

THE CROSS AND CATHOLICS: MAGIC OR RELIGION?

A Thesis by

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I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in Anthropology.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Kenneth and Dixie,
and to my sister, Stacey

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ABSTRACT

The Goal of this thesis is to understand the difference between Catholic “popular religion” and so-called “official religion” of the Roman Catholic Church, as it relates to the use of charms, and whether such usage is magic or religion. The “official religion” is belief and practices endorsed by the officials of the Holy See in Vatican City, “popular religion” is religion practiced without regard to “official” teachings or doctrines. I will look at criteria that qualifies a religion in its practice as “popular” or “official.” I will then apply this to what I have observed in Wichita.

It was concluded that the uses of charms by Catholics in Wichita were used as religious artifacts and not as magical charms. These religious artifacts were used in the proscribed manner of the Catholic Church and hence are “official.”

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this thesis is to understand the difference between Catholic “popular religion” and so-called “official religion” of the Roman Catholic Church, as it relates to the use of charms, and whether such usage is magic or religion. The “official religion” is belief and practices endorsed by the officials of the Holy See in Vatican City, “popular religion” is religion practiced without regard to “official” teachings or doctrines. I will look at the criteria that qualifies a religion in its practice as “popular” or “official.” I will then apply this to what I have observed in Wichita.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Methodology for this thesis includes both library and fieldwork. Primary sources are available from the Catholic Church on its history and doctrines, including literature from medieval and modern periods: councils, creeds, canons, papal bulls, letters, diaries, etc. The modern period offers a large amount of historical and social commentary on the Catholic Church about past and present practices.

The second portion is field work. Field work consisted of observing how charms are marketed and used. Locations include Christian/Catholic stores and shops, along with internet sites. Questions to be answered are: How does one get someone to buy a cross/crucifix? How are the items considered by the seller? Is it sacred or a simple object to be sold? Is there a special place or section for the objects to be sold? Are there any special restrictions on being sold or obligations to the buyer? What is the sales pitch or is their one? What are the claims made by the sellers?

For brevity, I use the term “artifact” to refer to objects such as crosses/crucifixes, saint medallions, Virgin Mary pins and medallions, angel pendants, and the rosary. This is a rather neutral term not indicating the object’s usage as religious or magical. When I use the term Church, for brevity sake, I mean the Catholic Church.

Lastly, I conducted interviews with Church authorities (priests), to determine practices occurring in Wichita, and the Church’s response to such behavior. The priest is the best intermediary between the “official” church and the “popular” church, since he has literally to live within both. The priest has to meet the expectations of his superiors as well as of his

parishioners. Also, a written survey (see Appendix 1) was conducted to determine if artifacts were worn and for what purposes the artifacts were worn.

CHAPTER 3

BRIEF DEFINITIONS

Clifford Geertz (1973:44) defined culture “as a set of control mechanisms - plans, recipes, rules, instructions - for the governing of behavior.” Geertz (1973:90) defined religion as “a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.”

Geertz, even as late as 2005, wrote that the study of religion “has never been a single bordered, learnable and teachable, a sum-up-able thing. It is, and has always been a matter of sorting through various happenings variously encountered. . . all in an effort to determine how overall conceptions of what reality really is and particular ways of going about in it play into one another to sustain the sense that, more or less anyway and on balance, things make sense (Geertz 2005:13).” This quote is relevant to my topic in the fact that a Catholic can easily be performing religious rites as well as magical rites.

Roy Rappaport (1971:63) defined ritual: “both animal and human, as conventional acts of display through which one or more participants transmit information concerning their physiological, psychological, or sociological states either to themselves or to one or more other participants.” Edmund Leach (2000:155) described rituals and beliefs are “forms of symbolic statement about the social order.”

Whether a ritual is magical or religious, rituals are performed on the internal conception of the performer. An act or ritual can be magic to one and religious to another. I distinguish a

ritual whether religious or magical based on the expected outcome and how the people think the ritual works. If a positive outcome is expected by the performance of the ritual and/or the belief that power resides in any object(s) being manipulated, then the ritual is magic. If a positive outcome is expected for by the performance of the ritual and/or the belief that the power does not reside in any object(s) but acts as a conduit or a focus mechanism while the authority to grant a petition resides within the spiritual agent.

Clyde Kluckhohn and Dorothea Leighton defined religion as “all that the People do and say with respect to those areas of experience which they feel are beyond the control of ordinary techniques and beyond the rational understanding which works well enough in ordinary affairs. We shall be speaking of the *super* natural” (Kluckhohn & Leighton 1979:179). Emile Durkheim defined religious representations as “collective representations which express collective realities; the rites are a manner of action which take rise in the midst of the assembled groups and which are destined to excite, maintain or recreate certain mental states in these groups” (Durkheim 1965:22).

Marcel Mauss, in his book **A General Theory of Magic** [1902], acknowledged that there is probably no ideal definition for magic but there were certain general characteristics in common throughout differing cultures. “*Magic aids and abets techniques* (my emphasis) such a fishing, hunting and farming” (Mauss 2001:24).

Raymond Firth described magic as “a rite and verbal formula projection man’s desires into the external world on a theory of human control, to some practical end, but as far as we can see based on false premises. A broad classification of magic in terms of these practical ends, whether the promotion of human welfare, the protection of existing interests, or the destruction of individual well-being through malic or the desire for vengeance (Firth 1958:124).”

Edward B. Tylor (1958:133) called magic a pernicious delusion and characterized magic as a “blind belief in processes wholly irrelevant to the supposed results.” Though in Tylor’s time period this view was common, while current anthropologists and historians share a different outlook on magic. Magic users are not ignorant but have an alternate view of how the natural and supernatural world operates.

Bronislaw Malinowski (1954:70) defined magic as a “body of purely practical acts, performed as a means to an end.” Malinowski observed magic having certain conditions for its performance:

an exact remembrance of a spell, unimpeachable performance of the rite, unswerving adherence to the taboos and observances which shackle the magician. If any one of these is neglected, failure of magic follows. And then, even if magic is done in the most perfect manner, its effects can be equally well undone: for against every magic their can be also counter-magic (Malinowski 1954:85).

This is a good functional definition, but it lacks the fulness of what magic is. This definition lacks an emotional quality and a desperate need of something that would answer the motivation factor that magic users believe in.

Richard Kieckhefer believed that when using “anthropological definitions of magic, we quickly find that they fit the historical material awkwardly at best, and it is not obvious that medieval peasants are well served by conceptions imported on behalf from Africa or Melanesia or by anachronistic redefinition of terms used by their learned contemporaries” (Kieckhefer 1994:832).

For the purpose of this thesis my definition of magic is best associated with Western and Christian conceptions of magic more adaptable to European and Euro-American cultures. I use a combination of several different definitions of magic, based on my understanding of magic and how it would be used by Catholics. In this thesis, magic is composed of three subjective

elements, a “body of purely practical acts, performed as a means to an end” (Malinowski 1954:70). The means to an end are to aid and abet (Mauss 2001:24) any human endeavor (magic is not performed to aid or abet any type of divinity or spirit). The third element is the notion of human control (Firth 1958:124) not supernatural control.

The “artifacts”, if they are charms (meaning they are used as a magical device), have a lot in common with each other; however, there are slight differences. An amulet (Lt. *amuletum*) “is anything worn about the person as a charm or preventive against evil, mischief, disease or witchcraft. Charm (Lt. *carmen*) is the uttering of magical chants which led to a condition of enchantment. Talisman (Gr. *telesma*) is an amulet that carries a magical or sacred inscription. To be a true talisman, it must display some lettering, numbers or text, or an abstract symbol or pattern of some kind” (Morris 1999:10).

In this thesis unless specifically stated, the use of charm(s) will also apply to amulets and talismans. Also, usage of charms implies that the devices are meant as magical devices. When one wears a charm, magic is implied, that protection and favor will be bestowed onto the wearer by the entity the charm is said to possess. If the charm is a medallion of the Virgin Mary, it is the Virgin Mary who will intercede for the person. There are four types of artifacts/charms that will be the focus of this thesis: (1) cross/crucifix, (2) rosary, (3) medallion, and (4) pendant.

The Roman Catholic Church after Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-1965) described religion thus:

Man is by nature and vocation a religious being. Coming from God, going toward God, man lives a fully human life only if he freely lives by his bond with God.

Man is made to live in communion with God in whom he finds happiness: ‘When I am completely united to you, there will be no more sorrow or trials; entirely full of you, my life will be complete.

When he listens to the message of creation and to the voice of conscience, man can arrive at certainty about the existence of God, the cause and the end of everything.

The Church teaches that the one true God, our Creator and Lord, can be known with certainty from his works, by the natural light of human reason.

We really can name God, starting from the manifold perfections of his creatures, which are likeness of the infinitely perfect God, even if our limited language cannot exhaust the mystery.

‘Without the Creator, the creature vanishes.’ This is the reason why believers know that the love of Christ urges them to bring the light of the living god to those who do not know him or who reject him (Catechism 1997:22)

The Christian/Catholic is meant to form a society, a society which is based on the teachings of the Church and a belief in God. To do this, one must suppress one’s own will and desires to the will of God and the Church (Abbott 1966). The Church ordered many events in life of its followers, a literal calendar of religious and social behavior.

The practice of religion is:

A collective act ‘*common prayer*’ - an affirmation of social solidarity. As such, religious worship emphasized the common concerns which all members of society shared. In addition to superintending the rites of passage which gave meaning & social recognition to the stages of a man’s life, the Church also provided the moral teaching upon which society rested. Homilies, sermons and catechizing played a crucial part in the formation of every citizen; most observers agreed that society would have been impossible without them, or the supernatural sanctions on which they rested (Thomas 1971:152).

The whole foundation for the belief and worship of God is based on faith. “To obey in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself (Catechism 1997:45).” The logic is definitely circular, but to the believer this does not matter. The logic gets trickier when considering that faith is considered to be a gift from God (Catechism 1997:47).

This faith in God must be placed in the Church as well. The Church maintains that it is the highest authentic authority. The Church has authority and the ability to properly interpret the word of God. Interpretation is done by the Pope, or the Bishop of Rome, the legitimate successor of St. Peter, the first Bishop of Rome and disciple of Jesus, in that Jesus told Peter he would be

the rock of the future foundation of the Church (Catechism 1997:32)

The Church interprets the faith through the use of Sacred Scripture. It is God who:

Inspired the human authors of the sacred books. ‘To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their own faculties and powers so that, though He acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever He wanted written, and no more.’

The inspired books teach the truth. ‘Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures (Catechism 1997:36).

The Church interprets the sayings of Jesus Christ to Peter as the cornerstone of the Church’s authority and the right to interpret scripture: “I for my part declare to you, you are ‘Rock,’ and on this rock I will build my church, and the jaws of death shall not prevail against it. I will entrust to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you declare bound on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatever you declare loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Mt 16:18).” The quote of Jesus to Peter is basis of Papal and Roman Catholic authority.

CHAPTER 4

OFFICIAL VS. POPULAR CATHOLICISM

To classify religion as “official” or “popular” is based on whether the belief or practice is understood to be institutionalized or non-institutionalized. Opposed to official religion are various terms but the meanings and usage are similar: the actual belief and practices of people who claim to be followers of a religion. The various terms include, “folk,” “vernacular,” or “popular.” My preference is “popular” and will use that term throughout.

“Folk religion is invariably syncretistic - it incorporates elements from the great tradition into a body of pre-existent beliefs and practices which have been handed down for countless generations among those who had been isolated from the influence of the ‘high culture’ (Williams 1980:60).” This ‘folk’ religion is then divided into three parts:

- (1) Core symbols provided for it by a great tradition [official mandated religion].
- (2) System of elaborations and interpretations which it works on these themes.
- (3) Broad collection of beliefs and practices which once made sense as part of the greater unity of an earlier primitive religious system, but which are now incompatible with the new synthesis. Instead, they live a half-life as a collection of magical practices, folk cures, and ‘superstitions’ which still retain a power of fascination. (Williams 1980:64).

“Popular” religion will develop when its “official” form spreads to other cultures and regions from its original base, especially when other religions are supplanted. The greater the distance and the greater the difference between the religion and culture being replaced, the more varied the “popular” religion should be from the original and “official” religion. Although with today’s technological developments [mass media and internet] and economic [trade and international corporations] differences and distances will lessen. This can lead to more conflict as the “official” tries to impose actual doctrines on the “popular” varieties.

“Popular” beliefs and their interpretations were not always studied so objectively or seen

as part of the larger cultural pattern. Wayland Hand, a folklorist, wrote: “Superstition has always flourished best where the mental horizon of man is low and his reasoning power limited. If the connections between cause and effect are not properly understood, the untutored person of any time or circumstance may be prone to seize upon the first explanation of a phenomenon offered, and may, in the same precipitate way, even favor a striking or intriguing solution over one more sane and reasoned” (Hand 1968:215).

Hand denied that “superstition” belonged only to the backward, primitive, or uneducated peoples, but existed “in all strata of society and is encountered among people of all degrees of formal education (Hand 1968:217).” The transmission of beliefs and practices were enacted “once a cause has been determined, then necessary courses of action may be prescribed. Since the measures accord with the best knowledge on the subject available within the group, they soon become an approved method of treatment in much the same way that factual data are handed down within the various trades and professions in modern life. Moreover, because the efficacy of the treatment or procedure has been ‘proved’ to everyone’s satisfaction, it can safely be recommended to others, and is thus passed on and finally handed down to posterity” (Hand 1968:217).

Primiano wrote: “what scholars have referred to as ‘official’ religion does not, in fact, exist. The use of the term ‘official religion’ as a pedagogical tool has helped explain scholarly perspectives to the uninitiated, but remains an inadequate explanation for the nature of ‘religion.’ While it may be possible to refer to various components with a religious body as emically ‘official,’ meaning authoritative when used by empowered members within that religious tradition, such a designation when used by scholars is limited by the assumption that religion is synonymous with institutional or hierarchical authority” (Primiano 1995:45).

Primiano is correct in that official religion is an arbitrary construct and does not exist as an entity. He even stated that religious leaders such as the Pope, Dalai Lama, the Patriarch (Eastern Orthodox) and the Chief Rabbi, however pious, still practices their faith in a popular manner. “There is always some passive accommodation, some intriguing survival, some active creation, some dissenting impulse, some reflection on lived experience that influences how these individuals direct their religious lives” (Primiano 1995:46). However, my study and other studies that deal with the differences between official religion and popular religion are not dealing directly with the nature of ‘religion,’ but with a particular example of a religion. The Catholic religion is not religion itself, but only a practicing of religion.

Michael Carroll wrote “official Catholicism consisted mainly of the bishops of the institutional Church. In other words, these bishops and the intellectuals and administrators who surround them are simply one social group among many, and their Catholicism only one variant among many. But there is no scholarly reason for calling this Catholicism more legitimate than the other variants” (Carroll 1996:7). Popular Catholicism is limited by two constraints: “(1) To be Catholic, a belief or practice must be at least loosely associated with the supernatural being considered important in the pantheon of the official Church, which usually means Christ, Mary, and the saints. (2) Public rituals must be legitimated by the clergy, at least the local clergy” (Carroll 1996:10).

The Church lists five obligations, at the very minimum, necessary for one to receive God’s blessing: “(1) Attend Mass on Sunday and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor; (2) Confess your sins at least once a year; (3) Receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season; (4) Observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church; and lastly, (5) Help to provide for the needs of the Church” (Catechism 1997:548).

Without meeting the five obligations, one is not considered to be a good Catholic.

The Church has allowed certain practices and beliefs to exist or to continue. It was easier to do so than try to reform certain behaviors as well as the fear of losing parishioners. Also such practices could draw converts into the Church (Thomas 1997). For instance, at one time church bells were considered as holy weapons protecting villages and livestock from lightning strikes and the resulting fire. The consecrated host was used to cure diseases of people, and livestock, and crops, increasing the fertility of people, livestock, produce, and crops, love potions, ward off evil spirits, and, by thieves to avoid detection. Processions of artifacts were to ward off diseases, ensure fertility of livestock and crops, and ward off evil spirits. By repeating prayers in a formulaic way, one could achieve one's desires by bargaining with God, the Virgin Mary, or the saints. People visited a shrine, in fulfillment of a promise to due some service for the fulfillment of a desire (Thomas 1997).

The local parish priest has always been a mediator between the local parish and the official Church hierarchy (dioceses and/or the Vatican):

Preachers could and did represent the values and beliefs of the institutional Church. But these preachers were also men who actively participated in the wider religious culture of the day, and they were charged with inspiring the devotion of the laity. Therefore, of necessity, they had to communicate in ways that would be understood and appreciated by their hearers. . . Preaching was one of the most powerful forces shaping and disseminating piety (Ellington 2001:27).

Next are some illustrations of concerns by 20th century Catholic elites who wrote on what a Catholic should be concerned about and where to focus one's spiritual, political, and moral duties. These illustrations are examples of Church officials using their own practices and beliefs and projecting them unto the Church as a whole. The following are illustrations on how Catholics should be living their lives, how they should be praying, and what they should be

worried about.

Angelo Giuseppe, Bishop and papal representative to Turkey and Greece [later known as Pope John XXIII] in 1942 wrote on the responsibility of the clergy to its flocks and on the dangers facing the world and the Church. Giuseppe's autobiography offers a deep personal account of how a priest is to act in order to fulfil his duties to the Church and its parishioners:

The two great evils which are poisoning the world today are secularism and nationalism. The former is characteristic of the men in power and of lay folk in general. The latter is found even among ecclesiastics. I am convinced that the Italian priests, especially the secular clergy, are less contaminated by this than others. But I must be very watchful, both as Bishop and as representative of the Holy See. It is one thing to love Italy, as I most fervently do, and quite another to display this affection in public. The Holy Church which I represent is the mother of nations, all nations. Everyone with whom I come into contact must admire in the Pope's representative that respect for the nationality of others, expressed with graciousness and mild judgments, which inspires universal trust. Great caution then, respectful silence, and courtesy on all occasions. It will be wise for me to insist on this line of conduct being followed by all my entourage, at home and outside. We are all more or less tainted with nationalism. The Apostolic Delegate must be, and must seem to be, free from this contagion. May God help me (Pope John XXIII 1980:260).

Priests and bishops have responsibilities to the Church and its parishioners in the spiritual world as well as the secular world. Sadly, there is no mention of Nazis or the Holocaust. It is a shame that the century's most important and devastating events, World War II and the Holocaust, is not mentioned. Pope John XXIII did not elaborate either on what he meant by nationalism, especially since the political leaders of Italy, where the Fascist Party led by Benito Mussolini.

Five years later in France, still as Bishop, he considered secularism to be the major threat to the Church. A second serious threat was communism (atheism). Other problems facing the Church included the practice of religion [he gave no examples of what he meant by this], schools [whether they would be run by the state or the Church], and the declining numbers of the clergy (Pope John XXIII 1980:268).

One last aspect of John XXIII's life, which is informative is his personal use of the crucifix and the rosary. Even at the age of sixty-nine, he would still "prostrate over the crucifix, kissing the face of Christ and his sacred wounds, kissing his heart, laid bare in his pierced side, here I am showing my love and grief. How could I not feel grateful to Jesus. . . (Pope John XXIII 1980:275)." His devotion to the rosary was constant throughout his life.

To say a good rosary three things must be kept in mind: mystical contemplation, private reflection, and pious intention. Contemplation meant:

close communication of thought and feeling with the teaching the life of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary,. . . Reflection is when everyone finds in each mystery a good and proper teaching for himself, for his sanctification and for the condition of his own life; under the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit. . . everyone confronts his own life with the strength of the doctrine he has drawn from the depths of those same mysteries, and find them of inexhaustible application to his own spiritual needs and to the needs of his daily life too. . . Intention for the intercession for persons, institutions, or necessities of a personal or social nature, which for a really active and pious Catholic forms part of his charity towards his neighbor, a charity which is diffused in our hearts as a living expression of our common in the Mystical Body of Christ (Pope John XXIII 1980:359f).

Pope John XXIII's statement means that the answers to one's problems can be found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Secondly, the Virgin Mary actively acts as an intercessor between people and God; one qualification, the intent must be pious. Piousness was never defined, but I assume piousness was not meant to mean acquiring winning lottery numbers, avoiding speed traps, or a good excuse to avoid spending time with one's in-laws. Lastly, intercession is not guaranteed. Intercession is not controlled by humanity or objects so it cannot be magic.

Pope John Paul II, in a papal address [2002], wrote on the power of prayer, in which he proclaimed that God listens to the prayers of the faithful. The Pope wrote:

We are often exposed to vicissitudes and tragic events, which sow disconcert and anxiety in public opinion. Modern man seems to be sure of himself and yet, especially on critical

occasions, he must come to terms with his powerlessness: He feels his incapacity to act and, consequently, lives in uncertainty and fear. The secret to face not only emergencies but exhaustion and personal and social problems day after day is in prayer, made in faith. Whoever prays does not get discouraged, not even in the face of the most serious difficulties, because he feels God by his side and finds refuge, serenity and peace in his open arms. Then, in opening his heart to the love of God, it also opens to the love of brothers, and makes it capable of constructing history according to the divine plan (John Paul II 2002:1).

Clearly, the Pope maintains that a person could get one's wishes, desires, fears, and hopes directly to God by the use of prayers, with the qualifier, one must have faith and is dependent upon God's love. Still, it would be nice to ask the Pope if a person with faith could pray to God for the wrong things, or is it that if one who prays for the wrong reasons has a false faith. In the same address, John Paul II reinforces the role of Mary, but does not mention the saint or angels [though in later letters, and addresses stresses the importance of the saints]. He states that "Mary may help us to understand the great value of prayer, the intimate union of the soul with God. . . Let us ask the Holy Virgin to open our hearts to greater confidence in the Lord, who worked great wonder in her, the humble and docile handmaid" (John Paul II 2002:1).

CHAPTER 5

MAGIC ANOTHER “POPULAR” VERSUS “OFFICIAL”

The word magic has had many images, connotations, and usages which is reflective of the fact that there is no accepted standard definition for magic. Views on what magic are, have changed over time, for example, during medieval Europe magic was synonymous with witchcraft and demonology. While today, witchcraft is studied by anthropologists and historians as a separate category and demonology is mostly studied by mythologists. Magic has been used by performers of slight-of-hand to describe their illusions, today this is recognized as a form of entertainment. Magic is also used in the selling of products: cleaning products (vacuum, detergent, toothpaste); diet and health products (pills and supplements, diet plans, weight loss machines, pills that guarantee some sort of health cure). These commercial items claim that they are far superior to other products and less work is needed in the performing the function of the product. Cleaning products will clean objects all by themselves. For the diet products, all one needs to do is, take the pill and the weight will disappear, without ever exercising or changing one's diet.

While researching magic for this thesis, I tentatively believe magic, as well as religion, can be divided into two forms: “official” or “intellectual” and “popular.” No interviews were conducted to support this assertion. My assertion is based on internet sites and user testimonials from these sites. It would appear that certain people only use magical artifacts/charms to acquire their desire, in other words “popular.” “Official” magic users I would classify were a user, and practitioner of the magical philosophy. For example of wiccans, a “popular” magic user would use a charm to acquire wealth. An “official” magic user would make charms, create spells,

attend the black Sabbath; would be the witch, not the purchaser.

Traditionally, “intellectual” magic is used more by the wealthy class and intellectuals. “Popular” magic is used by the middle and lower classes. “Intellectual” magic is characterized by such practices as seances, mesmerism (hypnotic manipulation), alchemy, prophecy (divination), astrology, New Age (enlightenment, healing), secret societies (Masons, etc.), astral projection, and remote sensing [these last two are seeking scientific acceptance but at one time was thought to part of the occult].

A user of “popular” magic seeks many of the same things that an “intellectual” magic user seeks. However, such practices are often labeled as ignorant, simple, or superstitious because the user is seen as the same (Hand 1968). Both the “popular” magic user and the “intellectual” magic user use different methods but seek the same result. Instead of a medium, an Ouija board is used to communicate with the dead; instead of prophecy, one goes to a fortune teller or some other type of fortune telling devices, e.g., tea leaves. Astrology still might be used, but instead of charting one’s path, one might only read the newspaper horoscope. Healing is sought through faith-healing or some sort of supernatural entity instead of some New Age technique. Techniques found in “popular” magic but not in “intellectual” magic include various home grown remedies or aid from a shamanistic type of person. These will vary from region to region and from ethnicity to ethnicity but they share important common features such as a health care, removal of curses or the cursing of an enemy, good luck, success in work or love, and acquisition of wealth or other material items. Examples of this include rootwork, curanderismo, espiritismo.

Rootwork has combined “elements of European witchcraft, West African sorcery, and West Indian voodoo. And refers to beliefs and practices used to cope with the physical and

psychological effects of malign magic” (Ness & Wintrob 1981:1478). Herbal medicine from the rootdoctor is used to reverse the curse. Curanderismo is practiced by Mexicans, and Mexican-Americans, and they also believe one is cursed by malign forces but use herbal mixtures, dramatic healing rituals, and prayer. Espiritismo is a combination of Spanish, African, and Indian folk healing practices which aim to drive out evil forces and spirits which have invaded a body (Ness & Wintrob 1981). Other popular home remedy techniques include tea leaves, crystals and other gems, charms, holy cards, candles, good luck charms (rabbit’s foot, horseshoe, four-leaf clover, eight-ball, etc.).

Though magic is difficult to define, the magical act is not. Magical acts are acts “compounded of verbal utterance and object manipulation, constitute ‘performative’ acts by which a property is imperatively transferred to a recipient object or person on an analogical basis. Magical acts are ritual acts, and ritual acts in turn are performative acts whose positive and creative meaning is missed and whose persuasive validity is misjudged if they are subjected to that kind of empirical verification associated with scientific activity” (Tambiah 1973:199).

CHAPTER 6

INTERCESSORS

Catholics appeal to the Trinity (God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit), the Virgin Mary, angels, and the saints. The predominance of an intercessor has varied through time, place, and culture. The Virgin Mary has probably caused the most controversy, whether some Catholics worship her as a divinity or more properly only venerate her and try to pattern their life on the way she lived her life.

At the top is God. Technically, God is not an Intercessor, since He is the Creator, the Father, He cannot intercede for anyone. He is the final judge, God cannot intercede with Himself.

Second is Jesus Christ, whose major intercession is the salvation of man fulfilled through his death and resurrection. People still ask for saving and healing from Jesus. Jesus was a healer, even raising the dead. Besides healing, Jesus Christ performed miracles such as exorcism, penance, feeding of many thousands from only a few loaves of bread and a few fish, and the turning of water into wine. “He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all men, especially sinners. He is ‘able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them” (Catechism 1997:695.). One title attributed to Jesus was “Miracle Worker.”

The Catholic Personal Prayer for Healing goes as follows:

Lord Jesus, I pray for your healing touch upon my body, mind, & spirit. I ask you to remove from me any fear or anxiety. Fill me with the peace that you alone can give. I place myself completely in your hands, Lord Jesus, trusting in your care and love for me. May my recovery be swift, my strength renewed, and my health restored. In place it all in your hands, Lord. You are the Divine Healer. Amen (Korn 2001:33).

In this prayer there is no mention of any use of artifacts th help in the healing process. All one needs, is to pray and ask God/Jesus Christ for aid. A positive response is dependent upon God and no artifact can influence God's will.

Personal charms that reflect Jesus Christ are the cross and crucifix [the history and development of the cross are in a later section]. Two of my informants who claim a miracle have occurred in their life, attributed the miracle to Jesus Christ [a more detailed history of miracles and the intercessors occurs in the discussion heading]. One wore a tattoo of Jesus Christ and another wore a ring with a cross on it. At no point in any of the responses was it thought that these charms or any of the following charms guaranteed a miracle. They were worn as a sign of their devotion and love of God.

The third intercessor is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the hardest concept to grasp as an intercessor for it is a spirit without origin (no body or conceivable form). In artistic representations, the Holy Spirit is shown as a beam of light or possibly as a dove in flight. "The Holy Spirit is teacher of the faith of the People of God and artisan of 'God's masterpieces,'" the sacraments of the New Covenant. The desire and work of the Spirit in the heart of the Church is that we may live from the life of the risen Christ. When the Spirit encounters in us the response of faith which he has aroused in us, he brings about genuine co-operation" (Catechism 1997: 309). The Holy Spirit is necessary for any intercession to occur.

Since the Holy Spirit is spirit and has no corporeal body, I have never seen a Holy Spirit charm. I have seen dove pins, but this symbol can also be used as a peace symbol. I have not discovered, in a Catholic store or internet site [Catholic site], selling a dove pin to represent the Holy Spirit.

Two intercessions are attributed to the Holy Spirit, though one is not an actually healing

miracle or protection miracle. It was felt that the Holy Spirit provided comfort to the family and to the dying. The other miracle [along with a saint] was a fertility miracle: the wife was able to conceive children. No one had any sort of charm attributed to the Holy Spirit.

The fourth intercessor is the Virgin Mary. The Virgin Mary is probably at this time the most important personage as an intercessor, around the world. “The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship. The Church rightly honors the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of ‘Mother of God,’ to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs” (Catechism 1997:275). This is not the place to discuss the theological argument about how the Virgin Mary, a human mortal, can be the ‘Mother of God’ when God was the Creator of all, but the fact that she is considered and praised as the ‘Mother of God’ is important to understand Catholic practices and beliefs.

Beside considering Mary to be ‘Mother’, Catholics consider her to be a protector. Mothers (even in the animal kingdom) will protect their young from danger, so why shouldn’t Mary, who is good, protect all who ask her for protection. Anthropologists and mythologists have attempted to explain the Catholic expectations of Mary as a form of the mother goddess.

Carroll discounts the notion that the Virgin Mary is a new representation of the old theme of mother goddess because of the lack of sexuality in Mary (Carroll 1986:5). Protestants have opposed this view of Mary, especially what they regard as the pseudo-deification of Mary by Catholics. Their objection to the “cult of Mary” is based on two observations: (1) Mary is hardly mentioned in the New Testament, mostly her role is in the birth of Jesus Christ; (2) it wasn’t until about the 5th century that people began worshiping and praying to Mary. If she was such an important personage, she should have been worshiped during the 1st century (Carroll 1986:5).

Carroll describes two other important observations in the cult of Mary. The worship of Mary is more predominant in societies where patron-client relationships exist and/or where rigid patriarchy or machismo exists. Along with a strong devotion to Mary, is found a strong devotion to Christ's Passion [his torture and execution] (Carroll 1986).

The Virgin Mary is considered to be the most unique of all the intercessors. She is human, but yet something more. Though not a divinity, she only gave birth to one. Intercessions that occur through the Virgin Mary are ongoing and worldwide. This ability was acquired because she bore Jesus Christ who brought grace unto the world. Jesus Christ never denied a request that the Virgin Mary made of him. This is why many in the world seek out the Virgin Mary for help. If the Virgin Mary thought one's petition was worthy, she would go to her son and He would grant it (Johnson 1996).

Artifacts associated with the Virgin Mary are pendants, medallions, and rosaries. My field work results attributed two intercessions to the Virgin Mary. One intercession was her presence during the operation of one of the informant's ten year old son, who was having open-heart surgery. The other intercession occurred at the shrine in Lourdes, France. The claimed miracle does not fit the technical definition of a miracle since the cure occurred a few months after the submersion at the baths at Lourdes, but she considers it a miracle by the Virgin. Also the same person collected holy water at the baths and distributed to others in Wichita who wanted healing. The way in which the Holy Water was used in Wichita may or may not be magic depending on how it was used. If the Holy Water was used in the expectation that a miracle healing would happen, then magic. If the Holy Water was used in the hope that a miracle healing would occur, then religion. I have no information on how the Holy Water was used when she gave it to those who asked.

Next on the list of intercessors are angels. The Catechism (1997:96) tells us an angel (angel is a title or a position) is a pure spiritual being which “have intelligence and will; they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendor of their glory bears witness.” Throughout the Old and New Testaments angels serve as protectors, messengers, and announcers of God’s plan. “From its beginning until death human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession. ‘Beside each believer stand an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life.’ Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the blessed company of angels and men united in God” (Catechism 1997:98).

Charms for angels are medallions or pendants with an angel on it. None of my responses credited any angel with an intercession. No one even mentioned the role of a guardian angel, though I did not ask any specific question about angels or a guardian angel.

The best example of the influence of an angel who represents cultural identity is that from Henry Adams’s Mont Saint Michel and Chartres. Adams saw in 11th century Normandy architecture how the Normans were inspired by the archangel Michael. It was Michael who defeated Satan and drove him out of Heaven and is considered the protector of the Church, the ancient Israelites also considered him to be their personal protector. Adams read into the architecture that Michael represented how the Normans perceived the world and acted in that world. This perception was that:

Church and State, Soul & Body, God and Man, are all one at Mont Saint Michel, & the business of all is to fight, each in his own way, or to stand guard for each other. Neither Church nor State is intellectual, or learned, or even strict in dogma. Here we do not feel the Trinity at all; the Virgin but little; Christ hardly more; we feel only the Archangel and the Unity of God. We have little logic here, and simple faith, but we have energy. We cannot do many things which are done in the center of civilization, at Byzantium, but we can fight, and we can build a church (Adams 1986:13).

Currently, I have found little discussion of angels by the Church. When people describe angels,

it is mostly in a sense of a New Age angel [which I discuss in a later section]. There is talk of angels as if they were some sort of dimensional being and are misidentified as an angel, due to superstitious mentality. Discussions of this sort come from pseudoscientific groups or authors, and can be found in the New Age section or late night talk radio, no scholarly or academic researches have made this claim. This is just another example of a “popular” belief on what angel or supernatural entities may be and how people could interact with them.

The last group of intercessors is saints. A saint is a person who “practiced heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God’s grace, the Church recognized the power of the Spirit of holiness with her and sustains the hope of believers by proposing the saints to them as models and intercessors” (Catechism 1997:239).

Charms of saints are represented as medallions. Two of my informants wore saints’ medallions, only one was named St. Anthony (patron saint of miracles). This saint was reported to aid the informant’s mother, who was in poor-health, tried many healings (no specifics on what the illness and the attempt of traditional medical healing). The other saint mentioned was St. Gerald (patron saint of mothers) who along with the Holy Spirit assured the conception of their children. The conception occurred after every medical option was exhausted.

Saints are important for indulgences. The Church maintains that “in the communion of saints, ‘a perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth. Between them there is, too, an abundant exchange of all good things.’ In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others. Thus recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified of the punishments for sin” (Catechism 1997:412). The

sinner can use that merit to lighten his own sin load or the load of a deceased one who is in purgatory to quicken the ascent into heaven. The indulgence does not work on any type of mortal sin. The indulgence can roughly be seen as a type of Catholic miracle, though not for healing or physical protection, but is a forgiveness of sin.

An indulgence is:

Remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses & applies with authority of the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ & the saints.

An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin. The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead. (Catechism 1997:411).

The importance of an indulgence is obvious, by such a performance one can lessen the sin load for oneself or a loved one, lessening the time one spends in purgatory, also it might keep one from going to hell. Indulgences are claimed by Papal authority but I have no knowledge that they are currently being proclaimed. In the modern Church good works acts like an indulgence without official proclamation for a certain act. Good works are those acts of charity, penance, devotion, and prayer.

Robert Shaffern (1992:368) argued that during 13th century Europe:

Penitents could seek substitutions for the penalties of which they had incurred through sin, and that indulgences, which were distributed from the church's infinite treasure of merit, could reduce purgatorial punishment. The tradition affirmed that indulgences could be received only if the penitent were in a state of grace. Indulgences must prescribe a good work designed to benefit Christendom. This good work must be completed, unless the grantor of the indulgence had proclaimed that the desire to perform a good work was adequate. Finally, all agreed that indulgences could only be granted by episcopal authority or its duly appointed agents. Penitents could only receive indulgences from their ecclesiastical superiors or those whom their superiors had licensed.

There seem to be a consensus on the nature of indulgence for the living, but disagreement

on whether an indulgence could be applied to the dead. The argument was between two groups or order, the Dominicans who favored indulgences for the dead and who were currently favored by the Papacy. The other order was the Franciscans, who did not believe the Church had the authority over the dead or the afterlife, only God had this authority. The Church had authority only over the living (Sheffern 1992).

During the middle ages a person and a saint would enter a patron-client relationship. “The saint for, for his part, desired honor from his clients. This might take the form of the repetition of suffrages and hymns to the saint. . . Clients also attended matins, Mass, and evensong on his feast, or fasted on his eve or even more regularly. . . Above all, the saint’s relic and there offer a coin or candle was held to be the most likely way to attract his interest and help. The commonest way of signifying such a vow was to take a silver coin and bend it: this constituted a formal promise to take the coin and offer it at the shrine” (Duffy 2005:183). This was a time when every day was some saint’s day - which entailed a feast or a fast, and was celebrated by the local church. Each local and regional church had its own special saint(s), the Virgin Mary, or angelic protection. From personal reflection of Mass attendance, little to no mention has ever been of saints, especially the saint’s role as an intercessor, most mention of a saint is as an example to be followed. The Church of Magdalen, named after the saint, Mary Magdalen, has another patron saint, St. Peregrine.

CHAPTER 7

SHORT HISTORY OF THE ARTIFACTS

The veneration of relics was not confined to nor did it originate with the Catholic Church. The bones of the Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammad were also venerated. The greatest and the most awe inspiring, for Christians, are relics of the Eucharist. This reflects the conception that the priest's most sacred holy obligation or most important magical power (depending upon one's perception) was the transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, during Mass. A whole set of practices and beliefs were established based on perceived potency of the Eucharist. In the medieval period it was thought "that anyone who saw a priest bearing the Host would not lack meat or drink for the rest of that day, nor be in any danger of sudden death or blindness" (Thomas 1971:35).

To discuss the origin of Catholic magic, its development and spread, is beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice to say, it is assumed that such origins began with an assimilation of existing "pagan" beliefs, incorporated into Catholic doctrines. This assimilation was endorsed by the official Church and by the local clergy for conversion. There was great incentive for a church or monastery to have a famous saint or relic. The relic would attract more pilgrims and benefactors, which meant more donations and gifts (Thomas 1971). Catholic pilgrimages, veneration of saints, and holy relics could be a thesis itself, but I will boil them down to their finer points.

Kaelber has observed that:

Adoption of pagan magic and Christian religion and the protracted process of negotiating cultural differences between the two in the early medieval period, the boundaries between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, when it came to the delineation of fidelity from superstition, was permeable. They remained permeable until the end of the Middle Ages, and

definitions of how the two realms were demarcated varied over time. The notion that many aspects of life could be influenced by attempts to subordinate and to command hidden powers on the supernatural plane, whether by licit or illicit means . . . It was an undercurrent of medieval culture sufficiently diffused and shared widely enough to transcend distinctions between elite and popular culture, learned and illiterate circles, though it was realized in more particularized systems of meaning. It signified the intersection of analytically distinguishable, but in actual life overlapping, practices and sets of corresponding beliefs in a cultural space (Kaelber 1998:108).

The spread of the Christian religion and its various institutions [monasteries, convents, shrines, etc.] was not just about the control of saints and relics. Other concerns for the Church were “authentic” religious issues, however, politics and economics entered into the equation. “Property owners might found churches or chapels near their own residence or at central points on their estates either from religious need, or as a display of their power, or out of concern for their dependents, or with the intention of cashing on church dues” (Tellenbach 1993:28).

The ultimate Catholic artifact/charm is the cross and/or the crucifix [the cross as a symbol has been used by non-Christian cultures as well]. Both have been widely used throughout history, for a variety of purposes. The cross represents the method of Jesus Christ’s death, and hence his resurrection, and with his resurrection, humankind is saved. The crucifix is a cross but includes the body of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

Pope Leo the Great [440-461] in a sermon stated that:

The Cross of Christ symbolizes the true altar of prophecy, on which the oblation of man’s nature should be celebrated by means of a salvation-bringing Victim. There the blood of the spotless Lamb blotted out the consequences of the ancient trespass: there the whole tyranny of the devil’s hatred was crushed, and humiliation triumphed gloriously over the lifting up of pride: for so swift was the effect of Faith that of the robbers crucified with Christ, the one who believed in Christ as the Son of God entered paradise justified. Who can unfold the mystery of so great a boon? Who can state the power of so wondrous a change? In a moment of time the guilt of long evil-doing is done away; clinging to the cross, amid the cruel tortures of his struggling soul, he passes over to Christ; and to him, on whom his own wickedness had brought punishment, Christ’s grace now gives a crown (Schaff & Wace 1994:167).

Many have made crosses/crucifixes or other types of charms out of material said to be from the True Cross. The cross Jesus Christ was crucified upon. There have been several legends of the finding of the True Cross. The legend most repeated is that of St. Helena. St. Helena with divine inspiration found the True Cross and had her son, Emperor Constantine, build a basilica, the Holy Sepulcher, over the spot (Cruz 1984:39). It was Constantine who converted to Christianity and who made Roman Catholicism the official religion of the Empire. Allegedly he saw on the battlefield a cross in the sky, which inspired his soldiers to victory.

Expressions referring to the cross, have been used to call people to follow Christ.

Thomas À. Kempis (1380-1471), Imitation of Christ, wrote:

‘Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me.’ To many this saying of Jesus seems hard. But how much harder will it be to hear that word of doom. ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.’ For those who now cheerfully hear and obey the word of the Cross will not tremble to hear the sentence of eternal damnation. The sign of the Cross will appear in the heavens, when Our Lord comes as Judge. Then will all the servants of the Cross, who in their lives conformed themselves to the Crucified, stand with confidence before Christ their Judge (Kempis 1952:84).

Kempis noted that man is weak in spirit matter by nature and those, who place their faith in themselves, will fail. However those who place their faith in the Lord will succeed. “If you trust in the Lord, you will be given strength from Heaven, and the world and the flesh will become subject to your will. Neither will you fear your enemy the Devil, if you are armed with faith and signed with the Cross of Christ” (Kempis 1952:87).

St. Theresa of Ávila would make the sign of the cross, snap her fingers and the devil and all his temptations would disappear (St. Theresa 1957:206). St. Theresa also used Holy Water and a Cross to chase away the devil when the devil was more persistent in his temptations. Holy Water works the best of the two (St. Theresa 1957:222f).

The significance and importance of the cross predate the Christian period. It was an

equally important symbol to the ancient Egyptians. Also, the cross was used by the Chaldeans, Indians, Phoenicians, and Mexicans. The cross symbolically came in several varieties: **+** (Latin Cross, *crux immissa*, *crux capitata*), **X** (St. Andrews cross, *crux decussata*), but the most popular cross was the Tau, “Cross of Egypt,” *crux commissa*, or T (Seymore 1898:2; Budge 1961). “The simple cross has been interpreted as meaning ‘support, or ‘Savior,’ sometimes ‘avenger,’ and ‘protective power’; but when the circle, the emblem of eternity, is placed upon it, forming the *crux ansata* [ānka]; signifies ‘Life to come. . .’ The *crux ansata* is the inseparable accompaniment of the chief trial of the Egyptian deities, Ra, Amon-Ra, and Amon” (Seymore 1898:3), an Egyptian trinity.

The cross which Jesus Christ died upon has had many different connotations and meanings through the centuries. At one time the cross represented the “death most ignominious that could be inflicted. The Roman citizen was exempt from it; to the Jew, ‘cursed’ was, ‘everyone that hangeth upon a tree’; the Greek regarded with mingled contempt and pity the preacher who proclaimed ‘The unknown God’ to be one who had submitted to such a disgraceful death” (Seymore 1898:67). Carthage crucified its criminals as well as its generals who failed in military matters for them were deemed to be traitors, or had the appearance of seeking personal power.

The Romans crucified criminals, and the reports they received on the Christians must have seemed liked criminal behavior. The early Christians adopted the cross as a symbol for their salvation [since it was Jesus Christ’s means of death and hence his resurrection]. Elements such as the transubstantiation, transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, their refusal to accept the Roman emperor as a god; and, the preaching of the expected coming of the kingdom of the one true God led to the Roman persecution of the Christians.

Surely it must have looked like a cult of the dead. The Eucharistic meal, without understanding its finer theological points, would have appeared to sound like cannibalism and blood-drinking. When persecutions began, the delight some Christians took in the act of their death, by singing and praising God at the expectation of becoming a martyr and receiving a direct ticket to Heaven, must have baffled the Romans. Their means of persecution only strengthened the morale of the Christians.

The adoption of the crucifix took longer. At first, the idea of seeing Christ in pain and not in His glory was considered to be sacrilegious. The first crucifix so far dated comes from circa the end of the 7th Century. On this crucifix, Jesus was portrayed in a tunic with sleeves, upon the cross. The figure lacked any type of wound (nails, piercing from the crown of thorns or the lance to the side), or any recognition of pain or suffering, but an expression of love. In the 8th and 9th Centuries the feet would be nailed, but the hands are free, the figure was still portrayed as alive. It is in the 13th Century where Jesus Christ is first represented as dead upon the cross (Seymore 1898:172f).

The first reported instance of the cross being suspended on a chain and worn around the neck is by Pope Hilarius, ca. 461. Up until the 16th Century, wearing of the cross was specifically for religious reasons, but in the 16th Century, the cross would become an ornament as well as a religious item (Seymore 1898). This trend in wearing crosses and crucifixes for ornamentation continues to occur in the present. I have no data on which religious denominations these people belong to and for the exact reason for the wearing of the crosses, but they are being widely worn. The 16th Century was when the Reformation and the Counter Reformation began and several wars between Catholicism and Protestantism were taking place. People would want to identify themselves as the true followers of Christ, and thus the false followers were their enemies.

From personal observations, almost any self-proclaimed Christian, across gender, ethnicity, and economic background may wear a cross. One unsubstantiated trend I have observed is in the level of ostentation seems to rise with the level of income and with pretensions to social status. I base this observation, on the overall quality of clothes the person wears and style and quality of jewelry [secular] on the person. Professional athletes and pop music stars come to mind, such groups usually just acquired new and large incomes. With this newly found celebrity status they want to present a certain image to the public or to their fan basis as a form of legitimacy. A way to exhibit such an image is conspicuous consumption. Part of that consumption lifestyle is jewelry. Once slang, but now a part of American lexicon is the term “bling-bling.”

“Bling-bling” is a type of jewelry which is an ostentatious display of precious metal (gold and platinum) and gems (most common are diamonds), meant to define the character of the wearer. The concept of pride is important. Those with “bling-bling” are often the best, and most artistic, by association must also be doing the best in their profession (music, sports, etc.) Those who are the best athletes or entertainers get the biggest contracts and can afford to buy bling-bling. Those who do not have bling-bling must not be successful.

So, what is the cross/crucifix as Catholics understand it? The cross, over the last two thousand years, has represented many different things and had multiple meanings, often at the same time. It has been used as a form of self identity or to proclaim a sense of community among believers, as a display of faith and/or religious belief, as a charm or protective magic, as art, as a display of power or authority, a fashion statement, and finally even as art.

The cross has been used in art and as art. Arnold Hauser claimed the aim of art was to evoke: “to awake in the observer, listener or reader emotions and impulses to action or

opposition” (Hauser 1971:128). This evocation can come by two methods: open propaganda or repressed ideology. The artist “can give expression to ideas, values and policies he is asserting either explicitly, through open commitment, a manifest programme or a direct and simple confession of purpose; or he can do so merely implicitly, by giving a tacit, concealed and uncertain circumstances unconscious ideological content to an activity which is apparently neutral” (Hauser 1971:128). Today’s cross is multifunctional - art, identity, status-seeking, devotion, magic - and it can serve more than one function at a time by its wearer. The Church only recognizes two appropriate functions - identity and devotion.

Even though the cross and Christian themes [Virgin Mary, grace, salvation, warnings of a sin and the result of a sinful life, warnings of temptation] have been used in art, this issue has been controversial and even the cause of violence within the Christian world. Next is a short history of the use of images as art, before I return to discussing charms, for I believe it is important to understand how images can and cannot be used in the Church. For throughout the history of Catholicism, many religious items, relics, icons, jewelry has been reported as an aide in the working of a miracle. Even today many Catholics have pictures of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and saints in their houses.

Christianity inherited the teachings of the Old Testament since Jesus Christ was himself a Jew. The Jewish religion has many laws, regulations, prohibitions, and traditions most of which have been attributed to Moses. The greatest of these laws which came directly to Moses by God are the Ten Commandments. The Commandment I have in mind is the first one: “I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery. You shall not have other gods besides me. You shall not carve idols for yourself in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before

them or worship them. For I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God. . .” (Exodus 20). The one and first instance where they had made an image and worshiped it (the golden calf) God quickly inflicted his punishment on the people.

One of the earliest examples of Catholic canon law prohibiting idolatry was from the Council of Laodicea (343-81 a.d.). Canon XXXV decreed that “Christians must not forsake the Church of God, and go away and invoke angels and gather assemblies, which things are forbidden. If, therefore, any one shall be found engaged in this covert idolatry, let him be anathema; for he has forsaken our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and has gone over to idolatry” (Schaff & Wace 1994:150).

The following canon dealt with amulets and magic usage: “They who are of the priesthood, or of the clergy, shall not be magicians, enchanters, mathematicians, or astrologers; nor shall they make what are called amulets, which are chains for their own souls. And those who wear such, we command to be cast out of the Church” (Schaff & Wace 1994c:151). It is a real pity the Church did not elaborate on why such canons were necessary and the exact nature or the spread of such activities.

The big clash over imagery and what was idolatry came in the 8th Century, at the 7th Ecumenical Synod. This movement known as iconoclasm, and the iconoclasts were against the creation and idolatrous use of religious images. Such images became the focus of worship, not God. The iconoclast movement wanted to destroy such images. The movement was more popular in the Byzantine Empire, but was found in Western Europe in different places and times. The pope and most of Western Europe were in favor of the images.

Chadwick wrote that “the strength of the iconoclasts lay less in their theological arguments, which were too technical to be in the long run persuasive, than in their instinct that

images were associated with the idolatry Christianity had come to destroy, and that the representations of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints, owed too much to pagan precedents” (Chadwick 1990:283). While the other side saw iconoclasm “as an attack on aids to devotion which frail mortals needed, and to which they had become accustomed by tolerably long use over more than a century before the outbreak of the controversy” (Chadwick 1990:283).

The Concilium of 754 set out to settle the dispute. This council was commanded by the emperors Constantine and Leo and held at Constantinople. The epitome stated it was “the folly of the painter, who from sinful love of gain depicts that which should not be depicted - that is, with his polluted hands he tries to fashion that which should only be believed in the heart and confessed with the mouth? The name *Christ* signifies *God and man*. Consequently it is an image of God and man, and consequently the Godhead which cannot be represented, and thus mingled what should not be mingled. Thus he is guilty of a double blasphemy - the one in making an image of the Godhead, and the other by mingling the Godhead and manhood” (Schaff & Wace 1994c:543). The only legitimate form Christ could be represented was in the form of bread and wine depicted in the Last Supper (Schaff & Wace 1994c:544).

The council addressed those who said it was not forbidden to create images of the Virgin Mary, apostles, and saints since they were mere mortal people and did not have a dual nature, the divine nature. The legend is as follows:

Christianity has reject the *whole* of heathenism, and so not merely heathen sacrifices, but also the heathen worship of images. The Saints live on eternally with God, although they have died. If anyone thinks to call them back to life by a dead art, discovered by the heathen, he makes himself guilty of blasphemy. Who dares attempt with heathenish art to paint the Mother of God, who is exalted above all heavens and the Saints? It is not permitted to Christians, who have the hope of the resurrection, to imitate the customs of demon-worshippers, and to insult the Saints, who shine in so great glory, by common dead matter (Schaff & Wace 1994c:544).

A few decades later another Ecumenical synod was called (Seventh Ecumenical Council or the Second Council of Nicea, 787) responded to the conciliabulum of 754. This council had to walk a political and religious tightrope in criticizing the action of the emperor of the Eastern Empire. The earlier conciliabulum had “failed to distinguish between holy and profane, styling the images of our Lord and of his Saints by the same name as the statues of diabolical idols” (Schaff & Wace 1994c:755). This council, through this sidestepping, decreed that images were appropriate for the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church defines with all certitude and accuracy that just as the figure of the precious and life-giving Cross, so also the venerable and holy images, as well in painting and mosaic as of other fit materials, should be set forth in the holy churches of God, and on the sacred vessels and on the vestments and on hangings and in pictures both in houses and by the wayside, to wit, the figure of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, of our spotless Lady, the Mother of God, of the honourable Angels, of all Saints and of all pious people. For by so much more frequency as they are seen in artistic representation, by so much more readily are men lifted up to the memory of their prototypes, and to a longing after them; and to these should be given due salutation and honourable reverence, not indeed that true worship of faith which pertains alone to the divine nature; but to these, as to the figure of the precious and life-giving Cross and to the Book of the Gospels and to the other holy objects, incense & lights may be offered according to ancient pious custom. For the honour which is paid to the image passes on to that which the image represents, and he reveres the image reveres in it the subject represented (Schaff & Wace 1994c:550).

The council concluded that one did not worship the image, idol, or relic itself, but the persona represented and the object was only a sort of transmission device or a mechanism to focus thought or prayer to the subject.

Pope Gregory I, the Great, in a letter to Bishop Serenus of Massilia (Marseilles) admonishes him for the destruction of images of saints and follows with the purpose of images in the Church:

For to adore a picture is one thing, but to learn through the story of a picture what is to be adored is another. For what writing presents to readers, this a picture presents to the unlearned who behold, since in it even the ignorant see what they ought to follow; in it

the illiterate read. Hence, and chiefly to the nations, a picture is instead reading (Schaff & Wace 1994b:53).

Such images were meant to portray what has occurred, and the truth of the Church which would aid in the conversion of the pagans to Christianity to keep those already converted, faithful. For the Catholic Church the doctrine of images and relics was now set, such objects were not in themselves worshiped but were only a means to communicate with the divine, which the object was meant to represent. However, the iconoclastic movement itself was not dead. It would revive during the Reformation, and those Protestant nations would deal with images and relics in their form of a theology.

The second type of charm to be studied is the rosary. The primary function of the rosary is to facilitate prayer. Prayer beads are common to many religions of the world, including Islam and Buddhism. Gribble presents two possible theories for the origin of the rosary; one theory is that prayer beads were adapted from eastern religions and then put into a Christian context. The second theory, more of a legend, was its invention by St. Dominic.

St. Dominic, working aggressively and diligently in his fight for preservation of the Church, was dejected for his apparent failure to convert the Cathars to orthodox Christianity. In 1214, the saint returned to a cave in the wilderness near Toulouse. There, exhausted after three days of penitential fasting and prayer, he collapsed and had a vision. The Virgin Mary appeared to him accompanied by three queens and fifty maidens - the numbers clearly corresponding to the pattern of the Psalter. Mary raised him from his prostrate position, kissed him, and in the style of medieval erotic mysticism, quenched his thirst with milk from her chaste breasts. She told Dominic that intellectual thinking and preaching were not required against the Cathars, but rather, the successful promotion and use of her Psalter. At that time, says the legend, Mary gave

Dominic a rosary, instructing him on its use against the Cathars (Gribble 1992:33).

The rosary, like all religious artifacts, depends upon the will of God to answer one's petition. Their power to perform intercessions is not in the object themselves but with God, and God's relationship to humanity. "The Rosary simply draws out the power that resides within you, the power to embrace that Covenant [the Covenant of Christ], and strengthens it. Constant practice of the Rosary works because it deepens your faith. It asks effectively for the graces that you need, a request that is never denied. It enriches your participation in the sacraments" (Johnson 1996:2). When one prays the rosary accurately, it draws one closer to God, the closeness allows one to receive God's grace or intercession. If one does not pray the rosary correctly or uses it as a form of magic, no intercession will occur.

Another function of accurately praying the rosary is to combat heresy both internally and externally:

Internally, it draws people away from false or incomplete doctrine, because people who meditate about the mysteries of the Faith are more intimately familiar with those truths. Consequently, they're far less likely to be led astray by incomplete or nonsensical presentations of them. Externally, the Rosary has always been advocated as an effective way to beg God to heal heresy in others (Johnson 1996:70).

Lay people don't wear rosaries, those I have observed wearing a rosary is Sisters of the Church. Rosaries are used in private, familial settings, in church, in hospitals, or at shrines.

The position and status of Mary, the mother of Jesus has changed through the ages and has been highly debated. St. Dominic's era, the 13th Century, when many of the new orders being founded, Dominicans and Franciscans, with each group's preaching and philosophy largely created the cult of the Virgin Mary. Controversial issues were whether Mary was born with original sin and transmitted this sin to Jesus Christ at his birth, Immaculate Conception; her role at Calvary (site of the crucifixion), and the possibility of her Assumption (whether she did or did

not die, and was taken directly into Heaven without any bodily corruption) (Ellington 2001).

The third and fourth type of charm/artifact I combine together for they are both very similar. One, is the medallion and the other is the pendant. The medallion is worn around the neck, while the pendant is pinned onto the garment of the wearer. Images of saints, the Virgin Mary, an angel can be found on all these items.

CHAPTER 8

NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF BELIEF

Beliefs are the root of all religious/magical actions and behaviors, hence its importance to understand why certain behavior patterns occur as they do. Thomas Kirsch (2004:707) wrote that:

the practice of belief found in a particular socioreligious field is influenced by how people there experience their relationship with spiritual entities. Because in the Gwenbe Valley [Southeast Africa] the spiritual realm was characterized by dynamic permutations, one's beliefs had to remain flexible. Conversely, the fact that the predominating conceptions of 'belief' in the West tend to stress permanency and consistency might be connected with the fact that the Christian God is usually represented in the West as eternal and unchanging. Particular practices of belief evolve in accordance with how the sources of religious truth are thought of and experienced to be.

Melford Spiro defined belief as:

Any proposition concerning human beings, society and the world that is held to be true. Religious beliefs are any belief that, directly or indirectly, relates to beings who possess greater power than human beings and animals, with whom human beings sustain asymmetrical relationships (interactions and transactions), and who affect human lives for good or for ill. . . Traditional beliefs are beliefs which are acquired by learning a cultural doctrine - a proposition about man, society, or nature - that originates and develops in the history of a social group, and is transmitted from generation to generation by means of those social processes that are denoted by such terms as 'education' and 'enculturation' (Spiro 1982:47).

The origin of a particular belief may be impossible to discern, but the sources of transmission are more readily grasped. The first and most important mechanism of transmission are the family, more specifically the parents, then the extended family, and, finally, the community. The community is important because it contains the institutions which transmit beliefs - churches, schools, medical facilities, sports facilities, police and/or military groups. A newer form of transmission which is highly prevalent and persuasive in today's society is the media. "The media are fragments of ourselves extended into the public domain, the action upon

us of any one medium tends to bring the other senses into play in a new relation” (McLuhan 1997:265).

Eric Hobsbawm defined the invented tradition as “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past” (Hobsbawm 1983:1). Tradition establishes the various beliefs or rituals which will become either religious, magical, or something else.

Berger and Luckmann observed this process of repetition, though they call it habituation. Habituation is “any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern, which can then be reproduced with an economy of effort and which, ipso facto, is apprehended by its performer *as* that pattern. Habituation further implies that the action in question may be performed again in the future in the same manner and with the same economical effort” (Berger and Luckmann 1989:53). The positive attributes of habituation are that they involve little thought processes. One just does it, as well as limiting choices in response to an action. From this habituation one goes to institutionalization. Institutionalization occurs when an act or actions are shared among members of a group.

The Church supports many beliefs whose origin is the Bible. The Church states categorically that there are Sacred Scriptures, the Bible, written by man though inspired by God through the Holy Spirit and, as such, these writings are true and without error. The Church claims the position of highest authority on the interpretations of these writings. The Catechism does qualify that any interpretation has to take into account the era in which it was written, the culture, poetry or prose, literary style, and prophecy.

There are three criteria for the interpretation of scripture: “(1) Be especially attentive to the content and unity of the whole Scripture. (2) read the Scripture within ‘the living tradition of the whole Church.’ (3) Be attentive to the analogy of faith” (Catechism 1997:38).

The Church has not yet exhausted the methods by which the Scriptures can be understood. There are two senses to keep in mind when reading Scripture. The senses are literal and spiritual. “The literal sense is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretations. The spiritual sense is not only the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs” (Catechism 1997:39). The spiritual sense is further broken down into three categories: allegorical, moral, and anagogical. “(1) The allegorical sense: We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ’s victory and also of Christian Baptism. (2) The moral sense: The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. (3) The anagogical sense: We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem” (Catechism 1997:39).

The most important practice and ritual for the Church is the Mass. This is where Catholic beliefs are stated and affirmed. A simplified version of the Mass consists of the reading of scriptures, a sermon, community prayer (Our Father and the Creed), presentation of the gifts, consecration of wine and Eucharist, and the final blessing.

At Mass one is to reflect on how helpless humans are to attain salvation for themselves. The Church is needed for salvation, and this is where community prayer plays its part: Our Father establishes God as the Creator and the Protector of man, the provider of nourishment and protection. The Creed affirms the beliefs of Catholic faith and states their importance. The

presentation of gifts affirms one's obligation to support the Church, materially and financially. The consecration of wine and Eucharist must be done by a priest. The lay people cannot perform this function. The final blessing can only be done by the priest as well. Finally, we are led to believe the suffering of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints are meant to ensure man's salvation.

The Host, or Communion, during the middle ages signified many things to Catholics. It was a source of devotion, a means of forgiveness, sanctification, and a source of community. Usually taking communion occurred only once a year for the average parishioner, and that during Easter (Duffy 2005). Today's Catholics receive communion, unless for a personal reason, at every mass. Communion is even taken at Catholic weddings and funerals. There are two main reasons a Catholic should not receive communion; (1) breaking the one hour fast rule before church; and (2) one's soul is in a state of grave sin. Other changes from the middle ages, include the lack of altar screens and rails, the priest performs the consecration facing the parishioners, as well as using the vernacular language instead of Latin.

The concept of tradition is very important to understand Catholic behavior. It is the best way Catholics identify themselves, through Church traditions. This is supported by interviews I conducted (to be discussed later). I would even suggest, that the traditions of the Church are more important than its doctrines. Vatican II equated sacred tradition as important as "sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others" (Abbott 1966:118). The Creed (one of the most important prayers for the "official" Church; this prayer is also known as the Profession of Faith) starts as:

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Creator of Heaven and Earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,
And was born of the Virgin Mary.
Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into Hell.
On the third day He rose again.
He ascended into Heaven and is seated
at the right hand of the Father.
From thence He will come again
to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit.
I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.
I believe in the forgiveness of sins.
I believe in the resurrection of the body.
I believe in life everlasting.
Amen.

CHAPTER 9

WHAT IS A MIRACLE

The Catechism does not define a miracle, but has defined Grace, which I believe is at the heart of all Catholic miracles.

Grace is *favor*, and *free and undeserved help* that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life. . . . Grace is a *participation in the life of God*. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life. . . . This vocation to eternal life is *supernatural*. It depends entirely on God's gratuitous initiative, for he alone can reveal and give himself. . . . Sanctifying grace is an habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by his love (Catechism 1997:538).

The Catholic Encyclopedia defines a miracle as “an observable phenomenon that so differs from or exceeds the capacity of the natural factors in a situation that the human mind recognizes a special divine intervention” (Donlon 1967:884). For the Church there are two types of miracles, the moral and the physical. This thesis is concerned with the physical miracle - physical healings, protection, etc. The moral miracle is intellectual that representing cognition, ethical behavior, and belief in God.

This means that *only* God can grant a miracle; the Virgin Mary, angels, and saints are only mediators between the petitioner and God. The intercessors are holier than the petitioner, so God is more likely to grant the miracle, or shed his grace on the person.

Philosophers have dealt with the concept of what a miracle is, more deeply than anthropologists have. Like the definition for magic and religion, the definition for miracle is also argued over. One current definition of a miracle is “a natural event with a supernatural cause” (Mumford 2001:192; Luck 2003). Another definition of a miracle is “the initial intended outcome of an intervention in the natural world by a supernatural agent” (Clarke 2003:463). The

major difference between the two is the role of intention. Can a miracle occur without intention, in other words by accident? Mumford's definition without intentions, is more accurate, because to know intention, one would need to understand the mind of the supernatural agent. This knowledge is beyond the grasp of humans.

From the beginning of Christianity/Catholicism understood the importance of miracles, the Virgin conception and birth; the many miracles of Jesus Christ turning water into wine, raising of dead and other healings, expelling of demons, feeding of many thousands from a few loaves of bread and a few fish; and then the Passion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Jesus then gave permission to the apostles to perform miracles in his name.

Even today exorcisms occur, but are very rarely reported. Priests still bless people and objects (crosses/crucifixes, rosaries, Bibles, people, houses, land, marriages). The priest during Mass is able to bring Jesus Christ to the lay people through Transubstantiation.

Transubstantiation is the moment when the priest consecrates the bread into the body of Christ, and the wine into his blood. Priests anoint the sick; "the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of the priests the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that he may raise them up and save them" (Catechism 1997:417).

Penance and reconciliation can loosely be considered a form of a miracle the priest performs. This miracle is the forgiveness of sins. Through penance one obtains "pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion" (Catechism 1997:396). The body and the spirit are healed through the sacrament of penance even though the body is not healed of any physical ailment.

CHAPTER10

HERESY AND SIN – OBSTACLES OF MIRACLES?

This section on heresy largely consists of Catholic “official” teachings. Heresy for the Church has been formulated over the last two thousand years of experience. This section defines heresy and its various forms, and especially focuses on sin. Sin is especially important to understand the motivation, practices, and beliefs of Catholics. Sin prevents one from receiving God’s grace, without God’s grace one will receive no miracle, experience negativity [despair, hopelessness, etc.], and most important of all, won’t be saved.

In a certain sense sin and heresy are equivalent to the anthropological concept of taboo. Malinowski (1984:425) associated taboos with magic and its practitioners in that they must be followed for the magic to work. Commonly, taboo is understood as a prohibition of using an item, an object, or performance of an activity. If a prohibition is violated, the person is usually considered to be unclean and must become clean again to reenter normal society. To become clean again a cleaning ritual is performed or a certain amount of time is observed.

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1952:134) defined a ritual prohibition as “a rule of behavior which is associated with a belief that an infraction will result in an undesirable change in the ritual status of the person who fails to keep up to the rule. Also Radcliffe-Brown (1952:136) identified ritual prohibitions as either religious and nonreligious. The breaking of religious prohibitions results in sin. The breaking of nonreligious prohibitions results in bad luck. As example of violating religious ritual prohibition for a Catholic would be to eat meat on Fridays during Lent, or not attending Mass on Sundays. The result of these violations causes one to sin, which distances the person from God. The person will be in this state of sin, a form of

uncleanliness, until the person receives the sacrament of penance. The confession of one's sins and their forgiveness is a form of ritual purification.

An example of violating a nonreligious prohibition would be to eat horse flesh. It is not a sin or crime to eat horse flesh, but to do so would be seen as cruel and inhumane, for the horse is not seen as a source of food.

The Catechism defines heresy as “the obstinate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with divine and catholic faith, or it is likewise an obstinate doubt concerning the same” (Catechism 1997:562). Other important terms defined by the Catechism are: “Incredulity is the neglect of revealed truth or the willful refusal to assent to it. Apostasy is the total repudiation of the Christian faith. Schism is the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with members of the Church subject to him” (Catechism 1997:562).

Doubt is considered to be of two parts: voluntary and involuntary. “Voluntary doubt is the disregarding or refusing to hold true what God has revealed and the Church proposes for belief. Involuntary doubt refers to hesitation in believing, difficulty in overcoming objections connected with the faith, or also anxiety aroused by its obscurity. If deliberately cultivated doubt can lead to spiritual blindness” (Catechism 1997:562). Heresy when committed distances one from God. If one misuses religious artifacts, one commits sin and distances oneself from God, so no miracle will occur, through the action of God.

Heresy belongs to the realm of theologians and religious officials. Religious elites claim the authority and right to define heresy. The lay person is concerned with sin. Nonreligious elites aren't concerned with the finer points of heresy but do know the larger issues of right and wrong. For example, most lay Catholics in their daily lives, are not concerned with whether the Virgin Mary remained a virgin after the birth of her son, Jesus, or had other children; which have

not been recorded. The “official” Church is concerned with such matters.

Humans either sin against other humans or against God. Sin is relevant to magic use by Catholics. Magic, its use and as well as its practitioners is sinful. For some [Jews and Christians] the Bible is a historical document as well as a spiritual document. Human history began when the first man and woman sinned, the consequence was being expelled from the Garden of Eden. Sin is also relevant because the Church’s assertion that it distances man from God, and if people sin they are farther away from God. The farther away from God they are the less likely they should expect a miracle.

Man’s first sin is called, Original Sin, this sin led to man’s fall (the Fall) from grace. The Original Sin occurred when “man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God’s command . . . In that sin man *preferred* himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good” (Catechism 1997:112).

Sin is the pathway to hell. The Catechism defines sin as “an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is a failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity” (Catechism 1997:505).

There are many different types of sin. One type of sin is the sin of flesh consisting of “fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing and the like” (Catechism 1997:506).

The worst category of sin is the mortal sin. The three conditions which qualify sin as a mortal sin are: (1) Grave matter: the breaking of one or more of the Ten Commandments; (2) Full

knowledge: knowing that the individual is about to break a commandment; and (3) Complete consent: even though one knows it is a sin and still does it (Catechism 1997:507).

A lesser form of sin is called venial sin. “Venial sin weakens charity; it manifests a disordered affection for created goods; it impedes the soul’s progress in the exercise of the virtues and the practice of the moral good; it merits temporal punishment” (Catechism 1997:508).

The Church admits that sin is an act of the individual which affects society. An individual’s sin becomes the responsibility of society when “(1) others participate directly and voluntarily in them; (2) by ordering, advising, praising, or approving them; (3) by not disclosing or not hindering them when we have an obligation to do so; and (4) by protecting evil-doers. Thus sin makes men accomplices of one another and causes concupiscence, violence, and injustice to reign among them. Sins give rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to the divine goodness. ‘Structures of sin’ are the expression and effect of personal sin. They lead their victims to do evil in their turn. In an analogous sense they constitute a ‘social sin’” (Catechism 1997:510). The Church holds the opinion that sin will lead to more sin.

Original Sin is believed to be held by every living being that was born (except for Mary the Virgin and her son, Jesus Christ) and is a result of Adam and Eve’s sin of eating the apple and disobeying God in the garden. Original Sin is believed to be forgiven through the process of Baptism (a washing away of the sin). It is a conversion to the Church and a life in God. Man does have the ability to ask God for forgiveness. This process or sacrament is made up of conversion, penance, confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The conversion is associated with baptism and a desire to repent, to become closer to God again.

Penance is similar to conversion. “Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our

whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away of evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of his grace" (Catechism 1997:399).

Interior penance is an outward manifestation expressed by certain methods: fasting, prayer, almsgiving, and martyrdom. Penance is a further step in the forgiveness of sins. It is only God who can forgive sins, and since Jesus Christ is God and, He gave the authority to man by way of his apostles, the priesthood claims it has the right to forgive sins through the workings of Jesus Christ.

The last step is reconciliation. Reconciliation is the "reintegration of forgiven sinners into the community of the People of God from which sin had alienated or even excluded them" (Catechism 1997:402). Venial sins are forgiven through the Sacrament of Penance and by indulgences. This method is by way of an indulgence. A family member who acquires an indulgence can apply it to a deceased relative or friend.

Hell is the eternal punishment for one's wrongdoing (sins), and as such should be one of the biggest fears for Christians. Hell is definitely a place to avoid. "Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, 'eternal fire.' The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs" (Catechism 1997:292).

Father Amorth reported from an interview with an alleged possessed person [person under the control of a demon], the demon claimed that the demons created hell and not God. Hell is not the fiery pit assumed by popular culture. The demon described hell in this manner: "Down there everyone lives folded within himself and torn apart by his regrets. There is no

relationship with anyone; everyone finds himself in the most profound solitude and desperately weeps for the evil that he has committed” (Amorth 1990:76).

Popular views of hell are some versions of a big pit, with a lake of fire in which the sinner is tossed in, tormented by the flames and a sulfuric stench. If an attempt is made to crawl out of the pit, the devil’s minions use a pitchfork to prod the sinner back into the pit. One of the most popular literary views of hell comes from Dante’s *Divine Comedy: Inferno*. In the *Inferno*, Dante had to make a trip through hell, purgatory, and paradise to visit his beloved Beatrice who had died. Dante was allowed to visit her and observe the structure of the afterlife and report back, on what he saw to the living. As Dante (1985:89) entered hell, the gate’s inscription read as:

I am the way into the doleful city,
I am the way into external grief,
I am the way to a forsaken race.
Justice it was that move my great Creator;
Divine Omnipotence created me,
And highest wisdom joined with primal love.
Before me nothing but eternal things
were made, And I shall last eternally.
Abandon every hope, all you who enter.

Dante’s hell had nine circles: Circle 1 - limbo, the unbaptised and the virtuous pagans; Circle 2 - the lustful; Circle 3 - the gluttonous; Circle 4 - the hoarders and the spendthrifts; Circle 5 - the wrathful; Circle 6 - heretics; Circle 7 - violence (whether against neighbors, self, god art and nature; each with its own corresponding ring in this circle); Circle 8 - Malaolgin or simple fraud which entails panders and seducers, flatterers, simoniacs, sorcerers, barrators, hypocrites, thieves, deceivers, sowers of discord, and falsifiers; and Circle 9 - traitors (whether they betrayed their kindred, country, guests, or their lords) (Dante 1985). I present Dante because his writings would influence authors, poets, historians, as well as theologians who followed. Dante also influenced people’s perception and concept of hell.

CHAPTER 11

PRAYER – MAGIC OR RELIGION

Prayer, like magic and religion, is a concept hard to define and study. It is a ritual, but is it religious, magical, or both? The answer depends on how it is used. Prayer can be used either as a magical ritual or as a religious ritual. Each is a verbal rite addressed to a more powerful entity.

Thomas (1971) believed prayers were magical when said in repetitious formulae, for example, saying ten Hail Marys in a row. Other examples of prayers being magic were: making a vow or a promise of a reciprocal service for answering the prayer, and the swearing of oaths. If a prayer is religious, a successful conclusion was dependent upon God's will. A prayer is magical when its success *was* guaranteed "unless some detail of ritual observance had been omitted or a rival magician had been practicing stronger counter-magic" (Thomas 1971:41). The success of a magical prayer is not dependent upon the entity's will, but by correctly performing the ritual.

The medium for bargaining with supernatural entities, is prayer. The Catechism characterizes prayer as a battle. It is a battle because "we must face in ourselves and around us *erroneous notions of prayer*. Some people view prayer as a simple psychological activity, others as an effort of concentration to reach a mental void. Still, others reduce prayer to ritual words and postures. Many Christians unconsciously regard prayer as an occupation that is incompatible with all the other things they have to do: they 'don't have the time.' Those who seek God by prayer are quickly discouraged because they do not know that prayer comes also from the Holy Spirit and not from themselves alone" (Catechism 1995:717).

The Catechism list three types (expressions) of prayer: vocal, meditation, and contemplative. Vocal prayers are:

words, mental or vocal, our prayer takes flesh. Yet it is most important that the heart should be present to him to whom we are speaking in prayer: “Whether or not our prayer is heard depends not on the number of words, but on the fervor of our souls’ . . . We must pray with our whole being to give all power possible to our supplication. This need also corresponds to a divine requirement. God seeks worshipers in Spirit and in Truth, and consequently living prayer that rises from the depths of the soul. He also wants the external expression that associates the body with interior prayer, for it renders him that perfect homage which is his due (Catechism 1995:712).

The second expression of prayer is meditation. Meditation: is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain. . . There are as many and varied methods of mediation as there are spiritual masters. Christians owe it to themselves to develop the desire to meditate regularly, lest they come to resemble the three first kinds of soil in the parable of the sower (Catechism 1995:713).

The last expression of prayer is contemplation, which: seeks him ‘whom my soul loves.’ It is Jesus, and in him, the Father. We seek him, because to desire him is always the beginning of love, and we seek him in that pure faith which causes us to be born of him and to live in him. In this inner prayer we can still meditate, but our attention is fixed on the Lord himself. . . One does not undertake contemplative prayer only when one has the time: one makes time for the Lord, with the firm determination not to give up, no matter what trials and dryness one may encounter. . . It is a *gift*, a grace; it can be accepted only in humility and poverty. Contemplative prayer is a *covenant* relationship established by God within our hearts. Contemplative prayer is a *communion* in which the Holy Trinity conforms man, the image of God, ‘to his likeness’ (Catechism 1995:714f).

The Catechism has proscribed the proper place(s) for prayer. The best and most obvious place is church. For the individual, a ‘prayer corner’ in one’s home, should be erected. This corner should contain Sacred scriptures and icons. Monasteries and shrines are appropriate places to pray (Catechism 1995:709). Father Mike, a local priest in Wichita, believes the Catholic Church needs to do a better job of instructing or educating its parishioners on the importance of prayer, and on how to properly pray: “We need to explain why we are Catholics.” It was Catholics, especially lapsed Catholics [those who were at one time a regular practicing

member of the Catholic Church, but now for whatever reasons do not attend Church or obey the teachings of the Church] who need a better understanding of their religion.

Patrick Geary, in his book Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages [1994], lists two main religious functions for the monasteries. One function was prayer. Prayer was for the living as well for the dead, meant to speed those dead in purgatory onto Heaven.

The second function of monasteries was to properly maintain relics and shrines: “to keep the spiritual powers benevolently disposed toward human society” (Geary 1994:95). “The gifts the living had received from the dead were so great as to threaten the receivers unless balanced by equally counter gifts. The gifts of the dead included nothing less than life itself, property, and personal identity” (Geary 1994:78). Gifts, other than prayers for the dead include elaborate funeral procession and resting places, anything dedicated and built in memory of the deceased. This shows that prayer has always been an essential and vital part of any Catholic life, and one’s relationship to God.

Because one prays, it does not mean that the prayer will automatically be successful. There are several impediments for successful prayer: sin, temptation, vanity, insincerity, laziness, etc. When prayer appears to be unsuccessful, it is the failure of the person, all the temptations and the external world must be shut out, because of the fault of the person God cannot give his grace. When prayer as a form of magic fails it is not due to the sinful nature of the individual but a failure of following the correct nuance of the prayer or spell. Other failures may be due to stronger counter-magic, or a failure to accurately pay up or sacrifice to the entity for the object being requested. If the prayer or spell is accurately performed, with adequate payment, and no counter-magic being performed by another prayer or spell-caster the entity must perform the request. In religious prayer no one can compel or force God to grant the request.

The Church recognizes that throughout time people have prayed for healing as well as for a variety of needs. Sickness, despair, loneliness, depressions are special times in one's life where the individual should pray to God. One should pray to receive God's grace and ask for healing. By doing so, one is brought closer to God and develops a deeper faith and love of God (Congregation 2006). Lay people have begun arranging prayer meetings for the specific purpose of asking God for healing. It is not known if such gatherings are faith healing sessions, lead by a claimed healer, or a group of lay people who got together for a specific reason and lead their own prayer. The Church cautions its followers about such gatherings, if such a meeting follows liturgical law, the prayer gathering is appropriate. However if it does not follow canon law, the prayer gathering is considered no to be Catholic, and the prayers are inappropriate. Therefore, no healings will occur.

Saint Theresa of Ávila, a medieval mystic of the early 16th century, emphasized the importance of humility in successful prayer:

We need to understand what sort of humility this must be. I believe the devil is very successful in preventing those who practice prayer from advancing by giving them false notions of humility. He persuades us that it is pride that gives us such great aims, and that makes us wish to imitate the saints and desire martyrdom. He tells us directly, or makes us think, that we poor sinners may admire but must not imitate the deeds of the saints (St. Theresa 1957:89).

For St. Theresa the rewards of prayer were:

Now when I began to avoid occasions for sin and to devote myself more to prayer, the Lord began to grant me favors, as though He desired to make me willing to receive them. His Majesty began to give me the prayer of quiet very frequently, and often the prayer of union too, which lasted for some time. . . For I felt very great delight and sweetness, which it was often beyond by power to avoid. On the other I was conscious of a deep inward assurance that this was of God, especially when I was engaged in prayer, and I found that I was the better for these experiences and had developed greater fortitude. But as soon as I became a little distracted, I would be afraid again, and would wonder whether it was not the devil that was suspending my understanding and making me think this is a good thing, in order to deprive me of mental prayer, to stop me from my meditating on

the Passion, and to prevent me using my mind (St. Theresa 1957:162).

The Church recognizes two types of grace: sanctifying or habitual grace and actual grace. Habitual grace is “an ordering of the life of the spirit that disposes it to live and act in accordance with God’s call - the soul’s vocation. . . Actual graces are God’s interventions at the beginning of the process of conversion and at certain point along the way to final salvation. Actual graces, particular acts are help from God, help us perform the good acts that habitual grace prompts us to do. . . Actual graces come if you have asked for them, and they pass when their work is completed” (Johnson 1996:84).

Actual graces are of three types: illuminating, immediate illuminating, and strengthening. “Illuminating grace illuminates the intellect and is the kind that suggests good thought. This prompting can come through external means as when a sermon, a Bible reading, or consideration of the life of Christ moves a person to reflect seriously on sin and salvation. . . In immediate illuminating grace, the action of the Holy Spirit directly elevates and penetrates the mind, prompting the soul to action and showing it, in a supernatural light, the eternal truths of salvation. . . Strengthening grace is indispensable because no works of salvation are even conceivable without the deliberate choice of the will, and this grace is the touch of God that elevates the human will to a more nearly perfect concordance with his own” (Johnson 1996:85).

God grants several graces or promises to those who pray the Rosary:

- (1) Special protection and the greatest graces to all those who pray the Rosary.
- (2) The Rosary shall be a powerful armor against hell; it will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies.
- (3) The Rosary shall cause virtues and good works to flourish; it will obtain for souls the abundant mercy of God; it will withdraw the hearts of Men from the love of the world and its vanities, and it will life them to the desire of eternal things.
- (4) The soul who recommends himself to me by praying the Rosary shall not perish.
- (5) Whoever shall pray the Rosary devoutly, applying himself to the consideration of the

sacred mysteries, shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not chastise him in his justice; he shall not die an unprovided death. If he be just, he shall remain in God's grace and become worthy of life everlasting.

- (6) Whoever shall have a true devotion to the Rosary shall not die without the sacraments of the Church.
- (7) Those who are faithful to praying the Rosary shall have, during their lives and at their deaths, the light of God and the fullness of his graces; and at the moment of death they shall participate in the merits of the saints in Paradise.
- (8) Shall deliver from Purgatory those who have been devoted to the Rosary.
- (9) The faithful children of the Rosary shall merit a high degree of glory in Heaven.
- (10) Shall obtain all that you ask of Me through praying the Rosary.
- (11) All who propagate the Holy Rosary shall be aided by me in their necessities.
- (12) All advocates of the Rosary shall have the entire celestial court for intercessors during their lives and at the hour of death.
- (13) All who pray the Rosary are my children, brethren of my only son, Jesus Christ.
- (14) Devotion to my Rosary is a great sign of Predestination (Johnson 1996:86ff).

There are a few observations or qualifications that need to be made about these promises.

First of all, the Bible doesn't mention the Rosary. Its practice begins in the Middle Ages. These promises are derived from the teachings, beliefs, visions of mystics, saints, theologians, and popes: not directly from God. Secondly, one has to do more than recite the Rosary. One has to believe in it and devote oneself to it. Mere recitation will not fulfill the promises. The promises by praying a proper Rosary brings one closer to God and grants those things which leads one closer to God. Praying the Rosary for personal gain will not be granted.

In summary, prayer is important for the religious, as well as, those who use prayer as magic (guarantee of a miracle). Prayer is the method one feels the closest to God.

CHAPTER 12

MAGIC REVISITED – THE MAGIC ACT

In the brief definition section, I defined magic and religion but haven't fully explained the differences between the two. Differences between the two are slight, but it is there. Protestants since the Reformation, and even Catholic reform movements before the Reformation, view certain practice of Catholics and teachings of the Church as magic. Examples of this are the use of relics, practice of indulgences, worshipping the Virgin Mary and the saints. The Church responded that it does not worship the Virgin Mary, the saints, or their relics but only venerate them. The veneration of the objects, people, or events associated with the two is to enable one to focus more accurately on God's love for humanity. If any Catholic were to worship such people or objects they would be in error, and have a poor understanding of Catholic doctrine. The Church teaches that one does not pray to the relic but what it represents. It is only God who has the power to grant an intercession not an object or a saint.

Catholic bishop, T. L. Frazier (1993:2) answers Protestant critics of Catholics using relics as magic:

The critic who compares the veneration of relics to magic fails to comprehend either magic or the veneration of relics. Magic employs material objects in order to cause a supernatural effect through demonic forces. Using relics doesn't compel god to act in a certain way. Miraculous events associated with relics are simply cases in which God, according to his sovereign will, uses the mementos of Christ and his saints as conduits of grace. Nothing could be more scriptural.

Mauss (2001:16) listed two properties of magic: "(1) magical rites act upon their object directly without any mediation by a spiritual agent, and (2) their effectiveness is automatic."

Somewhat ambiguous is Mauss's definition for magical rite: "any rite which does not play a part in organized cults - it is private, secret, mysterious and approaches the limit of a prohibited rite"

(Mauss 2001:30). The community must believe in the rite(s) before it is considered to be magic, otherwise the rite is purely an individual act that is related only to that person (Mauss 2001:23).

Mauss is partly correct in his properties of magic and his definition of the magic rite. Magic can act directly upon an object without a spiritual agent, but it can also be used through a spiritual agent. Immediacy is implied, though a magical act can be performed ahead of time for a specific event. Magic rites may occur in private, in secret, and may be prohibited. But they are also performed in the open, in public, and may not be prohibited. Also magic occurs in and out of organized cults.

Mauss described two laws operating in magic: (1) law of contiguity, and (2) law of similarity. The first law, contiguity “applies not only to people but also to things. In magic the essence of an object is found in a piece of it, as well as in the whole. . . This is not all: each object contains, in its entirety, the essential principle of the species of which it forms a part” (Mauss 2001:80). The law of similarity has two formulas: “like produces like; and like acts upon like, and, in particular, cures like . . . The image is to the object as the part is to the whole” (Mauss 2001:84).

In the middle ages, people thought that the consecration of the Host, was the most miraculous point of the service, and anything that is near the consecration also becomes sacred or becomes to possess some of the leftover holiness by sheer contact with the Host.

Tambiah described magical acts as “usually compounded of verbal utterance and object manipulation, constitute ‘performative’ acts by which a property is imperatively transferred to a recipient object or person on an analogical basis. Magical acts are ritual acts, and ritual acts in turn are performative acts whose positive and creative meaning is missed and whose persuasive validity is misjudged if they are subjected to that kind of empirical verification associated with

scientific activity” (Tambiah 1973:199). Tambiah justifies calling magical acts, performative rites since they combine words and deeds (Tambiah 1973:222).

Kieckhefer (1994:814) argues that medieval European magic was “thought as neither irrational nor nonrational but as essentially rational. To conceive of magic as rational was to believe, first of all, that it could actually work, and second, that its workings were governed by principles that could be coherently articulated. These principles need not always have been fully articulated or always articulated in the same way: conceptions of magic varied in their degree of specificity and in the specific types of principles they invoked. But the people in medieval Europe who used, feared, promoted, or condemned magic, and who identified magic as such, not only assumed it worked but could give reasonably specific explanations of how it worked.”

Malinowski (1954:82) understood that “magical beliefs and practices are not taken from the air, but are due to a number of experiences actually lived through, in which man receives the revelation of his power to attain the desired end.” “Magic is not only human in its embodiment, but also in its subject matter: it refers principally to human activities and states, hunting, gardening, fishing, trading, love-making, disease, and death. It is not directed so much to nature as to man’s relation to nature and to the human activities which affect it” (Malinowsk 1954:75). While religion deals with the supernatural (god(s), demons, spirit, enlightenment, or whatever one holds to worship or be divine) and man’s placement/role within the supernatural and the natural worlds.

Malinowski’s study of the Trobrianders of their use of garden magic offers an excellent piece of work to compare with Catholic magic usage.

Garden magic (megwa towosi) is a public and official service. It is performed by a garden magician (towosi), for the benefit of the community. Everybody has to take part in some of the ceremonial and have the rest performed on his account. Everybody also

has to contribute to certain payments for magic. The magic being done for each village community as a whole, every village and at time every subdivision of a village has its own towosi and its own system of towosi magic, and this is perhaps the main expression of village unity (Malinowski 1965:62)

The towosi exercises not merely an indirect influence on garden work, by giving the initiative and inaugurating the successive stages, by imposing taboos, and by setting the pace, but he also directly supervises a number of activities. In order to do this he has constantly to visit the gardens, surveying the work, discover shortcomings, and at least, not any special excellencies. For public praise from the towosi is a highly appreciated reward and a great stimulus to the perfect gardener, the towkwaybagula (Malinowski 1965:67).

I was always able to ask whether it was the way of magic or of gardening, and received unambiguous answers very early in my work . . . I was told also that the spirit houses, the miniature fences, the tufts of grass bound round the yam support and certain horizontal sticks place on the kamkokola were all purely magical. It was, on the other hand, explained to me that ashes fertilize the ground; that deep planting is advisable in dry seasons; that stones must be removed from the soil; that weeds choke the crop, and so on. To the natives, therefore the aims of magic are different from the aims of work. They know quite well what effects can be produced by careful tiling of the soil and these effects they try to produce by competent and industrious labor. They equally know that certain evils, such as pests, blights, bush-pigs, drought or rain, cannot be overcome by human work however hard and consistent. They see also that, at times and in a mysterious way, gardens thrive in spite of all anticipations to the contrary, or else that, in a fairly good season favored by good work, the gardens do not give the results they should. And unaccountable good luck over and above what is due the natives attributed to magic; exactly as they attribute unexpected and undeserved bad luck to black magic or to some deficiency in carrying out their own magic (Malinowski 1965:77).

Dupré, writing for the Catholic Encyclopedia stated that the Church's position on magic

was an:

actualization of transcendence, in the sense that transcendence is drawn into causal-empirical existence and that the latter is carried over into the former. Magic, therefore, is nondifferentiating and leveling delivery of the invisible, spiritual, and hidden into the power of the dominant pragmatism and automatism of everyday life or the attempt to control without distinction or difference the transcendent reality in the interests and purposes of a visible pragmatic conduct and fulfillment of life. . . Or if one wishes to give a precise definition of the phenomenon from the ideological point of view, magic ideology is present when it is believed that life can be ordered or controlled by the help of certain manipulations, incantations, prayerlike practices, amulets, and rites, or through special knowledge (Dupré 1967:65).

Dupré insists that the relationship between magic and religion is fluid and usually

depends upon the circumstance, but magic is in no way the source of or a step leading to religion. An artifact is religious when it used as veneration, devotion, or love but becomes magic “if the ‘power’ in the object is thought of as vital and real in itself” (Dupré 1967:66).

Magic can be categorized as official, popular, and private. Official magic occurs “when public affairs are conducted in accordance with a magically effective ritual. . . Such ceremonies are conducted by the community and also by an official priesthood or a professional magician” (Dupré 1967:66). Popular magic occurs when are acceptable magic practices that occur in public. Examples include the wearing of charms, utterances, visiting a medium, or other occurrence. These practices are largely seen as benign. Private magic occurs in private are more likely too not to be acceptable by the public, and consist more of the dark arts, black magic, or magic that is harmful to others.

William Rodman (1993) offers evidence of the poor and powerless using the belief in magic against the wealthy and powerful to lessen or alleviate the economic and social gaps that exist. Low ranking Ambae males (and females) from New Hebrides can bring charges of witchcraft against their chiefs (even when the chief is a relative). Other chiefs presided over the trial of the accused and with little supporting evidence, the accused are often found innocent, but the fact of being accused, the chief loses political power. Young men with little, to no rank, were able to establish themselves with some political authority by accusing others.

The internet fieldwork clearly provides the best examples of how to classify the artifacts, whether magical devices or religious devices. Three types of internet sites are identified that sold the artifacts [cross/crucifix, rosaries, medallions, pendants]. The first site is the Christian/Catholic site. These sites are a Christian or Catholic site which sells the artifacts. They make no claim by wearing the artifact one can expect a miracle. On the saints’ medallions the

saint's name may or may not be present on the medallion. The packaging of the saints' medallion will have the saint's name, and its patronage. There is no claim that one will receive aid by wearing the medallion.

The second site is the occult site. The occult site covers a wide variety subject matter and activity. Examples of the variety of sites are wiccan, various regional neo-pagan sites, Egyptian esoteric, tarot and astrological themes, vodou, and New Age. Some site's apparent purpose appears only to make money off desperate or unwise persons. These sites seem to be more faddish and fashion oriented than serious. The other type of occult site does appear to be more serious or that the site operators practice what they preach and sell. There is no evidence to support this claim of seriousness or lack thereof, but there is an observable tone between the sites. Both types of sites do make claims that a desired effect will occur by the use of the artifacts, spells, recitation of a spell or prayer.

The former type of occult site is the California Astrology Association. This site sells a variety of artifacts, occult and Christian. I focus on the Christian artifacts in the manner they were advertized, and compared to actual Catholic sites. This site sold Catholic artifacts the same way they were selling the occult artifacts, they guaranteed the artifacts worked if worn. Four of the artifacts illustrate my point.

The first one is the Miracle Cross of San Maya. This cross is sold for \$18.95 and contains a small vial of dirt from the lost city of San Maya, in the Andes Mountains. The benefits of wearing the cross are - money and good fortune; love and luck; and, joy and happiness. A quote about the artifact is "an old-world craftsman has embedded a portion of San Maya's sacred soil in a magnificent cross. Thus, he has succeeded in harnessing two of the greatest forces mankind has ever known: The power of the cross with the blessed earth of San

Maya.” The way in which selling the artifact is magic instead of religious is that one seeks God for healing grace, wisdom, and those things which will bring the person closer to God, and not for any type of personal gain or a fulfillment of a lustful desire. The use of the image of the old-world craftsman is meant to draw a relationship to the fact that Jesus Christ was a carpenter and could perform miracles. Since the Andes Mountains are in the New World, the proper term should have been a new-world craftsman. But drawing a comparison of a person making a cross which will guarantee a miracle with Jesus Christ would be heretical. The most important reason why the claim is magic and not religion is the claim that one can harness the power of the cross and the sacred soil. One cannot harness the power of God and no object can contain the power of God, God’s grace and miracle follow through such an object only by his desire.

The second item is the Guardian Angel’s medallion, sold for \$14.95. This item is meant to be worn as a device to communicate to one’s guardian angel, to understand and experience the guardian angel who constantly protects its subject. The site claims that “whenever you have a special prayer, request, or wish, focus your mind directly upon the amulet and speak your thoughts aloud. As soon as your Guardian angel hears your petition, he can immediately begin to work on your behalf.” Reasons for why this is magic and not religious is that this ad does not even mention God; if the guardian angel is to aid and protect the individual no device should be needed to communicate with the guardian angel; only God is a source of miracles, and the fact that only such things as healing, and things leading to God and/or a better Catholic life are to be asked for. The pursuit of wealth or the fulfillment of any type of lust is inappropriate and won’t be answered.

The third artifact is the halberd of St. Jude, sold for \$16.95. This artifact is a halberd that is worn around the neck on a chain. The site claims by wearing the halberd one will expect to

recapture the essence of a past romance; have the one you love to look at you with loving eyes; you are filled with love but have no one who appreciates all you have to offer; live your remaining years with your soul mate; if you want self-esteem and self-confidence; and finally, if you want a happy, fulfilling love life. This artifact's obvious goal is to ensure the success of one's love life. The criticism for why this is magic is the same as the criticism from the previous two.

The last artifact has nothing to do with Catholicism, but reinforces the site's promotion of such artifacts as magic and not religious. This artifact is the Da Vinci's Prize. The artifact is clearly an attempt to financially benefit from the Da Vinci Code's books and movie. It is claimed that Da Vinci always carried such an object with him at all times and the spirits [none of the intercessors of this thesis] would do his bidding. The site makes the claim that the artifact is specially adept at answering one's desire for protection against evildoers, stimulating new ideas, and to bring hope and love to the wearer. Clearly this is magic in that it promises aid to those who wear the artifact.

From a campy site to a serious site is a site with a collection of love spells. An example of one love [lust is more accurate description] spell which illustrates the difference between the two types of sites. The campy site, one buys the charm and wears it and then waits until the target comes into one's life. The serious site one has to collect the proper materials and prepare them for the performance of the rite. The material for one spell is: the target's picture placed over a doll, your picture over a doll, colored cloth, yarn, three candles, two rubber bands, a lighter, and a shoe box. The color of the cloth has to represent the color you consider to be lust. The cloth is used to cover the dolls, and the yarn is to tie the cloth onto the dolls, only using two knots. You must write 'Lust' on the cloth. Then the ritual can begin:

Light a love candle for you and a love candle for the target. Say; “This candle is my burning love for you.” “This candle is your will to love.” Place the target’s doll near the target candle and your doll near yours. Place a third candle between the two candles unlit. Say: “This is the growing lust between us, attracting us to each other.” Take the two candles with both hands and light the center candle with them at the same time. Extinguish the light of the target candle and your candle. Say; “By the light of our growing lust for each other, I bind us with it until I should choose to break the bonds and part ways with you.” Cover the dolls facing each other with the cloth and bind it with the yarn by making one more knot in addition to the two. Place the in a shoebox and make sure no one disturbs the box (ananael.net 2006).

CHAPTER 13

CATHOLIC WAR ON MAGIC

St. Augustine (1984:6) was one of the first to write on the struggles that face humanity: “God’s providence constantly uses war to correct and chasten the corrupt morals of mankind, as it also uses such afflictions to train men in a righteous and laudable way of life, removing to a better state those whose life are approved, or else keeping them in this world for further service.” In the Church’s long history, it would wage war either actual war (crusades, Reformation period, Inquisition and witchcraft/heretical hunts, attack on the Cathars of Languedoc) or political/spiritual warfare against modernism, atheism/communism, and neo-pagan/New Age movements.

During the Middle Ages, magic, witchcraft, and demonology were synonymous with each other. This section is divided into two subsections. The first subsection illustrates the Church’s reaction to the practice of magic during the Middle Ages. Magic turned people away from God, resulting in eternal damnation. Magic was a diabolic threat and its practice strengthened the devil.

The second subsection is on the “official” Catholic position on saints, miracles, relics, and shrines. Even when the Church canonized a saint it still had to watch the devotion of the saint, shrine, relic and any claimed miracles to ensure the activities are in line with Catholic doctrines and are not heretical or magic. The Church defined what a saint, shrine, and miracles were and how they were to be venerated. Saints and the Virgin Mary were promoted as intercessors and it was necessary to know if one was truly a saint before people began to venerated the claimant. Official sanction was needed, even though lay people would pray to

certain people in the expectation that one day that the person in question would become a saint. Two modern examples of this are Mother Theresa and Pope John Paul II. By defining what a saint is, and what a miracle is; no one could legitimize their own claims of miracles being performed on them without verification from the Church.

13.1 Magic Is Witchcraft

One of the most important pieces of work during the Middle Ages was the Malleus Maleficarum which was written by two German Dominicans, Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Kraemer. The Malleus's purpose was to restate Church doctrine and tell of the danger of witches and of devils for the faithful. The Malleus states that “the belief that there are such beings as witches is so essential a part of the Catholic faith that obstinately to maintain the opposite opinion manifestly savors of heresy . . . Moreover, no operation of witchcraft has a permanent effect among us. And this is the proof thereof: For if it were so, it would be effected by the operations of demons. But to maintain that the devil has power to change human bodies or to do them permanent harm does not seem in accordance with the teaching of the Church. For in this way they could destroy the whole world, and bring it to utter confusion” (Sprenger & Kraemer 1928:1). A side note to remember about the devil(s) is that they are pure spirit and have no bodily form. Demons can enter the body of animals and humans. Demons are fallen angels, who had rebelled against God, but their powers were never taken away by God (Sprenger & Kraemer 1928: Amorth 2002).

The authors of Malleus maintain that not to believe in witches is a heresy. A witch is a person who has “made a compact to obey the devil in all things” (Sprenger & Kraemer 1928:7). Sidky writes that “the people of western Europe were led to believe that they were the target of a

vast occult conspiracy of witches orchestrated by the devil. Many were convinced that satan himself walked the earth, bringing disaster and destruction. Secular and ecclesiastical authorities, along with leading jurists, theologians, and philosophers, all confirmed the reality of the threat” (Sidky 1997:23).

Who were these witches? The accused were mostly women, roughly a 4:1 ratio across Europe. The women were in their 40s and 50s (in mid-life people were expected to be settled and disciplined, one who was not settled was deemed dangerous). They were more likely to lack social power and prestige for their age (which could mean that the person would use witchcraft to acquire power); were menopausal, were often childless or had fewer children than the norm; had chaotic family lives; had a greater chance of having been convicted of other crimes; and practiced informal medicine (healer, midwife, etc.) (Demos 1982).

In the 16th and 17th Centuries, Augsburg, Germany, most accusations of witchcraft did not involve women on flying broomsticks, perverted sexual acts, pacts with the devil, and/or the witch’s sabbath, but focused on maternity issues. Accusations “were related much more closely to the physical changes a woman’s body undergoes when she bears children (nursing). While these clearly have a social meaning and thus a history, the issues were so closely tied to the physical reality and the female sex and to sexual identity at the deepest level that they seemed to elude off-the-peg explanations in terms of female roles and gender conflict. The stuff of much of the accusations made by the mothers was not femininity or genital sexuality, but was pre-Oedipal in content, turning on the relationship to the breast and to the mother in the period before the infant has a sense of sexual identity. The primary emotion of witchcraft cases, envy, also originates in this early period of life” (Roper 1994:203).

The Malleus noted that Inquisitors, officials of the “official” Church, were to be the

judges of witches and their crimes. “It must be for the crime of heresy; but it is clear that the deeds of witches can be committed without any heresy. For when they stamp into the mud the Body of Christ, although this is a most horrible crime, yet it may be done without any error in the understanding, and therefore without heresy. For it is entirely possible for a person to believe that It is the Lord’s Body, and yet throw It into the mud to satisfy the devil, and this by reason of some pact with him, that he may obtain some desired end, such as the finding of a treasure or anything of that sort” (Sprenger & Kraemer 1928:194).

Demonology is related to witchcraft and often was seen as synonymous with it. Its importance is based that Catholics feared being possessed, especially dying in a state of possession, and, as such, developed strategies to counter and prevent possession. Father Amorth, a modern day exorcist, lists six activities which demons do to harm humans:

- (1) External pain: deals strictly with physical suffering. This includes the beatings, scourgings, and injuries caused by inexplicable pushing, falling objects, and so on, that we read about in the lives of saints. . . These occurrences are not as rare as we may think, and the demon’s activity is usually confined to external activity; internal activity, if any, is only temporary and limited to the duration of a particular disturbance.
- (2) Diabolic possession: is the gravest form of demonic activity, which allows a continuing presence of a demon in a human body. The evil symptoms do not have to be continuous but can alternate between periods of crises and periods of rest. Possession implies intervals of temporary suspension of mental, intellectual, affective, and volitive faculties. Symptoms can include the knowledge of languages unknown to the victim, superhuman strength, and the ability to know the occult or someone else’s thoughts.
- (3) Diabolic oppression: is a random discomfort. We must remember that symptoms and gravity differ case by case. This oppression can strike health, job, affections, relationships with others, and so on. Its symptoms include unexplainable rages and a tendency to complete isolation. Oppression can affect both individuals and groups.
- (4) Diabolic obsession: causes an almost split personality. Our will remains free, but it is oppressed by obsessive thought. The victim experiences thoughts that may be rationally absurd but of such a nature that he is unable to free himself. The obsessed person lives in a perpetual state of prostration, with persistent temptations to suicide.
- (5) Diabolic infestation: the malefic activity is directed toward places (houses, offices, stores, fields), objects (cars, pillows, mattresses, dolls) and animals, therefore it only indirectly affects man.
- (6) Diabolic subjugation: the term indicates a voluntary part - implicit or explicit - with

Satan, by which we submit to the lordship of the demon. There are also involuntary ties with the evil one, these cases fall into the preceding categories, especially the most severe: possession (Amorth 2002:61f).

Amorth makes it clear that objects can become evil and even produce evil on their own when they had become associated with an evil being (demons).

Referring back to the concept of diabolic infestations, Amorth lists four methods by which a place or an object can become infested. The most dangerous and difficult cause is the satanic cult and the rituals occurring within. Ceremonies such as seances, fortune telling activities, etc. fall into this cause. The second cause is from a homicide, a suicide, or even on abortion. The third cause is associated with prostitution, homosexual acts, masonic activities, criminals and especially organized crime, and drug dealers especially cartels. Lastly, a hex was placed on the house, object, or location (Amorth 2002:158).

Father Amorth laments the loss of the clergy's fear of satan and his powers. When the people lose faith they turn to superstition (fortune tellers, astrology, and other paranormal disciplines). The rise of superstitious beliefs are spread by the mediums of movies, television, radio, newspapers, internet, and mass gatherings (when dancing, drinking, drug use, and sexual behavior is the prime motivator to attend) (Amorth 2002). None of my respondents reported a fear of the devil or his power over their lives and soul. Even though they may not fear the devil, in theory the devil could still influence their lives in a negative way if they do not protect themselves. The religious way to protect themselves was to attend Mass, do Confession and Penance, take the Eucharist at Mass, and pray to God. The magical way to protect themselves from the devil involved the wearing of an artifact and the belief that to wear this artifact the devil could not touch them, one did not have to ask God for protection, it was assumed to be automatic.

13.2 Miracles And Saints

The Church cautiously withholds judgment from people who claim to have spoken with God or have been visited by the Holy Virgin, angels or some saint. Proclaimed miracles take years before they will be accepted as a real miracle and not some sort of temporarily psychosomatic response to a perceived holy location or object. Current criteria which must be met for a miracle, initiated by Pope Benedict XIV in 1734, are: “(1) The malady must be grave and impossible or very difficult to cure. (2) The malady was not in a state of decline. (3) There was no use of a possibly effective medicament. (4) The cure was instantaneous. (5) The cure was complete (a perfect cure of the malady). (6) There was not beforehand any noteworthy decrease of symptoms or a ‘crisis’ that might provide a natural explanation. And (7) The cure was permanent” (Glynn 1999:58).

Do alleged miracles meet these criteria? Without medical records of the pre- and post-miracle event, there is a problem, also without validation from the Church, there is no miracle. The one miracle which happened at Lourdes took some time so, without instancy, this would not meet the miracle requirement. The pregnancy and the broken ankle appear as reported to be miraculous but a broken ankle I think would not be considered impossible or difficult in healing by letting nature taken its course. But with this in mind, they do consider these events to miracles and live their lives as if they were miracles.

Authorities at all shrines keep records of any miracles proclaimed by the visiting pilgrims. The pilgrim was questioned in order to authenticate the miracle, to prevent fraud, to record successful miracles, and to insure that the alleged miracle was by the saint or holy relics as intercessors between God and not by a demon trying to corrupt the souls of men. Certain shrines competed with each other for pilgrims, wealth, and prestige. Other shrine sites would try to

discredit supposed miracles at competing sites in an attempt to keep people from going there (Frank 2001).

Hans Belting stated that:

Relics and images were closely related and sometimes were even dependent on each other in their ritual function and veneration. Images assumed the appearance of relics and in turn gained power from their coexistence with relics. In medieval imagination, images and relics were never two distinct realities . . . The image, with the bodily appearance of a sculpture, was an agent of religious experience as it represented the reality of the presence of the holy in the word, on terms similar to those of the relic. Image and relic explained each other. In addition, the image, with its coat of gold and jewels, expressed the mentality of an agrarian society with feudal rule, in which gold was valued not merely as an item of exchange but as an expression of power and prestige (Belting 1994:301). The legitimate use of individual images was subject to dispute and controversy among the popes, the monasteries, and the people. The images protected and honored those who controlled and worshiped them. The propaganda with images went back to the time when the pope used images to express his dispute with Byzantium. He had himself depicted at the feet of the imperial Mother of God, thereby declaring himself her subject, not the emperor's, in order to be master of his own house (Belting 1994:314).

At first glance sainthood and witchcraft would appear to be polar opposites. Saints are good while witches are evil. Both have the ability to control supernatural forces. In actual practice it was difficult to determine who was a saint and who was a witch, especially if non-religious concerns are being addressed. Joan of Arc is a perfect example, to the English she was a witch, but to the French she was a saint. Both might have the appearance of controlling the weather, the fertility of crops and livestock, the health of people, and the finding lost items or treasure. A witch might cure the sick in order to aid the devil in its attempt to destroy the authority of the Church, for greed and financial benefit, or from a desire to help people through unchristian methods. The motives of any such miraculous workings had to be determined. This debate occurred on the local and regional level, while Rome has the final decision to condemn or canonize (Kieckhefer 1994).

In modern times the Church has been criticized for creating saints to enhance its

reputation and political stance. Gary Wills has accused the Church of inventing a false history to canonize Edith Stein [a Jew who had become a Catholic nun, only to die in a Nazi concentration camp, for being a Jew] (Wills 2000:54). The Church claims she was killed for being a Catholic but at her arrest at the Convent, only Stein and her sister were arrested, the other sisters were left alone. The miracle attributed to Stein is also questioned. A little girl overdosed on Tylenol pills, and would go into a coma, her parents prayed to Edith Stein and the girl recovered. The best doctors in the nation were consulted and said the girl would recover in due course [99% recoverable rate] and refused to say it was a miracle, however the Church disagreed and proclaimed this to be a miracle and Stein was canonized. Wills proposes this canonization of Stein was to “maintain the argument of *We Remember*, that the Church was more with the persecuted than with the persecutors during the Holocaust. In order partly to clear the church of guilt for the Holocaust, it would partly usurp the sufferings of the Jews from whom Stein is now being separated in her death” (Wills 2000:54).

A second controversial canonization was Maximilian Kolbe. Kolbe, a Polish priest, who was arrested by the Nazis after he refused to allow the Nazis to take over the Polish youth groups from the Church. He was sent to a concentration camp, where he switched places with a man who was condemned to death by means of starvation because of an escape attempt by other prisoners. Kolbe would die by starvation. Kolbe was beatified in 1971 and was on the road to be canonized. Pope John Paul II wanted Kolbe to be proclaimed as a martyr, thus absolving him of all past sins, even his anti-Semitic activities. This martyrization would also imply the Catholic Church was persecuted during the Holocaust. The Pope appointed a commission to determine whether Kolbe was a martyr, and it responded in the negative. John Paul II claimed apostolic authority, which allowed him to canonize Kolbe as a martyr in 1982. Wills asserts the Church

and/or the Pope could make up special rules to help its image and political stance (Wills 2000:62f).

This 20th Century canonization of saints for political necessity, also occurred in the Middle Ages. Aviad Kleinberg suggests the haste in the canonization of Catherine of Siena was largely due to the fact that the pope, Pius II, was also from Siena (Kleinberg 1992:12). Kleinberg described the process of translation or the process of a human being becoming a saint:

as the saint began to fade from the memory of the community, her image underwent a series of changes. The saint of everyday life with her ambiguous and contradictory messages, with her warts and wrinkles, was gradually replaced by a more coherent creation. The oral tradition simplified the saint; it turned her into a mnemonic unit. Many of the trivialities that make a living person were removed in order to get to the saintly core - that which made the saint holy. Among other things, society's role in making the saint was forgotten. The saints' contemporaries could tell about discord and skepticism, about collaboration and collusion, but with time little but the saint's victories remained (Kleinberg 1992:1).

With this type of mental and cultural processes occurring it is not hard to see why people believed saints could act as intercessors between men and God. The saints were no longer mere human beings, but beings who had acquired a certain level of divinity. One surprising historical tidbit, was the relative infrequency of canonizations during the Middle Ages. "Between 1198 and 1434, 71 canonization processes were opened, 35 ended successfully" (Kleinberg 1992:21). There would have been many more alleged saints who were venerated locally for a certain amount of time but by various reasons: time, condemnations by Church officials, a more popular or more powerful saint, lack a strong patron, interest in this alleged saint would wane and eventually forgotten.

Another surprising fact of canonization, Pope John Paul II has canonized "more saints than all his predecessors put together - and he has beatified on the same scale. The saints and blessed were chosen to give a picture of the church John Paul wants to project" (Wills 2000:245).

This is not the place to study the meaning of why this pope has decided to canonize as many as he has, but it raises many interesting possibilities. From a religious perspective, could it mean the end times, the so-called Rapture is coming and God is giving us a larger number of saints to lead by example, in an effort to reform our lives? A sociological perspective might suggest that the pope feels the Catholic Church is losing its social position and claim to authority through various scandals, and secular or ‘New Age’ movements, and is in need of positive examples to emphasize what is good about the Church. A third possibility is the personal belief of the pope, John Paul II believes the Holy Spirit has correctly guided him, and it was correct to canonize all that he has, because, in truth, they are saints.

From 1978 till today [ca. 2002], John Paul II has beatified 1,299 persons, 1,029 of whom were martyrs, while he has canonized 464, of whom 401 were martyrs. The number of lay people, he has risen to the honor of the altars is far more numerous than one would think: in fact, 268 blessed and 246 saints, 514 lay persons in all” (Martin 2005:2). Cardinal Martin answering the criticism by people who say the Pope is politicizing saints for the Church’s agenda, responds “the Gospel is so widespread in the world and its message has sunk deep roots that the greater number of beatifications vividly reflects the action of the Holy Spirit and the vitality flowing from Him in the Church’s most essential sphere, that of holiness” (Martin 2005:2).

Local claims of saints and relics would cause problems for the Church. The Church does promote divine intercession for human affairs, so when one person or a group makes a claim that such an occurrence has occurred, it cannot be dismissed without investigating. Recently the Church has taken a wait-and-see approach to any claims of miracles or visitations. If it is real, then it should be lasting, and if it is not real or just a fad then it will soon pass.

When trying to determine the accuracy of such claims for miracles and/or visitations, both subjective and objective evidence is collected. Subjectively the character of the claimant is called into question: Is this person a trustworthy person (no evidence of previous fraud or criminal activity)? Is the person religious, non-religious, or anti-religious? What is the level of devotion? Is there a personal or familial history of mental disorder? Did the claimant try to find or discover secular reasons for the miracle or visitation (e.g., self-delusion; or hoax)?

In this one aspect, the believer has a negative attribute to its position. In a study by Alcock and Otis, they have concluded that skeptics were better at critical thinking than believers, and were also less dogmatic. Skeptical “rejection of paranormal phenomena does not reflect a close-mindedness, while at the same time indicating that the believers are relatively deficient in their ability to evaluate critically arguments and evidence” (Alcock & Otis 1980:480). Though this study was based on parapsychology (telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis) and not orthodox religious beliefs, I still believe a correlation can be made between believers of religious phenomena and believers of parapsychological phenomena.

In summary, the roles of saints have changed over time. The role of saints had a greater impact during the middle ages, when they were more actively sought as intercessors, or sources of protection, healing, forgiveness, and wealth. These processes of miracle working were part of the religious practices and magical practices of the time. It is magic when a rite is performed with the expectation of success, not the hope of success. It was religious if the outcome was dependent upon the entity or God. During the Reformation period, critics and reformers of the Catholic Church heavily criticized the use of shrines, saints, and relics as devices of miracle working. The Church maintains that the saints are a source of intercession, devotion is proper, but agrees that to worship a saint as a replacement to God is heresy. Saints are still seen as

intercessors, but the role of saints as miracle worker is not emphasized as much as the fact as they are promoted as shining exemplars of the Catholic faith upon whom people should model their own lives.

CHAPTER 14

NEW AGE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

With the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, a threat [at least perceived by the Church] was removed. However, a new threat has come to fill the void of the old one. This new threat is called New Age, though this movement is a series of movements, not just one movement, has been around for a considerable time in several forms. The Pontifical Councils for Culture and for Interreligious Dialogue issued a report in 2003, describing the threat of the New Age movement to Catholics and even to all Christians.

New Age is a:

Reaction to contemporary culture, there are many ways in which it is that culture's child. The Renaissance and the Reformation have shaped the modern western individual, who is not weighed down by external burdens like merely extrinsic authority and tradition; people feel the need to 'belong' to institutions less and less, and are not inclined to rank 'official' judgements above their own. With this cult of humanity, religion is internalized in a way which prepares the ground for a celebration of the sacredness of the self. This is why New Age shares many of the values espoused by enterprise culture and the 'prosperity Gospel,' and also by the consumer culture, whose influence is clear from the rapidly-growing numbers of people who claim that it is possible to blend Christianity and New Age, by taking what strikes them as the best of both.

New Age appeals to people imbued with the values of modern culture. Freedom, authenticity, self-reliance and the like are held to be sacred. It appeals to those who have problems with patriarchy. It 'does not demand any more faith or belief than going to the cinema,' and yet it claims to satisfy people's spiritual demands. . . . Some versions of New Age harness the powers of nature and seek to communicate with another world to discover the fate of individuals, to help individuals tune into the right frequency to make the most of themselves and their circumstances. In most cases, it is completely fatalistic (Pontifical Council 2003:4).

The report does recognize that the New Age movement is really a collection of movements and not an overarching homogenized philosophical movement. Most of the varying movements share a few features in common: perfectability of the one's own soul without the aid of God or any supernatural force; denial of a concept of sin, or the concept of good or evil; reincarnation;

impersonal god, or god as nature; love; or some sort of energy.

As just stated, the Church believes New Age movements are dangerous to the spiritual well-being of Christians. So have New Age movements influenced the usage of charms by Catholics? This question is extremely hard to answer, especially since there is no unified New Age movement. There are Catholics who practice New Age methods such as acupuncture, yoga, meditation and other various techniques of self-enlightenment, but these methods do not necessarily change their conception of God, or the Catholic Church. One of the movements, which might sway Catholics, is the guardian angel.

As mentioned earlier, the Church believes in the existence of angels, classifying the angels into categories, based on their function. The New Age Angel is something entirely different from the Catholic version. This movement claims to believe in God and the Bible; however, the relationship between people and these guardian angels are somewhat different from what the Church endorses.

Both the Church and the New Age version believe in guardian angels, which is an angel assigned to a newborn and would continue to guard the newborn to the end of its life. The prayer to one guardian angel is:

Angel of God, my Guardian dear,
To whom God's love commits me here,
Ever this day be at my side
To light and guard, to rule & guide.
Amen (Korn 2001:203)

The New Age movement believes one can know and communicate directly with one's guardian angel. Crain wrote to know one's guardian angel, one must "cultivate a state of 'relaxed expectation.' If you set aside time every day or evening a 15- or 20-minute meditation, in a quiet place with a candle, soothing music, and incense to create the requisite atmosphere,

you will find your energy becoming more peaceful. It is this peaceful vibration that connects to the angels and allows them to communicate with you” (Crain 2003:15). These guardian angels work in the manner of one’s gut instinct or intuition, and/or the sending of messages or answers, which come in various forms (songs, passages from a book, a phrase one hears on the street) one just has to hear it and recognize the message’s meaning and its purpose.

The best way, says Crain, to receive a miracle from one’s guardian angel is to use the angel properly and to believe in them (Crain 2003:45). Also, creating an altar or ritual place aids in communication with one’s guardian angel. Devotion, gratitude, concern, as well as gifts in the form of prayer, food, and drink are means of saying thank you. Along with Crain’s book was included an angel doll and blessing cards which formed a guardian angel tool kit. Crain suggests it is a good idea to carry one’s angel doll at all times, so the guardian angel can better communicate and protect the person, as well as the person protecting the doll and hence protecting the angel (Crain 2003). The Church does not go beyond saying they exist and is our personal protector and shepherd (Catechism 1997). Crain’s ideas go beyond what the Church would say is acceptable. I have no evidence of such usages as this guardian angel by my subjects, but I introduce it to illustrate how attractive and seductive such things can be. Even the Church has recognized this and has warned its followers of New Age movements.

CHAPTER 15

DISCUSSION

The charm works on two levels, passive and active. The passive level, the person just wears the charm and expects intercession, or that no specific intercession is required, just a general protection and favor. The active level, the person actually initiates the involvement of the intercessor for a specific purpose: one has cancer, was in a car wreck, needs the winning numbers of the lottery, fears possession by demons, or fears immediate and expected death for some source. The means of activation is varied: praying over the charm, rubbing of the charm, swearing of an oath, a vow, or a bargain, kissing the charm, or making a sign of the cross over the charm. There can be any number of sequences. Whatever is done, it is a personal act by the user of the charm, there is no standard rite or proscription for the rite to occur. The only standard rite is that established by the user.

Another factor in the use of charm is the emotional. The use of charms and the relation to the entity through which intercession occurs is highly emotional and personal. Why would someone pick the Virgin Mary over Jesus Christ, or a saint over the Holy Spirit? One would think that God and Jesus Christ would be sufficiently for all of one's needs. Was there some event [trauma of a physical or emotional form] or some despair for a particular choice? The idea of a saint being picked is easier to assume since the majority of saints are a patron saint of something. A saint might be picked for regional reasons: St. Patrick is the protector of Ireland. A saint might be picked for the parish one attends.

A saint could be chosen during the process of confirmation. My personal saint is St. Stephen, King of Hungary (975-1038). This choice was made during the confirmation

process. In this process I had to find a saint who I respected and hoped to pattern my life after confirmation as a full member [adult member] in the Church. St. Stephen was the king of Hungary, who had a program of Christianization the Magyar's lands and peoples. He established many churches and dioceses, established a Christian law code [threw out pagan laws], began the process of feudalization of Hungary, established a system of welfare. St. Stephan is thought to be "an exemplar of justice, mercy, charity, and peace in a cruel age" (Vann 1954:184). I admit that until now while writing this thesis I have never thought of my personal saint. So for one to continue to venerate the saints and "ask" for intercession there must be a deeper relationship and commitment, that just being confirmed. So I believe the desire/need for intercession is based both on emotion and real physical needs.

This is supported by a statement by Goodenough (1990:597): "a proposition's credibility may appear obvious from experience, or a proposition may seem to be the most prudent assumption on which to act. In either case, the commitment has a pragmatic basis. Emotional commitment to a proposition occurs when a person wants or feels a need for it to be true because of what its truth implies about things that matter."

To collect data on Catholic beliefs and practices of charms and the use of magic to acquire miracles, I used survey questionnaires and telephone interviews. Respondents were from two sources; one group was people who I knew to be Catholic and willing to fill out my questionnaire, the other group was parishioners from the Church of the Magdalen, located at 12626 E. 21st St. N., Wichita. Thirty survey forms with a self-addressed stamped envelope were given to the Magdalen's RCIA group. This RCIA group consists of those adults who are converting to Catholicism, or those baptized Catholics who were never received the sacrament of confirmation when in High School (normal age for confirmation). As adults they now wish to

be confirmed. RCIA consists of several months of spiritual preparation and study of Catholic doctrines. Out of thirty RCIA people only three responded, all of which was a sponsor for an initiate.

I interviewed four Catholics who were either known to have received or to have witnessed a miracle. These four were members of the Church of the Magdalen. It was reported that these four were especially known for their religiosity and their work in the parish. All were very eager to talk and to share their views on their faith and the teachings of the Catholic Church. One of the female interview subjects implored callers who get her answering machine to pray for children, so that they will find inspiration in the Lord in order to avoid the temptation today's children face.

Since the number of respondents to the survey was low, it is impossible to draw a conclusive model of the belief system for Magdalen. However I believe inferences can be drawn for Catholic belief in miracles whether such beliefs are from an orthodox Catholic doctrine or is it a form of popular magic within Magdalen's. The subjects interviewed are known for their religiosity within the parish, while the survey respondents vary in their religiosity.

The low religiosity for some of the survey respondents is known by verbal reporting as they filled out the survey form. They reported very low church attendance or even beliefs in most of the teachings of the Catholic doctrines: birth control, premarital sex, abortion. One of the respondents went to Catholic schools instead of the Wichita public education system. Though even with their low religiosity, they still identified themselves as Christian and Catholic.

The three respondents from RCIA do not in itself denote high religiosity, but with past experience only means that the sponsor knows the person who was converting to Catholicism. From personal experience, in my hometown parish (Ellsworth) those who went through RCIA

were normally spouses of Catholics who decided to convert or Catholics who were never confirmed when in High School.

By low religiosity, I mean, is a person who attends church (Mass) irregularly and often dismisses the teachings of the Church as irrelevant or outdated to their lives. Those with high religiosity (interviews) were chosen by Sister Connie Beiriger, pastoral associate of the Church of the Magdalen. In this thesis high religiosity means those who attend Mass at least once a week, are actively part of the parish's social and/or religious organizations (Knights of Columbus, Parish Council, Altar Society, Men's Club, Choir, attends retreats and/or pilgrimages, Bible study groups, and other various parish volunteer or a charity event). Even with this in mind there are other reasons besides religious for someone to be active within the parish; economic, social and/or political. However, over an extended period of time those who are truly religious stay regular.

Medium religiosity reflects those who attend Mass from once a week to a few times a month. They attend a parish organizations or events sporadically. Joining and attendance should not be attributed to a reflection of devotion but from a form of guilt and/or pressure. Guilt for knowing one is not a particularly good Catholic but also not a particularly bad one either, excuses of some reason are used for the lack of participation.

A priest, whether in a sermon at Mass or through personal conversation can put pressure on parishioners to become a more obedient Catholic or reform one's life. Other pressures come from or high religiosity parishioners who question those who do not attend or volunteer. From personal experience, the priest does little personal pressuring, on a one to one base, the priest lets the sermon say what he wants. The priest collectively admonishes the parish, not anyone individual, thereby avoiding an awkward scene or any lasting personal bitterness between the

priest and the parishioner. Most one on one pressure is from an event or organization leader who needs personal and/or material contributions for the functioning of the organization or event. High religiosity people are usually the first to volunteer, or needs only to be asked to participate. Medium religiosity people need some coercion to participate. Low religiosity people are seldom asked for it is already known that they will not attend or help. Even their pessimism or negativity about the event will be unwanted.

First I will begin describing the high religiosity interviews. I interviewed four Catholics from the Church of the Magdalen. Three of the four claims a miracle had occurred in their life, while the fourth believed the Holy Spirit intervened in her life to ease her emotional suffering at the passing of her mother and later with her father-in-law. The three who believe a miracle had occurred, never sought official documentation and as such, the Catholic Church will not officially recognize such an event as a miracle. The interviews were over the phone and lasted fifteen to thirty minutes each.

Interview # 1

Is a white Caucasian male aged fifty-four years, born and raised a Catholic. When questioned on why miracles occur, he responded that “they are an outward sign between us and God.” Miracles come in varying degrees: healings at shrines, like Fatima; a baby being born; to positively influencing others to do the right thing. His miracle was a family miracle, three times over. He and his wife were medically (no specifics) unable to conceive children, even with invitro-fertilization, after many prayers, pilgrimages, and a visit to a *Catholic* faith-healers they were “blessed” (his term) with three children (not triplets). He attributed the pregnancies to St. Gerald, the patron saint of mothers, and to the Holy Spirit. When asked about non-Catholic faith

healers and/or religious artifacts, his response was that he would never associate with any type of faith healing which wasn't endorsed by the Catholic Church and religious artifacts are only a means to an end, and not a source of power. The artifacts are meant to draw one closer to God. When asked about what is or isn't proper in asking God for, he responded that anything is proper to ask for but an inner awareness and a receptiveness to God's love is necessary for a miracle to occur or to understand when a miracle has occurred.

Interview #2

Is a Caucasian female aged thirty-five years, born and raised a Catholic. She believes miracles occur as a sign of God's love and they occur very frequently however people fail to recognize a miracle when it occurs. She felt no personal miracle has occurred in her life, but has definitely believed the Holy Spirit comforted her mother and later her father-in-law as they passed away from a terminal illness. Also the Holy Spirit eased her own suffering when they passed away. She was comforted knowing they had moved onto a better place (Heaven). Religious artifacts could induce a miracle but is blasphemous if not used in good faith. Good faith means compliance with Catholic doctrines.

Interview #3

Is a Caucasian female aged sixty-four years, she converted to Catholicism from Presbyterianism forty-six years ago. She believes miracles occur all the time but people are unaware of them. Miracles are a sign of God's love. She claims many miracles have occurred in her life and she shared the latest one.

In the year 2000, she broke her ankle, after thirteen months it had not yet healed causing her serious pain. She was scheduled to have surgery on her ankle, to repair the break after she

returned from Chicago. The trip to Chicago was for a Catholic healing convention and spiritual retreat. At the convention she was walking in a hallway and someone said to her, “You are in pain and need healing,” she said, “yes.” So a priest and some of the other convention members who were nearby, knelt on the ground, the priest put a crucifix on her ankle and they prayed together. She said her ankle heated up and later on Monday at the doctor’s office, with new X-rays being taken, the ankle was fully healed. She attributed the healing to Jesus Christ.

Religious artifacts are tools for motivation and for devotion. She has visited Lourdes, as well as many other holy shrines believing in their healing power. Material items such a winning at Lotto and other forms of wealth are inappropriate to ask God for, but for any miracle to occur God must will it.

Interview #4

This Catholic is a Caucasian (born in Egypt) female aged fifty-two years, who was born and raised Catholic. Miracles are a sign and occurrence of God’s love. Her ailment was severe and chronic pain in the pelvic region. X-rays and MRIs revealed disintegrating cartilage in the pelvic area. This pain led to a constant need for aid in any activity (baths, toilet, even to turn over in bed). Her family convinced her to visit Lourdes and to pray for healing. At Lourdes, she prayed to the Virgin Mary to ease the suffering of her autistic nephew. Her husband and her daughters, who also went on the pilgrimage, prayed for her healing. She immersed herself into the bath at Lourdes, instantly feeling a peace of heart plus the will to endure the pain. A couple of months later, she realized her pelvic pain was gone, she had been healed.

At Lourdes she collected Holy Water for those unable to make the trip. This Holy Water and other religious artifacts are instruments, a tool, in cures, but the cure is based on the *belief* in

God, not an innate power of the object. She asks God and, especially, the Virgin Mary [there is a statue of Mary and a small shrine in her backyard] for healing for her, her family, for spiritual guidance, and strength of faith. She believes the best attributes of the Catholic Church are its traditions as well as the universal and inclusive nature of the Catholic Church.

A second part of the fieldwork was the use of surveys. The respondents ranged in age from nineteen to sixty-seven; one did not list his age, but he was retired, so I placed this survey form into the older group [defined later]. There were six males and three females. Racial makeup was one Asian, one Mexican, five Caucasians, and two non-responses. Occupations when listed were a professional (banker, manager, teacher), two were students, and one was a retired Boeing employee.

All but one of the respondents was not born into a Catholic family and was raised as such. She converted at age of twenty-six and since then has been in the Church for twenty-two years. Her reason for conversion was her husband, Catholic, and the feeling that it was the right thing to do. All the other responses of why they were Catholic were that they were born into it, their parents had them baptized in the Church and they grew up Catholic. The older group wrote that the Church was the only true Christian faith established by Jesus Christ.

The survey respondents fall into two age groups: a young group: ages nineteen to twenty-four (four total; three males, one female); and the older group: ages forty-eight to sixty-seven (five total: three males, two females). The young group is very consistent in their responses. The responses are extremely brief, mainly circling yes or no, with little explanation. Only one, the female wore any type of religious artifact; which was a ring. The ring had a cross on it. There was no explanation of why she wore it (not worn all the time). Three of the four believe that an intercessor (Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary, the saints, or the angels) intercedes in peoples' lives. The

same three also believe that the Church promotes the role of these divine beings in Wichita appropriately. All four believe that no intercession has occurred in their life. On the role of popular culture influencing the image of Catholicism, the same three people were not concerned with how Hollywood portrays Catholicism because it is only an opinion. The dissenting opinion, believes Hollywood portrays the Church's teachings falsely.

The older group is more consistent in their responses with each other. Four of the five wear religious artifacts: one wears a saint medallion; one a crucifix and a tattoo of Jesus Christ on his arm; one a cross (from Jerusalem); one a crucifix and a saint medallion. Both of those who wore the saints' medallion wanted to live their life like the saint. There wore the medallion to honor that saint (they were not worshiping the saint). One listed her saint as St. Anthony, the patron saint of miracles. I have no evidence on what a saintly life entails.

All five believe that an intercessor intercedes in human lives. Answers to why there are intercessions are varied: 'it is necessary for God to guide his people, so why wouldn't you ask God for an intercession; Jesus only intercedes with those in severe need of help; the Bible tells us so, and in modern times it is Mary and the saints who intercede; and finally, my faith tells me they are living and real, and they truly care about my needs, and want what is good and true for me.' Three of the five (two males, one female) believe an intercession has occurred in their lives. One male who said no, still attributes surviving the Vietnam war to God, because he believes God still had a plan for him. One male believed the Virgin Mary was present when his ten-year-old son had open heart surgery. Another male believed that Jesus Christ answered some of his prayers during the tough periods in his life. One female prays daily for the intercession of saints, particularly to St. Anthony's for her mother's health. She also wrote she has been healed many times by intercessions but gave no specific occurrence. All five believe that their parish in

Wichita promotes the holy intercession, and that the Diocese of Wichita is a strong and traditional diocese.

On responses about Hollywood's image of Catholicism - two were concerned and two weren't concerned about Hollywood's portrayal of Catholicism. The four respondents still believe such media can be used for good, when it accurately portrays Christian/Catholic doctrine. Examples, of movies, are Mel Gibson's The Passion of Christ (2005) and the movie Saint Thérèse of Lisieux (2004). One believes that Hollywood as well as the music industry is partly responsible for the low morality in modern American society. This same respondent believes the Catholic Church needs to do a better job of explaining to younger Catholics the tradition and tenants of its faith. He fears that Protestant Evangelicals will continue to convert younger Catholics to its tenants.

The third type of fieldwork consisted of visiting local Catholic gift shops as well as Internet sites to determine the method of how the artifacts were being sold and marketed. Sites visited in Wichita were Holy Trinity Catholic Books and Gifts, Eighth Day Books, and Catholic Arts and Gifts. Eighth Day Books is mostly a bookstore, with at least two-thirds of its books on some aspect of religion. Religious artifacts [cross/crucifix, rosary, Virgin Mary, saints, angels medallions and pendants] are sold but have a very small space devoted to selling these items. These artifacts were of the high dollar variety. There was no advertisement to aid in the selling of these artifacts. There is no guaranteeing of a miracle by buying and using the artifact. Religious icons were also sold. This selling pattern reflects that of the two gift shops, which is next to be discussed.

The two gift shops had a wider range of religious artifacts: greater selection of crosses/crucifixes, number of saints, images of the Virgin Mary, and angels (archangels or a guardian

angel). Prices ranged from cheap (a few dollars) too expensive (forty or more dollars). I determine the medium range to be from five dollars to forty dollars. The two gift shops had a greater variety of material and sizes: small plastic pieces, fine porcelain, cheap base metal to gold and silver items. The Catholic Arts and Gifts store sells parish religious items: vestments, chalices, candlesticks, procession crosses/crucifixes, religious apparel. None of these three sites sold religious jewellery under the claim or guarantee of a miracle will occur. The extent to any literature that came with any of the jewellery was with the saints, a possible short biography, and the patronage of the saint. There was no mention one should expect a miracle.

A side note to the retail stores, was observed from a TV news report on the sales of St. Joseph statues. There is an increase of St. Joseph's statues being bought and then buried in the yard of homeowners to aid in the selling their home. The statues were the cheap, plastic four inch variety. It was understood by the purchasers of the statue that by buying and burying the statue in the yard, the house would soon (matter of days, or a few weeks) sell. The report contained testimonials of those who buried the statues and in a few days found someone who bought the house. The report did not give any statistics on whether the using the statues were Catholic or not. The intent of buying and using the St. Joseph statue is clearly magic usage. I have no evidence of such practices in Wichita. But I present this example to show that even when retail stores do not promote artifacts to secure an intercession, the patrons of the store can still purchase an artifact and use the artifact as a magical device.

Internet sites reflect a similar selling pattern that one finds in the local retail stores. They range from Catholic religious affiliation, to secular sites selling religious artifacts, or to an antique dealer selling high dollar and/or rare religious items and jewellery. Prices ranged from cheap, too expensive, too very expensive (two hundred dollars or more). Quality ranged from

cheap base metal to precious metals (gold, silver, platinum) and to items studded with semi-precious and precious gems. No intercession or miracle was guaranteed or claimed from the site if one bought or wore any of these items. On some saint medallions, it was written what the saint patronized. Some sites were selling other religious items: books, calendars, DVDs, CDs, art, statues, etc.

Internet sites selling magical charms are also varied and more numerous than those selling religious artifacts. Such sites include: neo-pagan, wiccan, satanist, and New Age. These sites sold various charms, jewellery, candles, stones, scented oils, and spells. These items ranged in price from a few dollars to a couple of hundred dollars, which guarantee to the purchaser the stated result: wealth, love or sex, power, job, health (strength), death or harm to a foe or previous loved one. These sites range from an apparent harmless or campy atmosphere. The apparent object of these sites is to make money off people who believe in magic or are desperate for the desired result to go ahead and try the product. Other sites seem to be run by an actual witch/satanist or practitioner, those who believe their items will do as they claim. These sites are usually the more expensive ones, the material quality of the items is higher, as well as selling the more of the harmful items.

These sites claim by the proper use of the artifact a result will occur, and some sites offer guarantees. Usually there is a loophole, such as performing the magic right correctly. There is no doctrine of how such results occur, often with the aid of some form of deity, spirit, demon or entity. There might be an entity in the overall belief system, e.g., wiccans the mother goddess, neo-pagan Egyptian - Amon-Ra, etc. In the performance of some spells there is no mention of the entity. Some sites seem to function as a support group. Chat rooms might be present as well as testimonials. Testimonials state that the magic purchased did work. I have no evidence on

whether these testimonials are true purchasers and users or are fake testimonials by the owner of the site hoping to influence the buyer. The common features of all the testimonials are that the person has/had a problem, bought and used a charm, spell, etc. and then one's life got better.

The last aspect of my fieldwork was an interview with an associate pastor of Magdalen, Ft. Mike. He believes that the teachings of the Church are clear, religious artifacts are *signs* to a greater reality than themselves, a reminder of one's faith, *not* faith in the object, faith in the object is superstition; artifacts can be used as an aide for better prayer. Prayer in this instance is not meant to ask God for stuff but to communion with God, to obey God, to have a relationship with God.

He admits, in his estimation, people do wear such artifacts as fashion or part of a trend, though not sacrilegious, but bad taste. He knows of no specific examples of magic use from these artifacts but would not be surprised if it occurred. The closest example he could illustrate on the spot was the use of rosaries by older women during Mass. Before Vatican II, the Mass was said in Latin, which very few Americans understood, so for some women say the rosary during Mass. After Vatican II, which endorsed the use of the local language, the same women would still say the rosary during Mass. Ft. Mike appreciates the fact that they are dedicated to the rosary and the Virgin Mary, but at Mass, their focus should be on Jesus Christ, his sacrifice and resurrection, leads to salvation. They should not be saying the rosary during Mass, but telling them this would not work because they believed they were doing something right and approved by God.

Wichita might eventually have a saint of its own. Father Emile Kapaun's case is under review. Kapaun was a chaplain in the Korean War, during the war he was captured and sent to a prisoner of war camp. At the camp he administered to the medical and spiritual needs all men of

any faith within the camp. He became ill with a blood clot in his leg, and was denied medical treatment, which led to his death. Currently his sainthood is being based on martyrdom.

On the Internet there are many news blurbs and personal testimonials about people discovering or seeing images of Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary in various household items, food items [potato, grilled cheese sandwich, etc.] or some stain on a wall, a mirror, or a window. Wichita had its own Virgin Mary sighting. This sighting was located at 21st and Waco, in a business window. Father Mike visited the alleged sighting, where he recognized a vague shape, but did not see the Virgin Mary in the shape. The diocese did not make an official pronouncement either way on the shape, for if one did see Mary it would help those in their faith and if you didn't see Mary, no harm done.

Another series of questions dealt on the nature of interaction he has with his parishioners. Parishioners, on a one to one basis, will come to him in search of advice, answers, and someone to talk to, on about any subject: spiritual concerns, questions on doctrines or teachings, cultural, social, familial concerns, or something as seemingly irrelevant: e.g., how a father should handle his daughter when she did not become Homecoming Queen. In his sermons, he does not purposely avoid topics, but is aware of political correctness and will try not to offend people. His favorite sermon topics are World Marriage Day, Holy Thursday, and the Last Supper (where Jesus Christ instituted the priesthood).

When specifically asked why the Church no longer discusses the activities of evil, satan, or punishment in hell for one's sins. He stated that the Church, especially under John Paul II, wants to focus on the positive, a 'Culture of Life', not a 'Culture of Death' [abortion, contraception, cloning, genocide, war, capital punishment]. The Church wants people to believe in God, to go to Church for its rewards, in the spirit of love and devotion to God. It does

not want to scare people to make them go to Church.

Father Mike recognizes the modern Church faces several problems. The biggest problem is on educating its membership on Catholic doctrines. Parishioners lack a knowledge of their faith. Education has been dumbed down. The Church needs to explain why we are Catholics. With the shortage of priests, their job has become more administrative and less a shepherd of their flock. He also believes many oral traditions have been lost, as well as many family traditions. Modern churches do not visually inspire members. Artwork was to inspire, to increase devotion, or tell the story of Jesus Christ. He believes Christian artwork is an excellent teaching tool when applied correctly (no specifics on what correctly meant). He also believes that Vatican II has been poorly implemented.

The patron saint of Magdalen's is St. Peregrine, the patron saint of cancer. St. Peregrine was said to have been cancer. Healing occurred in a dream where he saw Jesus come down from the cross and touch his cancerous leg. The next morning his leg was healed. Pergrine died on May 1, 1345 and was canonized on December 27, 1726. The Church of Magdalen is planning a pilgrimage to the National shrine of St. Peregrine at Chicago from June 23-27, 2005. The cost of the trip is \$550.

One example of a prayer to St. Peregrine is:

O God, in St. Peregrine you gave us an
outstanding example of faith and patience.
We humbly ask you that, by imitating
him and by the help of his prayers, we may believe
more fully in your healing help, bear the
suffering of this life without wavering, and
come with joy to the peace of heaven.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Originally the patron saint for cancer, St. Peregrine seems to be heading toward being the

patron saint of AIDS and life-threatening disease patients, as well. So far only one site is calling him the patron saint of these three diseases. All the others are still calling him the patron saint of cancer. St. Peregrine has a shrine in Portland, OR, where one can send an e-mail with one's intention (asking for an intercession). The intention is written on a card. This card is then placed on the altar during Mass. The intention goes to St. Peregrine who then seeks the intercession from God. If God grants the petition, the person is then healed or comforted. Apparently, it is now possible to be healed from a shrine without ever attending the shrine.

This is just one instance from one Catholic church in Wichita, where some parishioners seek an alternative source of healing, other than from the modern professional medical and health care system. There is a segment of Catholics in Wichita who do more than just go to church on Sunday. They have an active relationship with God. And further studies need to be done to delve deeper into their faith, beliefs, and practices.

CHAPTER 16

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, my intention is to study how Catholics were using certain artifacts [cross/crucifix, rosary, medallions, and pendants of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the saints, and the angels]. Were these artifacts worn to insure a miracle (“popular” religion), or were they worn as sign of devotion and/or to identify themselves as a Catholic (“official” religion)? If such usage is “official,” usage should reflect proper religious activities. If usage is “popular,” such usage may reflect a magical activity instead of a religious activity. If usage of artifacts is deemed to be magic, such activities are considered heretical (sin), a sign of a lack of faith. This lack of faith and sin separates humans from God.

My usage of magic is: a “body of purely practical acts, performed as a means to an end (Malinowski 1954:70): the means to an end are to aid and abet (Mauss 2001:24) any human endeavor (magic is not performed to aid or abet any type of divinity or spirit). The third element is the notion of human control (Firth 1958:124) not supernatural control.

A religious artifact is an item worn solely as a form of devotion, a reminder of how one should live one’s life, and/or to identify oneself as a member of the religious faith. This is different from a charm, in the fact, that there is no expectation that a miracle or some sort of reward is expected by wearing the artifact.

The responses from interviews and surveys, there are no usage of artifacts as charms. No magic is being performed. Many did wear an artifact(s). These artifacts were worn as signs of devotion and faith. Interview respondents claim a miracle has occurred in their life. Miracles were the result of God’s love and a sign of his love toward humanity. Some have visited or have

participated in a pilgrimage to a shrine or a healer (Catholics faith healers as opposed to any other type of faith healer). These are acceptable “official” Catholic practices.

Magical and religious acts are very similar. They often appear side by side in the performance of religion. The clearest distinction between the two is: religion subordinates the self to a higher power, for Catholics the higher power is God. In magic, the user doesn’t subordinate the self to any power, but manipulates objects to control the power or forces that power to obey one’s will. Bargaining occurs in both processes. If you do this, I will do this in return. God does not bargain. Religious artifacts do not have any power to perform a miracle. Magical artifacts do have power to perform a miracle.

Religion is public and open, though some access may be denied for certain rites to nonbelievers and some events may be closed to believers based on age, sex, or standing in the religion (only cardinals are allowed in the chamber to elect a new pope; at one time women were not allowed to hand out communion). Magic is mostly individualistic though does occur in small groups (family, age cohort, craft specialization). Magical acts occur in public as well as in private. Magic rites are not dependent upon age, sex, nationality, or occupation. Magic use does not depend upon the intention of any type of deity, but the correct performance of the ritual, force the power to grant the request.

The young age group survey respondents were not good sources of information on Catholic beliefs and practices. A variety of reasons may be offered for this: their outlook on life might be more secular than previous generations or a lack life experience that comes with age. Also, they might not have been taught as well as previous generations. This is supported by, Father Mike, priest at Magdalen’s, assertions that the Church has failed to teach its traditions, doctrines, and practices properly. Another reason for the lack of response for the young people is

their age. They may not feel that God is not important; along with age, marriage, self-dependency (not relying upon one's parents), raising children, and increased risk of serious illnesses (diabetes, cancer, heart disease) often found in middle age and beyond, these Catholics might have a need to belong to something more than just the self.

The older survey respondents responded more positively in a belief for intercessions. Reasons for this are: older people have more health problems as well as the possibility of sick children. The quality of Catholic education for the older group, as children, was better than today's level of education. Another aspect is: whom did Catholics of earlier decades spend their time, Catholics or non-Catholics? And how did this influence their beliefs? Do today's Catholics spend more time with non-Catholics or with Catholics? And how does this influence Catholic beliefs and behavior? I did not research this topic but it would offer a better understanding on the nature of Catholic beliefs.

Another common theme of the interviews and surveys is that there is no mention of the presence of evil and/or the devil. One respondent did allude to the sinful ways of today's culture, but this allusion is based on a lack of personal morality and not a suggestion that it was the work of the devil. The Church has de-emphasized hell and the devil in its "official" writings and sermons. Father Mike attributes this to the promoting a Culture of Life/Love (union with God/Jesus Christ) and not a Culture of Death (sin).

Catholic "official" literature maintains that God gives humanity signs from various sources: environmental disasters, Bible, and prophecy, to aid humanity. The aid is to bring one closer to God, and away from sin and punishment. One needs to be open to recognize and understand the sign(s). When one obeys the sign, the person will follow the correct path. The correct path leads to reward. For example if a person was offered a job, but not sure if the job

should be taken, one prays. God answers with a sign, but it is up to the person to interpret the sign correctly. If the person interprets the sign correctly and takes the job, the person will find the job rewarding, if the person incorrectly interprets the sign and does not take the job, the person is out of a rewarding job. If the person takes the job, which he was not meant to take, the job will not be rewarding and may face consequences - job loss, harassment. The onus is on the person not on God, God delivers, humans receive.

The interview subjects mentioned prayer as the most important part for intercession. Some implied the religious artifacts are important, but the importance is not in the object itself. The object is only an aid, it is meant only to focus prayer and/or as a sign of devotion, their love for God.

Prayer is an ambiguous ritual. An incantation, a magical prayer, it is an invocation of an entity meant for immediate response. Incantations are used for protection, acquire items or wealth, lust, or to curse one's enemy. Prayer, as a ritual, can be both magic as well as religion. The difference is in the expected outcome. Religious prayer is the hope that God will answer one's prayer. Magical prayer guarantees success unless the ritual was not performed correctly or someone else used a stronger counter-magic. Success is not dependent upon the will of the power being petitioned.

In the methodology section I asked certain questions on the marketing of artifacts. Is there a difference in how religious artifacts and magical artifacts are sold in stores and internet sites? The answer is yes. Religious artifacts are sold in Christian/Catholic speciality stores and Christian/Catholic internet sites are religious items. The way the artifacts are used is dependent upon the buyer. There is no claim that by the purchase, the wearing, or the use of such an artifact, a miracle will occur. There are no restrictions or obligations placed upon the buyer. At

the shops the retailers will help a customer find an item, but no observation was made of them suggesting a certain item can be used to secure a miracle.

There were internet sites which did not claim to be a Christian or Catholic site also selling the artifacts. These sites sell the artifacts and other jewellery (secular) for profit. They also sold a wide variety of secular items: books, CDs, DVDs, clothes, and gadgets. These sites focus on the high end type of artifacts and use material made of precious metal and precious and semi-precious gems. Christian and Catholic sites sell high end artifacts as well as the cheap end artifact, made out of plastic and aluminum.

Pagan internet sites do sell Christian artifacts, but more specifically, they sell charms, spells, potions, dolls, from any conceivable belief system: wiccan, vodou, pagan, New Age, satanic, Egyptian, etc. These items (even the Christian items) are sold as magical items. The purchase and proper performance of such objects acquire for the person will get a specific positive response. The response is dependent upon the correct performance of the magical rite, and that there is no counter-magic present. For example, if one tries to curse another, the other must have no protective spell(s) to counter the curse.

In summary, the use of artifacts by Catholics in Wichita, does correspond to “official” Catholic doctrine, hence it is religious, not magic. Also the usage does not match my definition of magic and the usage reflects that of religious rituals. The Catholic/Christian stores in Wichita and internet sites sell the artifacts as religious items. Religious items do not aid and abet. Occult internet sites sell occult charms, and Catholic artifacts as magic items. There is a clear distinction in the manner and promotion of the items being sold: magic guarantees success.

Although the thesis topic is on artifacts and whether Catholics use them properly (religious) or improperly (magic), there are excellent avenues of Catholic “official” and

“popular” behavior to pursue. Local Catholics do seek out alternative healing sources when the “official” medical establishment has failed them. Other lines of investigation are comparisons and contrasts of Catholics who are more secular (low devotion) to the highly devoted Catholics. Why do young Catholics seem to have a disconnect with the Church, is it age or something more? When such questions are studied and answered, a truer picture of how Catholic practice their religion will emerge.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX B: LIST OF SOME INTERNET SITES

CATHOLIC SITES WHICH SELL RELIGIOUS ARTIFACTS:

<http://camerojewelry.com>
<http://aquinasandmore.com>
<http://catholiccompany.com>
<http://rubylane.com>
<http://handcraftedcollectibles.com>
<http://romegiftshop.com>
<http://savellireligious.com>
<http://www.catholic.com>

MAGIC SITES:

<http://amuletstones.com>
<http://www.smokylake.com>
<http://saulat.com>
<http://spellsnow.com>
<http://hocuspocus.co.uk>
<http://www.calastrology.com>