbingo parish hence hindering their engagement in the church.

Whenever a young person is left to grow by him or herself, it becomes a potential danger to himself, his parents and home, the society and the future of his nation. Thus Many young people due to lack of committed parents have been exposed by their peers to media that has caused immorality, and corrupt their good behaviors into bad. This in one way has also cause young people who are disturbed by peers without being guided to abandon the church due to the fact that there is no one to follow up the right path and activeness of the child.

2.3 Economic Factors

Economically, everyone is striving towards being in a good and wealthy state in the society. This implies that no one wants to live without money, job or ways of self-sustenance in this contemporary world. The biggest problem for this study on the economic side is that, there are some economic factors noted, that have negatively contributed to the declination of young people's involvement from the Church.

2.3.1 Unemployment

Observation shows that; many young people Nabbingo Parish are unemployed where graduates of colleges and universities constitute part of the jobless in Kampala population, leading to the dilemma of young people's development. The widespread unemployment to young people make them to have no opportunities available and this makes them redundant and since it is well known that; "*an idle mind is a devil's workshop*" hence immorality crops in to make the active.

Unemployment, is a state of not having a job or work to earn a living. Joblessness among the young people in Nabbingo stimulates the exhibition of immoral acts and behaviors where by when young people are unable to earn a living, they turn to social vices such as armed robbery, drug abuse, illicit sex and so on.

Apart from these social vices, they look at themselves as second class Christians who are poor to an extent that they cannot even afford to contribute to their groups, parties and other arrangements as youth groups, hence leading them to depression, low self-esteem and frustration. By this young people to evade the church in a way that they become impatient in Christian life and develop a thinking that their prayers which are ought to be answered immediately are either not heard or God has forgotten them, hence quitting from their engagement.

2.3.2 Gambling and Sports Betting

As one of the passive leisure activities, gambling has come out as one of the most problematic challenge affecting young people especially boys today. This is done in the format of betting money or some form of property on the outcome of a game which is based on chance. This has become a society courtesy of liberalization of the game in the world. In the same way, access to internet, wide spread presence of cafes and affordability of information technology gadgets like smart phones, Laptops, I-pads among others.

Sports betting is among the common popular type of gambling in Uganda that has attracted the life of male young people. Given the fact that some get money out of it, on the greater side it has done more harm than good because of the disturbing effects on those addicted young people who become obsessed. The main challenge here is that many young people have borrowed money, sold their property, others are imprisoned, and some have become unemployed because of betting. Gamblers have taken sports betting as their hobby and a form of recreation which in one way or another it has put their families, and jobs at a risk. To make matters worse, this business is practiced by primary, secondary and tertiary institution students which in another way it has interfered with their learning ability of concentration.

Sports betting has affected the spiritual life of young people and their engagement in a way that, most of the times, church activities are arranged over the weekend including Sunday as the day of the Lord for prayers. This has become a predicament in a sense that, at the same time when these activities are to take place, is also the same time the international sports football and other games are to take place. This means that given the secularism and permissiveness of young people, many of them mostly male young people have neglected the activities of the church and opted to watch football matches because they find themselves competing in betting and so they have to be present when the match is taking place and the end of the day leads to decline of their engagement in the Church.

2.3.3 Desire for Quick and Unnecessary Material Wealth

Today young people are preoccupied with a lot of world activities as they strive to look for their daily bread, and they end up having no time for carrying out God's work. They put much of their energy on material life than spiritual growth. This is due to the love of money that has made many young people to indulge in all sorts of immorality. The reality is that, young people want to become rich within a short time

and because of this excessive desire for material wealth, some of them can even kill in order to acquire material wealth. This love of money and other material wealth is becoming the root cause of all evils among young people, because due to this some has become perfect murderers, robbers who after being arrested they end up in jail where they cannot engage in the Church.

Furthermore, it is known in normal circumstances that dishonest money dwindles away, but he or she who gathers money little by little from his or her personal efforts, makes it grow. Many young people in Nabbingo parish lack the virtue of patience. By this, many of them gather money in dishonest ways like through theft, robbery among others, and when they are arrested they can no longer engage in church activities due to shame, hence disengagement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a critical analysis of the factors presented in this chapter reveals the urgent need to assist young people in their decision making because they are likely to be driven by the post-modern culture at a very high speed, yet they are the future of the Church of tomorrow. The above analyzed factors, if properly addressed, will help our young people to be strengthened and to avoid the worldly waves that are daily blowing to sweep them away.

CHAPTER III

CHURCH TEACHING ASSESSMENT ON YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

3.0 Introduction

The Church has pastorally involved herself in the pastoral activity and integral development of young people, by directly engaging them in their social, economic, spiritual and educational programs as part of its evangelization and attraction to their engagement in the Church. Having acknowledged the declination of young people's involvement in the Church which is becoming a pastoral problem, the focus of this chapter is to draw the understanding of young people from the scriptural background, and make an assessment and reflection of some of the Church teachings on the accompaniment of young people through evangelization.

3.1 Biblical Understanding of the Young People

The ministry of young people has an enormous Biblical precedent in it, because in a good number of scriptural passages a lot is presented on how God used young people to pass His message, with some prominent figures like Solomon, Joshua, Joseph, David, Daniel, Abednego, Shadrach and Abednego among others, who exercised the great faith as great icons but they are rarely acknowledged and imitated by the young people today. This proves that God in His redeeming work, works in and through young people. This implies that, young people are gifts of God, sources of joy and happiness, and signs of blessings. If the Church can borrow a leaf of what the God is doing and journey with

the young people, his will draw a good number of them into His kingdom and inspire them to continue with their prophetic work as disciples with and among themselves.

3.1.1 Young People in the Old Testament

Reading from the Old Testament, we get it clear that in its admonishment to ensure that young people are accompanied to know the precepts of God. God in the book of Deuteronomy, invite the Israelites to accompany their young people by teaching them to obey and revere God (Deut 4:9-10). Thus “we are to train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Prov 22: 6). The Old Testament portrays several figures of young people who embraced the call of God and ended up questing for Him. Some of them also went through a lot of difficulties and suffering but they managed to keep the fire burning.

3.1.1.1 David Son of Jesse

One of the marked scripture about David in the Bible is the story of David (1Sam 17) where David as an obedient son of his father (1 Sam 17:17-20), a brave soldier was tested by God for a number of times. From the family of Jesse, David is noted to be the youngest child among his eight siblings, David according to (1 Sam 17:28). Nobody was taking him as a serious child and in the same way, he did not have much as far as property was concerned. God is said to have placed David in form of the giant Israel to fight against him so as to save the Israelites. Given his age he was able by the power of God to slay Goliath a giant enemy of the Israelites and killed him.

David as a youngest son of his father, presented himself before the king as someone who was enthusiastic and ready to go and fight Goliath. He was given five stones and fought with Goliath whom after raising a single stone he was able to hit him to the ground. David took Goliath’s sword and cut off the head of Goliath and killed him. David was a young man who was tested by God and ended up doing great things for Him whom he entrusted.

3.1.1.2 Joseph Son of Jacob

Joseph is one of the sterling figure of young people in the Old Testament. Joseph was a favorite son of his father, something that incited the passionate envy of his brother. He was sold by his siblings while a teenager and he was transported to Egypt. It is noted in scripture that after his betrayal by the family members and being sold into slavery, instead of taking advantage of the sexual advances of an older married woman, Joseph refused join into sexual intercourse with her. This was due to the fact that Joseph wanted to cling to purity out of his obedience to God and he declares, “How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God” (Gen 39:9). We see that this commitment and obedience to God’s precepts, resulted into God’s fervour, despite the fact that it was a trial moment I his life. As a young man, God observed his strong integrity and allowed him to hold a high position in Egypt, where he became an important person to his family members who had sold him by saving them from anger. Joseph in his strong trust in God, exemplify what integrity looks like in the life of young people, mostly when they encounter temptations and other worldly challenges.

God used Joseph to save the world from starvation and deliver his family as a well. This was due to the fact that Joseph as a young man listened to God, that he always remained faithful and committed to God. Therefore, it is not until one becomes mature that he or she can follow God, but with the example of Joseph, young people can make their confession of faith to God and serve Him. And so young people ought to directly engage themselves in church so as to attentively listen to God’s voice as Joseph did to become fully devoted followers of Christ both today and tomorrow because they are still strong.

3.1.1.3 Joshua Son of Nun

Another example of God calling young people to serve, obey and love Him is Joshua who is said to have been mentored by Moses since his youth stage. (Num11:28) Joshua is a young adult who by the time he was choses and accompanied by Moses.

When Moses went to intercede with the Lord in the Tent, Joshua went with him. The unique benefit of being with Moses was a great advantage of Joshua to learn from Moses and it was a plan of God to raise Joshua for the future leadership. In accompaniment with Moses, Joshua watched Moses' styles of leadership something that changed him from being a good leader (Exod 18). Due to the fact that Joshua listened and imitated Moses' conversation with God (Exod 33), and he also took a good number of challenging works which were given to him by his mentor Moses (Exod 17).

Joshua as a young man, in his journey with Moses learnt how to stand upon the convictions of God's provisions. And later on declared his obedience in leading the people of Israel to take possession of the Promised Land. In his mission, as a young man he declared that "he and his house hold will serve the Lord" (Josh 24:15). This calls us to note that each generation due to its dynamisms must be taught who God is and what He has done in the lives of people but especially young people. It is always dangerous to assume that the past faithfulness will always continue. This implies that the pathway ought to continue to be refreshed with each generation of young people such that they may clearly know the great historical legacy of how God has loved and called the young people in the salvation history to obey, love and serve Him. This implies their involvement in all church activities by being mentored just as Joshua was with Moses.

3.1.1.4 Solomon Son of David

In the Old Testament who is well talked about in his leadership as a king was Solomon. Solomon is described as a little young man who began his reign in his early young ages. It is well noted that during his reign he was told to ask whatever he wanted to lead God's people and here it is clear that as a young man, he would have asked for riches, security, money, power and many others, but what surprises is that he abandoned all those and requested for wisdom. In this life of a biblical young man a lot stands as

a lesson to all young people today that amidst all that they need in life, wisdom of God stands to be the best gift ever that they can inquire from God and helps them to get whatever they need. However, what is surprising is that if a young person is asked today to ask for whatever he or she want, wisdom will be the last but it will be, cars, parties, houses, business and many others.

Solomon as a young man stands a good figure to all young people today. When you read the book of Ecclesiastes, you get to discover that just young people are taken by the different world desires, Solomon during his time had pursued the most popular ways of life, seeking fulfilment of purpose and came up empty. As discussed in the first chapters, a good number of pathways are exulted by our young people today which they claim to be good like movies, Television, mass media among others. For this reason, Solomon evaluate his life and conclude to all young people. This is the foundation of our biblical rationale of accompanying young people. As it is vividly observed that, many young people today have become entangled in the affairs of the world, and end up missing peace and joy that God designed for all His followers.

3.1.2 New Testament Understanding of the Young People

Jesus in his ministry give an emphasis on the importance of the ministry of young people. This is evident in the synoptic Gospels which record Him calling children to come to Him. Jesus was also young when he practiced His public ministry. Through His time on earth, Jesus contextualized his public ministry to whoever came to Him including young people

In the same church, there are ministers who are under the same age group of the young people, like those in their early thirties, they are encouraged to “Do not let anyone look you down because you are young but set an example for he believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity” (1Tim 4:12).

3.1.2.1 Jesus Earthly Son of Joseph

Given the fact that the church stands its understanding of young people from fifteen to thirty-five, Jesus' earthly life is also bracketed in the same age. As it is indicated in the gospels that Jesus was born, and grew just like any other human being. The greatest understanding of young people's mission is generally from Luke's gospel where Jesus is described as a young person/ teenager. The gospel according to Luke states that, "when Jesus aged twelve years, He went to the temple of Jerusalem with His parents" (Lk 2:42).

This does not focus on His Christological nature but on the fact that Jesus grew from the natural childhood, teenager and young adulthood. It is well noted that just as the current generation of young people, Jesus during His young adult hood, he encountered a number of challenges like obeying parents, developing His self-identity, puberty, relationships with others and with God among others.

3.1.2.2 Mary Daughter of Joachim

In the life of Mary, a mere teenager she has never paid attention to marriage, until she received the news that she was to give birth to a son of God. She was composed with a lot of purity in the sense that she was virgin at the age of sixteen, and she became confuse of the news from the angel. Despite the fact that the news may sound exiting, this could imply a possible death by atoning because her relatives and friends would have thought that she engaged with a certain man outside the bonds of marriage. Given that it was God's plan so that His glory and will may come true, When the angel came to her with the good news from God, she just said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord...may it be done according to your word, then the Angel left her" (Luke 1:38).

It is scripturally noted that she accepted the angel's message. This has an indicator that engagement and commitment to God's plan is not easy at all, because it comes without notice, but come to shocking through angels, miracles just as it happened

to Peter when they spent the whole night and caught nothing but when Jesus appeared they were able to obey His word and a miracle happened, something which made them to follow Jesus. Although Commitment to God is not easy but with the blessings of God all become possible.

3.2 Catholic Social Teachings on Young People's Accompaniment

Catholic social teachings on young people mainly stands on papal encyclicals, magisterium, and other local Church teachings. It is where the popes and bishops provide a pastoral guide to the universal Church on the Synodal journey with the young people based on the gospel values, to enable young people fit in the Church and society, and as our study is, to be able to interact, and involve in all activities. It is the Church's prophetic evangelizing mission in the world and in society inspired by Gospel values and universal ethical principles to accompany young people.

3.2.1 Papal Encyclicals

The word "Encyclical" refers to a "circular letter". Papal encyclical is one of pope's highest forms of communication used for condemning, clarifying, promoting and amplifying some issues. They are addressed to the universal catholic clergy, laity and the people of good will. They contain pope's views on church teachings and doctrines in a given area of life of the church.

3.2.1.1 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation (Christus vivit)

In *Christus vivit*, Pope Francis which calls for the renewal of the Church's understanding of young people and the entire congregation of God's people. Its focus is on how the Synodal Church can journey with young people in a discernment way through its pastoral method of see, judge and act to give them light. Having listened to the young people, it was discovered that in the Church programs young people are not much thought of. Thus neutralized this by saying that, "young people frequently fail to

find in our usual programs a response to their concerns, their needs, their problems and issues.”¹⁵ As a universal call he added that, “it does not matter where they are coming from or what labels they have received, whether “conservative” or “liberal”, “traditional” or “progressive”. What is important is that we make use of everything that has borne good fruit and effectively communicates the joy of the Gospel.”¹⁶

It is true that in today’s academics world, young people’s faith, behavior and lifestyles are not well observed and thought of carefully this triggered the Holy Father to ask the Church and the world as well to, “make our institutions better equipped to be more welcoming to young people... If the young grow up in a world in ashes, it will be hard for them to keep alive the flame of great dreams and projects. If they grow up in a desert devoid of meaning, where will they develop a desire to devote their lives to sowing seeds? The experience of discontinuity, up rootedness and the collapse of fundamental certainties, fostered by today’s media culture, creates a deep sense of orphan hood to which we must respond by creating an attractive and fraternal environment where others can live with a sense of purpose.”¹⁷

In a way of offering them counseling, Pope Francis advised young people to, “make the most of these years.... Don’t observe life from a balcony... whatever you do, do not become the sorry sight of an abandoned vehicle... Take risks, even if it means making mistakes... Make a ruckus! Cast out the fears that paralyze you, so that you don’t become young mummies. Live! Open the door of the cage, go out, and fly! Please don’t take an early retirement.”¹⁸ This ought to be observed by all young people such that they may be socially, spiritually and economically balanced to overcome all the troubles of the world.

¹⁵ Pope Francis, post Synodal apostolic Exhortation: *Christus Vivit, (Christ is Alive)*, 2019, No. 202.

¹⁶ Pope Francis, post Synodal apostolic Exhortation: *Christus Vivit, (Christ is Alive)*, No. 205.

¹⁷ Pope Francis, post Synodal apostolic Exhortation: *Christus Vivit, (Christ is Alive)*, No. 216.

¹⁸ Pope Francis, post Synodal apostolic Exhortation: *Christus Vivit, (Christ is Alive)*, No. 143.

While concluding his letter, Pope Francis in a sentimental way stated that, “my joyful hope is to see you keep running the race before you, outstripping all those who are slow or fearful. Keep running, attracted by the face of Christ, whom we love so much, whom we adore in the Holy Eucharist and acknowledge in the flesh of our suffering brothers and sisters.... The Church needs your momentum, your intuitions, your faith. We need them! And when you arrive where we have not yet reached, have the patience to wait for us.”¹⁹

3.2.1.2 Evangelii Nutiandi

In this document *Evangelii Nutiandi*, Pope Paul VI made it clear that evangelization stands to be the main mission of the Catholic Church, and it is the great, “task and mission which the vast and profound changes of present day society make all the more urgent.”²⁰ In His mind he, enlightened that the Church is a product of Christ’s evangelization which ought to be extended to all people where young people make part of the congregational Church. In this line, it is an ecclesial duty and obligation to accompany, catechize and nourish the spiritual, social and physical life of young people with the help of the light of the Gospel, granting them hope of life to secure the future Church of God on earth.

Pope Paul VI, continues to invite the family as the primary unit of evangelization. By this, he calls parents to be the primary teaches of faith and morals to their children which will help them to grow when they are morally upright and strong to defeat all challenges the face acknowledging God in their life. In addition, He acknowledges the special role of young people play in the growth of the church of today and tomorrow. By asking those responsible to take their duty and hand over the faith to the young people through teaching them, praying with and for them and listening to all

¹⁹ Pope Francis, post Synodal apostolic Exhortation: *Christus Vivit*, (*Christ is Alive*), No. 299.

²⁰ Pope Paul VI, Encyclical, *Evangelii Nutiandi* (*On Evangelization In The Modern World*), December 8th, 1975, No. 14.

their concerns, and engage them in various responsibilities of the Church to keep the unity and progress of the Church. The implication of all these, is to give hope to the young people by initiating to church activities, decision making such that the imparted knowledge may positively change their lives and in the long run contribute to the growth of the Church.

3.2.1.3 *Familiaris Consortio*

In this document *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope John Paul, narrates the rights that children ought to have and that their respect as young people and as human beings together with their human dignity, ought to be preserved in good health. The Holy Father, in his main portrays it that without young people it is difficult for any country to predict the future. And on this he stated that, “acceptance, love esteem...emotional and spiritual concern...”²¹ for the children must enable them to grow in “wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (Lk 18:16).

In the same message of the Roman Pontiff, the young people of Nabbingo Parish by laying a strong foundation right from families, Small Christian Communities, in collaboration with the clergy through prayer, living and working together and living the gospel values which portrays Godly life in the growth of the young people, can help to solve the contemporary challenges young people in Nabbingo face and they stand with God’s quest in their lives.

3.2.1.4 *Misericordia et Misera*

In his Apostolic Letter, entitled *Mercy and Misery*, Pope Francis while closing the year of Jubilee of Mercy illumine the Church that, “Mercy is a vital indispensable in the Church since forgiveness from God is given abundantly through His mercy.”²² The Holy Father, explicates the foundation of mercy from the gospel of John that,

²¹ Pope John Paul II, *Encyclical Familiaris consortio (the Family In The Modern World)*, 2012, No. 26.

²² Pope Francis, *Encyclical: Misericordia et Misera (Mercy and Misery)*, 2016, No. 12.

“Receive the Holy Spirit: If you forgive sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (Jn 20:22-23). By this he calls the Church to be shaped by the mercy of God, and extend it to others.

Young people particularly in Nabbingo who find themselves committing criminal offences which annoy the elders, parents, relatives and friends, and in the long run creates conflicts and anger, and they are judged as the woman who were caught in adultery as we get it from (Jn 8:1-11). In these situations, young people find themselves mistrusted, and misjudged, something that make them evade the church and distance themselves from those judging them. Mainly issues of abortion, murder, homosexuality, drug abuse and others.

The people in this document invites first young people to receive the sacrament of reconciliation as well as others, and also calls elderly people as well as the church leaders and the clergy to embrace these young people and welcome them with all their broken lives just as Christ who welcomes every repentant sinner and look for possible ways of evangelizing them to build a strong communion with the church and society, putting it in mind that all people pass through the same stages and no body under the sun is perfect.

3.2.1.5 Ecclesia in Africa

This document *Ecclesia in Africa*, is considered as a fruit of the several years of reflection by the Catholic Church in Africa. Pope John Paul II, teaches that, “genuine witness by believers is essential to the authentic proclamation of the faith...they should show the personal witness of sincere mutual love.”²³ This theology of witnessing Christ to His suffering people, calls for pastoral solidarity with those in our great need. This is exemplified in the gospel according to Luke 10:30-37, where a man was left beaten

²³ John Paul II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: *Ecclesia in Africa (The Church In Africa)*, Paulin’s Publications Africa, 1995, No. 77.

on the roadside is identified by people but they all bypassed him and no body attended to him apart from the Good Samaritan who helped him to be treated. In the same way, an objective look teaches us that, young people are also lying by the roadside because of the challenges they encounter that lead them to evade God and the Church, and they need a Good Samaritan to accompany them back to good spiritual health.

In the same way, according to Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia in Africa* continues to encourage the Church to be a, “refuge and a Good Samaritan to those who are in need.”²⁴ Thus, in line with Nabbingo Parish, the young people can be equated to that gentleman in Lukan Gospel, crying, and dying by the roadside being beaten by the contemporary challenges who need a good Samaritan, the church to offer them a listening ear and in a Synodal way journey with them to restore their love and dignity because they are like a sheep without a shepherd that is why whenever the current modern culture beats them they all scatter.

3.3 Local Teaching Assessment on the Young People

Local teachings are the teaching authority of the church which gives an interpretation of the word of God. It is composed of bishops, priests, deacons and other dignified leaders of the church selected to guide and accompany young people in matters which are controversial and sensitive. They help to teach the church when it comes to teaching about the challenges that affect not only young people but the entire body of God’s people.

3.3.1 Pope Francis’ Visit to Uganda

His Holiness Pope Francis on his visit in Uganda on 28 November 2015, in a conference with the young people, seminarians and novices together with other people of good will, in his speech, he sided himself on the Gospel of Luke 24:13-35, where he

²⁴ John Paul II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: *Ecclesia in Africa (The Church In Africa)*, No. 41.

stated that, by thanking all Ugandans for welcoming them. As his motto stood that he had come as a minister of the Gospel, he informed those around that, this gospel of Luke turns out well as a model of the Church for effective ministry among the young people. The Holy Father noted that, “taking care of young people is not an option task for the Church, but an integral part of her vocation and mission because without young people there is no future Church.”²⁵ Like the disciples, he said that, “the disciples on their way to Emmaus were so disappointed about what had happened to Jesus, and in the same line young people also face a lot of challenges that leave them confused and disappointed with life.”²⁶

Continually, we also come to discover When Jesus was killed whom these disciples believed as a miracle worker and a messiah, their situation appeared to have changed dramatically because their hope had been nailed on the cross. Today young people encounter similar experiences of life especially when whenever they find themselves in a state of not being able to meet their basic needs. Jesus is said to having appeared and walked besides them. In the same way, amidst all the challenges young people encounter, they need to have ministers who stand in the name of Christ to Synodal journey with them by guiding them and comforting their frustrations of life.

Pope Francis, told seminarians, novices and all young people of Uganda, to “always recognize the presence of God and follow His commandments by reading and listening to the word of God and taking care for each other especially those who are in need.”²⁷ And finally there was an emphasis to the young people that for them to cultivate their life positively, they must be good and generous, copying that true goodness from Jesus Christ as their role model and a true friend who never betrays but loves us all. A final request was that, the world to those desiring to serve God as priests

²⁵ Pope Francis, *Speech on his visit to Uganda*, November 28th,2015.

²⁶ Pope Francis, *Speech on his visit to Uganda*.

²⁷ Pope Francis, *Speech on his visit to Uganda*.

and nuns, there is a lot of destruction in the world that might cause confusion and destruction which might hide the voice of the Lord in their vocation, but they should always follow and listen to Christ who is calling them.

3.3.2 The Twenty-two Martyrs of Uganda

On third of June every year, the church in Uganda in unity with the universal church celebrates the solemnity of the twenty-two young men who enthusiastically dedicated their life to the teaching of God that was offered to them by a missionary Father Laudel and Brother Amans. Although “Mwanga had shown some love for the missionaries as a young prince, his attitude changed when he became a King.”²⁸ These were workers in the palace of King, and when Mwanga became a king, because of his own interest, he hated the Europeans who were previously invited by his father King Muteesa to come and evangelize and civilize his kingdom. Having received the light of the Gospel through the teachings of Fr. Laudel, these twenty-two young men decided to evade the practices of the king and cling their life to Christ whom they were later on baptized.

When the King heard this he made a meeting and he informed them that there are those who had decided to follow the teachings of the white man, and having informed them about what was to happen to them, he asked those who were willing to continue with the white man’s teaching to cross to one side and those who want to continue remain. History tells us that a group of forty-six crossed who were both Catholics and Anglicans. The King ordered his executors to tie these gentlemen and take them to Namugongo and kill them.

These twenty-two Catholic young men were later beatified by Pope Benedict XV in 1920, and Pope Paul VI canonized them on 18th October 1964. These icons of faith in Uganda are under the age gaze of young people who deductively engaged their

²⁸ <http://www.buganda.com/martyrs.htm>

life to Christ. The sacrifice they made standing on the precepts of Christ is the same that is needed to the contemporary young people that amidst the challenges they encounter they ought to exhibit in their life by standing with the truth which comes from Christ to fight the modern culture which has made them not to engage themselves to the church.

3.3.3 Uganda National Youth Conference

His Lordship Bishop Anthony Zziwa, while making the closure of the National youth day in Uganda on 3rd July 2021, in his address of the young people in described the relation of the church and young people as companion, He said, “as with the disciples on their way to Emmaus, so the Catholic Church is ready to journey with them.” This implies that the journey young people make with the church is to help them become responsible adults in living the challenges of life and becoming good Christians in the church. He added that, God created each young person with in His love and has a plan for each one’s life on earth. By this, his Lordship called the entire church to accompany young people on their journey so as to embrace Christianity as they become adults that in return they may not evade the church.

When Jesus accompanied the disciples on their way to Emmaus, he listened to their questions, take time to explain to them the truth of faith and at the end of the journey when they reached home it is noted that He revealed Himself to them in the breaking of the bread, which in return sent them to go and share with what they received with others. This prophetic duty of accompanying young people the bishop said, it is for a universal community of believers to journey with the young people by listening to the questions of their lives, learning what they encounter in life and understand the relevant ways to journey with them by revealing Christ to them so as to effectively be involved in the church happily.

3.3.4 Kampala Archdiocesan Youth Day

The Diocesan youth coordinator, Aloysius Kabanda, in his speech on the Archdiocesan youth day which took place on 20th November, 2021, stated that, “all young people in their capacity, ability and strength ought to be directly be involved in the social and spiritual activities of the church in their respective parishes and small Christian communities.”²⁹ This will help those in leadership to engage them in serious activities of formation, service and other spiritual responsibilities to help them avoid isolation from the ecclesial community. He reminded them the words of the homily that was given to them during mass by Fr. Luzindana the Diocesan youth chaplain that, “they need to always be able to show their efforts practical such that they may be relevant to the mission by actively participating in the pastoral activities of their youth apostolate which is a church’s mission in the world.”³⁰ This according to Aloysius, will help young people into different responsible activities to promote their personal, social and spiritual growth.

3.3.5 Nabbingo Catholic Parish Youth Chaplain

Rev. Rev. Fr. Ssendi Joseph who is the current chaplain of young people, in his message to the young people who gathered on 04th January, 2022 for the Mass of blessing before returning to schools after two years of the Lockdown in Uganda, said that, “Despite the fact that one may be young, each and everybody with the age of reason is able to place him or her life in the hands of God and involve him or herself in the church activities of the church by allowing himself to work for God.”³¹ He emphasized them to cling to God who is doing a lot among young people, and he is still ready to do it for them as they return for their sturdies.

²⁹ Aloysius Kabanda, Diocesan Coordinator, *Speech, on the Youth day of Kampala Archdiocese*, November, 20th 2021.

³⁰ Joseph Luzindana, Diocesan youth chaplain, *Homily on the Youth day of Kampala Archdiocese*, November, 20th, 2021.

³¹ Joseph Ssendi, Chaplain, *Message to students at Nabbingo Parish Church*, January, 04th 2022.

Continually he said that, “it is greatly wonderful if young people allow God to use them so as to accomplish His great mission.”³² He emphasized them to engage themselves in the activities of the church wherever they are and always be attentive to “The Lord is good...and His faithfulness continues through all generations” (Psalm 100:5). Just like David in the Old Testament who allowed God to use him and did great things.

Conclusion

This generation of young people which stands together at a crucial crossroad with the church, is ready to throw themselves into the waves of the world in the direction that catches their attention. Spiritual accompaniment of young people stands to be the greatest methodology to inspire them to involve in the church by ensuring the formation of each generation. However, since time memorial the church has always in its ministry open to receive them as part of its disciples and also to support them as sharers in its mission by being part of the evangelizing Body of Christ. As discussed in the past chapters, there is an observation of the decline in the involvement of young people in the church due to the tensions of life they encounter. Thus as it is the plan of the church to journey with young people, there is a need to adopt the missionary mindset through the assessment of the church teaching to effectively draw possible ways of understanding young people and ways of helping them to quest for God so that they may know, love and serve God in their lives, and this is the duty of the following chapter.

³² Joseph Ssendi, Chaplain, *Message to students at Nabbingo Parish Church*.

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

4.0 Introduction

Having explored and subsequently analyzed the various insights of the topic in the preceding chapters, it is at this point that we ought to make some spiritual, social-economic and pastoral recommendations which will help those accompanying young people to discover what requires to be implemented as well as areas that need further research.

4.1 Spiritual Recommendations

It is a must that in life must know and love God, all Christ's faithful are called to be guided by professing their faith, living in a fraternal sharing, celebrating it in liturgy and prayer. Thus as a way of solving the crisis of faith among young people the following have to be addressed.

4.1.1 Constant Seminars and Symposiums on the Life of Young People

In accompaniment of young people, we recommend that, the Church regularly organize seminars and symposiums with different topics that can be assist young people to identify their spiritual and social talents, which are in line to meet their necessities and to be relevant to their life situations. This will help young people because in their lifetime they, “try to form their own beliefs which are not necessarily those of their

parents.”³³ Thus the presence of seminars will help them rediscover themselves and their religion.

In a similar way, it is worthy recommended that seminars and retreats be organized to accompany young people’s spiritual life and to help them reflect on their challenges. This should be done in different categories like the young from twelve to eighteen, twenty to twenty-five who are starting relationships, and twenty-six to thirty-five who are parents to help them on how to take care of their children so as to cope with the stereotypes, stigma and discrimination by those who are still single.

4.1.2 Emphasis on the Reception of Sacraments

The research shows that a good number of the young people do not receive sacraments especially Eucharist, and reconciliation. It is recommended that the clergy especially the chaplain must strive to educate the young people at all ages the importance of receiving sacraments in the life of a Christian.

This will help to create a relationship between young people and their God by becoming witnesses in their lives. This mission, especially to bring Christ, His virtues and the Gospel to the young people should be translated to be compassionate, generous, tolerant, peaceful, forgiving, and loving so as to live these virtues in their interactions among themselves and the community.

4.1.3 Catechetical Teaching to the Young People

The frontline animators of evangelization in the Catholic Church are the parents who directly receive children as a gift from God and present them to the Lord at baptism. It is from these Christian families that from childhood, “one can get Catechetical training, learn moral values and human formation, begin to honor God and

³³ Michael Moloney, *Skills for Counseling young people: A Practical Approach*, (Pauline’s publications Africa, 2013), 16

make good use of freedom” (CCC, 2207). In this way Christian families fulfill their divine calling, and then the entire Church from its catechetical teachings take over.

It is of great importance for the church in connection with the laity, to implicate catechetical lessons that will aid the clergy and the laity to equip the young people with what the Church say, and teach in their lives. This research invites the clergy to put more emphasis on effective programs that comply with the changing times and contemporary challenges so that they may empower young people to live as responsible and talented Godly people with the standards of the teachings of Christ in their daily lives.

Those with the duty of catechizing to the young people, ought to ensure that they have a proper understanding of who the young people are, what they want, their worries, and concerns so as to direct them with appropriate catechetical materials that encompass all aspects of their life. This will enable young people to actively involved in catechetical programs and be engaged in reaching out to evangelize to their fellow young people.

Furthermore, it is recommended that, the clergy mainly the chaplain, may observe the signs of the time of Nabbingo Parish youth ministry, journey with them, so as to be able to deliver relevant talks and homilies that address the needs of the contemporary situation of the young people. While “catechizing them, the clergy ought to accompany young people to not only memorize and understand the teachings of the Church like the Ten Commandments, sacraments, prayer...but also to integrate these teachings by applying them in their life.”³⁴ Catechesis given to young people ought to be present in a relevant way to be the light amidst their crisis of faith so as to achieve

³⁴ Uganda Episcopal Conference, *Deeper Evangelization in the Third Millennium: A Challenge for AMECEA*, (Uganda Catholic Secretariat, Kampala 2003), 17

the spiritual life of these people and end up making them love the activities done and they engage in them actively.

4.1.4 Involvement in Small Christian Community

The Church ought to re-awaken the initial reason that gave birth to the establishment of the small Christian communities such that they can engage young people in the church activities starting from the ground level and when they feel welcome this will grant them a chance to be oriented to Church necessities, and they will be able to ask questions and they are answered as they grow in faith, social life, by sharing their experiences.

In the same gatherings of the small Christian community it is recommended that, elders must give pieces of advices o the young people on different ways of conducting themselves as well as sharing the word of God for their spiritual nourishment. When the future Church of Nabbingo is taken care of at the ground level, their enthusiasm, and love of their Church will be at their heart, something that will help them to get knowledge of solving their mushrooming challenges of the contemporary world.

4.1.5 Religious Vocation Promotion

The observation of the research explicates that, there are few young people who express their interest for joining religious and priesthood life. This implies that the future of the Church will be in scarcity of ministers to carry on the mission of Christ. The discovered reason according to this study is that the background of the families where they come from, and the current way of life seems to be unfavorable for them to join the seminary. Also at times fail to find role models among the ordained ministers to influence their calling and to encourage them to pursue their calling.

From that reason, it is recommended that ordained ministers in Nabbingo together with the religious, must influence and encourage young people to join the

religious life and the seminary for priestly formation from the way of life they live. Secondly, to promote vocation, on vocation Sunday, the clergy are recommended to organize different congregations to come and promote vocations by making parents and young people aware of religious life and serving God. This will help to get one or two who will be inspired to join.

4.2 Social-economic Recommendations

The study findings revealed that the social economic challenges that led to disengagement of young people in Nabbingo Parish can be overcome. In order to fully realize the objectives of the study, the following issues ought to be addressed

4.2.1 Availability of Well Skilled Counselors

It is noted that, “counseling is concerned with the issues, problems and situations which lie within what might be called the normal range of human experiences.”³⁵ Given this description, it was discovered that, time after another there is migration of young people, from the parish is at hyper speed due to lack of skilled counselors to journey with young people. Counseling services in Nabbingo are offered although it is done by elders who volunteer to come and talk to young people. Our recommendation is, that, it would be better for the parish to equip itself with qualified counselors so as to attend to the challenges young people face in their daily life.

While bringing these counselors, we recommend the Church ministers in Nabbingo to bring qualified counselors of different skills like those to deal with female young people whom they can share with their uncomfortable situations and personal concerns where they may need counseling like abortion, menstruation, premarital sex, early pregnancies, masturbation, sexual immoralities like homosexuality, masturbation, and other healthy challenges.

³⁵ Michael Moloney, *Skills for counseling young people: A Practical Approach*, 26.

In the same line, some medical personnel also ought to be in place to educate the young people on the dangers of using contraceptives, surrogate motherhood and other negative practice which antagonize God's plan of procreation. These are issues which may need a counselor for the young people to discuss with in confidence such challenges which lead them to evade the Church when they have no one to journey with. Thus given that a human being is made up of body and soul, I recommend that, as the clergy feed the soul of the young people with catechetical life of knowing, loving and serving God, so also the body to be fed with counseling of both male and female counselors to deal with the problems that affect young people.

4.2.2 Employment Opportunities

Given the economic factors of unemployment, poverty, high crime among others, we recommend that the clergy as pastors collaborate with some government officials at different levels to look at possible ways to employ some of the young people in Nabbingo, as well as educating those who have no skills to gain possible skills necessary for the jobs. This will help young people to withstand the challenges of engaging themselves in the vices of gambling, theft and among others due to unemployment and idleness.

In the same line, it is recommended that, the chaplain of young people must collaborate with the skilled and prominent leaders to train young people in leadership skills. This is to be done through Inviting, training, and supporting young people into leadership in the apostolate and also for the broader community. This formation will help the young people in Nabbingo Parish to take up different responsibilities by being oriented towards different leadership skills, something that will make them prominent leaders, and decision makers in the future Church and society.

4.2.3 Synodality

One of the challenges faced by young people in the church is the patriarch system where the Church take the duty as the pillar of the teaching of morality that young people should follow as moral guidance and correction. The recommendation is that, the current church of Christ ought to be a Synodal Church with young people who are striving to journey in the ocean of the modern culture where liberalism and capitalism, and permissiveness are the ways of their lives. This calls for a conducive atmosphere to be listened to by a shepherd whom they can discuss the issues of their life and appreciate their presence as well as correcting them, rather than giving them a teacher who will give them instructions.

In the same way, at all levels of young people, we need elders who truly understand young people, study their needs and speak up for them. Adults should be anxious to enter into friendly dialogue with young people to be able to know one another and opt for better ways of assisting them. On the side of young people, they should be able to open up what troubles them, and be able to listen with open hearts the advices given to them which may impact their Christian and social growth.

4.2.4 Promotion of Young People's Talents

One way of uniting and converging young people to orient them into church activities is to attract them with their interests. Today it is well known that what attracts the life of young people are the leisure activities of sports, cultural music, and entertainment programs of different types. And places like film halls, football fields, concerts, are areas where they spend most of their times. This is a recommendation to the Church to open up its doors and look at promoting the talents of young people by organizing church music concerts, sports competition, and charitable works.

This will help young people in Nabbingo Parish to develop their skills in Christian contexts, which in return may become prominent talented people who may

even compete in different international competitions in practical work. Having united them through entertainment, then whenever they are invited for sports also some spiritual nourishments, prayer and other church activities may be integrated which strengthens their faith and in return help them to avoid the vices of theft, drug abuse, and loneliness.

4.2.5 Skilled Knowledge of Modern Technology by Animators

In order to be relevant to the young people today, Church leaders ought to familiarize themselves with the various popular technologies where young people spend most of their time. This will be possible by learning different ways of using social media and such that it can be turned from not only being a mean of communication but also a mean of evangelization to the young people. Having acquainted themselves with modern technology animators will be able to recognize its advantage in the life of young people, and get to know how to caution them to avoid the negative use of it by educating them the rampant consequences that come along its perverted use.

In addition, we recommend counseling programs for the young people to be broadcasted especially on televisions and radio stations where young people also find most of their time on. These programs should focus on the negative influence of media on their morality, and encourage programs which have proper education regarding media literacy. This can be done through the advising young people to follow church channels like, Radio Maria, EWTN, and other websites from Vatican, which can give the food of the soul, moral education and spiritual entertainment.

4.3 Pastoral Recommendations

The Church is pastoral in nature where from the virtue of Baptism all members share in the common prophetic nature of Christ to evangelize to the ends of the world. Young people in Nabbingo are part of the universal church with apostolate of carrying

out Christ's mission. Due to the noted challenges, below are the pastoral recommendations on how the church may pastorally journey with young people and help them fulfill their duty.

4.3.1 Emphasis on the Pontifical Missionary Societies

All baptized are entitled at least to belong to one of the church groups. Given that children originate from families, we recommend that the church in collaboration with the parents and guardians, must encourage young people to be join the Pontifical missionary societies and other groups in the church which help them to cultivate personal discipline and strength their faith such that the child may grow when he or she is responsible in both the church and society.

In the same line parents before handing over the children to the Church, must to prepare them in their background at home. We recommend also that parents join hands with Nabbingo parish to the fight against the challenges affecting young people by giving proper directions to the children with regard to the use of mass media, its obsession and addiction among young people hence showing the right direction of life to take.

4.3.2 Training Skilled Chaplains and Animators

The apostolate of young people is a fragile apostolate which needs people skilled to accompany them. This study recommends animators, teachers and counselors to be chosen among the laity, with the spirit of commitment in the line of accompanying young people in the parish ought to be trained with social, spiritual, physical and psychological skills and right ways of handling these young people first by understanding them and second look at possible ways of listening and help them out of their challenges.

In the same line, the diocese and the entire church ought to include these courses of youth ministry for those who have made a lifetime commitment to serving the

Church as priests, sisters, brothers, and deacons to always equip them with knowledge to offer spiritual seminars, joint prayers and other social accompaniment to the young people. In the same regard, those trained, mentors and animators who assist the chaplain on matters of young people in the parish ought to give a report to the chaplain at least after every three months and an evaluation on how the ministry is moving.

4.3.3 Empowerment of the Young People

The AMECEA Bishops at this plenary Assembly emphasized, “the need for the active and full participation of the lay faithful in evangelization.”³⁶ Borrowing a leaf from them, it is our recommendation that some young people may be empowered like by allowing them to elect their own leaders whom the clergy later train on spiritual, social and economic matters, so that they may minister to their fellow young peoples in the language that they understand and fit their standards. This will help in a way that, given that young people know each other, and they almost face almost the same challenges, those who have been trained and advanced on knowledge and skills at different levels can help to criticize their fellow peers because they will be well acquainted with the right behaviors to attack.

However, this does not whatsoever imply that the Church will just sit back, but after a while the clergy through the chaplain may frequently meet them, share with them the word of God, correct some mistakes and also answer some necessary questions that their fellows may have failed to answer.

4.3.4 Evangelization through Media

Having noted that one of the greatest challenge among young people in Nabbingo is modern technology, and mass media in particular, we recommend that the Church adjust its evangelization method to effectively use the same technology to

³⁶ Uganda Episcopal Conference, *Deeper Evangelization in the Third Millennium: A Challenge for AMECEA*, 15

outreach the young people. This will be possible by coming up with some pastoral programs which can help to unite young people on social media like on whatsapp groups, Facebook, twitter, where they can evangelize and catechize them from there by sharing the word of God either on video calling or other possible ways.

With full trust, when some sharing is done on social media, it will spiritually touch some young people and they will be united, because it is proved that they are always busy with social media. This will help youth ministry to flourish because it keeps them intact and with easy access of the information, meetings and other arranged programs of the parish for effective evangelization.

Additionally, during their normal pastoral work, Church ministers may initiate media-education programs, through preaching the word of God during the Masses of young people, and instruct them on the dangers ahead of them, and making them aware that God will judge them according to their actions such that they may change their ways of living. It can also be done through articles on the use of social media by different theologians and authors.

4.3.5 Registration of Young People

What makes a positive or negative evaluation of the apostolate is the statistics of the members of the church. On this point, a recommendation goes to all those accompanying young people to make a registration of the young people in Nabbingo parish right from the small Christian communities such that, they may be aware of where these young people come from, what they do for their daily life, those in schools, those who are employed, those without jobs those who are educated with various skills.

This helps the parish to draw its pastoral, social and economic programs and budgets knowing the right people they are working with and how to reach to them each with his or her dignity and capacity. This mutual connection, helps the Church to make a smooth fall up on its members such that incase one of the young people is no longer

engaged in the church activities, it becomes easy to trace the location where he or she reside, get to know the problem of his or her disengagement, and come up with a solution which may help that young man or woman to know that he or she is united with the church in joys and sorrows.

Conclusion

After carrying out research and analyzing the data that was gathered, this chapter has presented the spiritual, social-economic and pastoral recommendations of the study. When those commissioned to accompany young people follow some of what is noted, they by all means be helped to understand better the ways of attracting and retaining and engaging young people in the Church, as well as offering a guide for further study in the same area.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Generally, the whole study has been accentuated in the following way; Chapter one, as the initial section took care of the setting of the study by offering the contextual background, that explored the understanding of young people, their social life and how they approach realities, their engagement in the Church through different movements, and problems, the challenges young people face in the contemporary world, like mass media, entertainment industry, modern technology, unemployment, alcohol and substance abuse, prostitution and sexual exploration and the negative peer pressure. These contemporary challenges provided the study with necessary impetus to analyze the factors that contribute to them in particular in Nabbingo Parish in the subsequent sections of the proceeding chapters.

Chapter two, focused on a critical analysis of the factors that contribute to the disengagement of the young people. This was done by examining the individual factors, like sexual immorality, grief from the past sinful life, high expectation from the church, influence of formal education. The second part was the social factors which are, increment of mixed marriages, lack of parental commitment, permissiveness and secularization, mass media, and peer group influence. And economic factors being, unemployment, gambling, and sports betting, Desire for quick and unnecessary material wealth.

After a critical examination of the factors contributing to young people, engagement in the Church, chapter four focused at the assessment of Church teachings on young people, in the catholic church in the scriptural side, papal teachings as well

as the local teachings with some interviews and speeches and seminars that were offered to the young people by different people.

The final chapter spelt out the recommendations on how young people ought to be accompanied. It was noted from the research that, the family is the first initial place where catechesis, accompaniment and moral as well as spiritual support ought to be oriented, by parents who are entitled to impart Christian values to their children through the way they live, how they speak and by praying together. In the same way, the clergy particularly the chaplain and those senior selected patrons to journey with young people, should organize seminars, retreats, communal prayers which present Christ to the young people and they ought to pass the message of love, and liberation of the Gospel to them.

Furthermore, in a Synodal way, the Church through chaplains in collaboration with the local leaders ought to educate and look for some employment opportunities to save young people from too much leisure, and unemployment which lead them to vices of loneliness, theft, and others. And finally, empowering young people came as another great recommendation such that they may be engaged with various responsibilities as they are accompanied which in a long run may become skilled leaders and Christians of the future.

Generally, the study affirms that the main goal has been verified in the research recommending that, young people should invest their life and time in reading good books, studying, exercising or engaging in social activities, which may help them to grow spiritually, socially and responsibly. And young people, ought to avoid excessive wastage of time on social media and other modern technological advancement, which exposes them to undesired entities which they should not know end up teaching them dangerous lessons of their lives.

In summary, the study was carried out to establish the impact of contemporary challenges of young people's engagement in the Church to solicit a way forward on how a better can young people actively engage in Church activities in big numbers. This has been done and achieved through exploring young people's contemporary challenges, affecting young people, analyzing their root factors, looking for the Church teaching on young people, and recommending ways that may attract young people to involve and engage in the Church for their social, spiritual and physical advancement.

Thus, the study, affirms that the main goal and objective of this project have been attained and it is now a document to assist animators, chaplains and others journeying with young people as well as young people themselves to self-actualize themselves, and confront all sorts of problems ahead of them into opportunities for social, psychological, spiritual, physical and biological growth in the Catholic Church and the society at large.

It was a good moment while carrying out this research to discover what young people go through that make their numbers to go down day by day. However, despite the interest in doing the work, I have been challenged with lack of time and airtime to call in Uganda to get the necessary information which was meaningful for the study. And thirdly, lack of written materials from Nabbingo about the youth ministry and its annual calendar.

Given the efforts, I do not doubt that, this research will have an impact on the Christian life of the young people and ways of accompanying them by those in charge, in one way or another today and in the future. However, aware of the human limitations, I cannot claim to have exhausted all the information about the topic, and so this leaves a room for further research about the mushrooming challenges that lead to young people's disengagement in the Church. It is therefore, worthwhile noting that this work is not an end in itself but a means to further investigation into the same problem.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CLERGY AND YOUTH PATRONS

1. What programs do young people have in the Parish to ensure their effective engagement?
2. Explain your understanding of young people in the Catholic Church.
3. How many Young people are engaged in the Parish activities?
4. What challenges do young people in Nabbingo Parish encounter that hinder their active participation?
5. What are the causes of young people's disengagement in the parish?
6. How does the Parish handle some the above challenges?
7. How should the members of the Parish address the needs of young people?
8. What measures have you as the parish leaders come up with to combat the phenomenon?