

**SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTEMPORARY
CATHOLIC AFRICAN ADOLESCENTS**

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**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for Doctor of Ministry Degree**

**Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
Graduate Studies Program
New York, New York**

MAY 2005

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DEDICATION

**This Thesis is dedicated to the Holy Spirit-the third Person of the Blessed
Trinity-the Divine Advocate and Counselor;**

And

**To the Blessed Virgin Mary-the Mother of Jesus Christ
-Our Lady of Good Counsel-**

And also

To My Beloved Son in The Priesthood

**Late Rev. Fr. Lawrence Gbemi Adetoye; The Second Catholic Priest
From Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State of Nigeria.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endures forever.

O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endures forever.

O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endures for ever." (Ps.136: 1-3).

As King David expressed his gratefulness to God in the above psalm, in the same vein, I am very grateful to God for creating me, strengthening and counseling me up to this very moment of my life. I thank God who has made it possible for me to study in America and to complete my Doctorate Degree program in Pastoral Counseling. All to the glory of God (Ad Dei Gloriam) and to the benefits of humanity. I sincerely thank my Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. M.O. Fagun, who gave me both his apostolic permission and blessing to study in America. My unalloyed gratitude goes to the Directorate of the Doctor of Ministry program, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York and Post Graduate Center for Mental Health, New York. I am particularly grateful to the Director of the Doctor of Ministry program, Dr. Carol Ochs, who is also one of my mentors for this project, for her motherly advice and corrections while writing this project and throughout my course of training. I also thank the Registrar, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Dina Linsk, for the useful role she played while going through this program, she is a woman of value. I am also indebted to John Staton, C.S.W. and Martha Miller, C.S.W. who were my Clinical Case Discussion Supervisors in 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 sessions respectively, I appreciate all their supports and encouragements; may good things never perish from their families (Amen).

I thank all the faculty members of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York and those of Post Graduate Center for Mental Health, New York for their support, encouragement, and other meaningful academic assistance they have given me toward this Doctorate Program. To all my colleagues in the Doctorate Degree program, I had no regrets of studying with you; you are an intellectual body of knowledge, tradition, culture, and spirituality full of counseling skills for the third millennium. I am grateful also to my second mentor, Lynne Jones, for her painstaking and useful suggestions for this project. To Dr. Mark K. R. Banschick, whose words of encouragement, recommendations, and humility geared me up to venture into writing this project, he is a teacher full of wisdom and integrity. I am sincerely grateful to him.

I also thank in a special way Rev. Fr. Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R who was my mentor, spiritual guide and confessor, for guiding me in my spiritual journey and in my pastoral counseling program. My sincere thanks go to the pastor of Church of St. Charles Borromeo, Dover Plains, Rev. John J. Backes, for his assistance throughout the course of my stay in Patterson, may God reward you with eternal glory (Amen). I am grateful to all the members of Sacred Heart Church, Patterson, New York, and the Knights of Columbus; especially the members of Fr. James T. Breen Council Number 7490, Patterson, New York, in which I am a member, for your love, kindness, and generosity toward me. I am also indebted to all these good people in the parish namely, Frank Schmazl, Meg. Cairney, Lori Byrne, Jean Mattiace, June Richardson, Veronica Roche, Mary Ann and Edmond O'Connor, Vincent Malacarne, Russell Nolan, John Panzanella, Kathy and Larry Elliot. My gratitude goes to these special friends of mine, John M. Mocibob, Peter Sheida, Rev. Leonard Jarvis and Rev. Sulton Stack Jr., for their love and

generosity. I am grateful to the Nigerian delegates and women, especially Mrs. Kate Ohanele, Mrs. Cecilia T. Fagbemi and Mrs. Anna U. Eneh that I led to celebrate the black history month in Brooklyn and to the African Catholic Women summit in Washington D.C in February, 2005 respectively. Thank you for being good ambassadors of Nigeria.

I am also grateful in a special way to the administrator of Sacred Heart Church, Patterson, New York, Rev. Thomas M. Lutz, for his hospitality towards me, he is truly a priest according to the mind of Jesus Christ. To him everyone is equal in the presence of God. May the peace of God that you are serving abide with you always (Amen). I also thank Ellen Lewis for her generous and motherly contributions toward this project in particular and to my stay in America in general and to her late husband-Bill Lewis- who was until his death my very good friend and mentor; may his gentle soul continue to rest in perfect peace (Amen). I thank Mary L. Mullen, Michael and Patty Brady for their contributions toward my spiritual, financial, and academic sustenance in America, may God reward you abundantly (Amen). I also thank Martha Felipe, Simeona Curiel, Judy and Mike McDermoth, Michael and Roleline Nwankwo for buying some of the books I used for this program. My gratitude goes to my noble friend- Dr. Akintunde Ayeni-the Pathfinder Oye Kingdom-who sponsored my coming into America for the first time, and to his wife, Chief (Mrs.) Abiodun Ayeni, I am also very grateful.

I am very grateful in a million folds to all my amicable brothers and fathers in the holy priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church especially: Rt. Rev Monsignor Jerome Oluwafemi Ayeni, Rt. Rev. Monsignor Edward Akintunji Ogidan, Very Rev. Fr. R.K Pariola, Rev. Frs. Francis Mary Ogundare, Andrew 'Kunle Toyinbo, Dominic Sunday Ajayi, Raphael 'Bode Aborisade, Raphael 'Femi Osegboun, Micahael 'Tunji Ilori,

Fredrick `Wale Abe, Peter Okanlawon Alade, Emmanuel Abiodun Ojo, Peter Obawale Olawumi, James Adeola Olaogun, Jude `Bidemi Asanbe, Jerome `Bimbo Aiyelari, and Francis Ibanga, MSP who are always ready to assist me. I thank Rev. Sr. Gloria Mary Agumagu, HHCJ and Michael Amraibure who read the first draft of this project and for their great love and support for me in making this project a reality. I am lucky to know you. I thank in a special way my lecturer and mentor at Fordham University, Dr. Thomas E. Legere who encouraged me to pursue my Doctorate Degree Program and Ellen Raspitha who saw to the final proofreading of this project, thank you for your academic and motherly corrections. I am grateful to all the adolescents too numerous to mention their names, especially the five Catholic African adolescents that I worked with and sampled their opinions for this project, their valuable contributions to this project have made it a reference point for Pastoral Counselors and Caregivers of the twenty-first century. I am also indebted to my brother, Esq. Emmanuel Oluremi Ajayi, who worked tirelessly to make my coming to America a reality, may God reward you in a million folds for your love and kindness. A million thanks also to my uncle, Chief Michael Ayo Omodara, who saw to the financial sustenance of my education in America, may you be richly blessed in your children's children (Amen).

Sincere thanks to my cousin, Rev. Sr. Regina Adenike Oke, SSMA who was in America in March, 2005 as a counselor to witness the final stage of this project and her two jolly friends, Rev. Sr. Beatrice `Funmilayo Opaireke, SSMA and Rev. Sr. Damiana `Kehinde Adeyingbo, SSMA for all their sisterly advice, support, and encouragements while working on this project in particular and while staying in America in general; to them love is not a scandal to justice and logic.

I am grateful in a special way to His Royal Majesty, Oba (Sir) Michael Ademolaju, the Oloye of Oye Kingdom (Adugbole III) and his queen, Olori Theresa Ademolaju, Chief Ayo Ogunlade-the Iare of Oye Kingdom, Dr. Micahel Jimi Oke, Mr. Joseph Akinjobi, Rev. Sr. Veronica Iyabode Owoso, SSMA, Rev. Sr. Agnes 'Funke Adeluyi, SSL, Rev. Sr. Agnes Taye Adebayo, SSL, Mrs. Elizabeth Onogwe Campbell, Mrs. Veronica 'Funmi Dada, Chief (Mrs.) Cecilia Olu Oke, and Princess Adenike Olubunmi Okunola for their sincere kindness and generosity. I sincerely thank my elder sister, Mrs. Cecilia 'Funke Olatunji. She is one of the rare good sisters in the world, may her shadow never grow less. I am happily grateful to three of my nieces, Mercy Sefunmi Walter, Christianah Bukola Esan and Anthonia Helen Kokoro Jegede who are presently my secretary and personal assistants respectively. I also sampled their opinions as adolescents while embarking on this project, praying to God to make them successful adults as they navigate through the struggle of adolescence.

I am also grateful to my younger sisters, Mrs. Grace Atinuke Esan and Mrs. Helen Motunrayo Olorunfemi for their loving support and encouragements while writing this project in particular and while in America in general; when I see them I am full of joy, happiness, peace, and love. A glowing tribute to His Holiness: John Paul II (the great) - the pope of adolescents- who died during the final stage of writing this project, his inspirations will have a lasting memory on me as a Catholic priest. May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace (Amen). Finally then, I give my unreserved gratitude to my parents, late Chief Stephen Ajayi Jegede and Chief (Mrs.) Esther Omoyeni Ajayi, for the good enough and well-done job they did on me while I was growing up as an adolescent, in fact they are parents of all parents; thank you papa and mama for not giving up on me.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Each stage of life has its own way of coping with life's challenges, its own practice of faith, and therefore its own spirituality. The adolescent years are special not because they disappear temporarily from "normal life" into spiritual black hole but because for the first time, adolescents have a chance to choose for themselves, to question others' assumptions, especially those of adults, those of their Church, temple or mosque, and eventually from their identity as human beings with which their spirituality is fused.

According to Wattenberg (1955) the teen years were described as a period of storm and stress, largely revolving around religious and spiritual questions. Emphasis has been placed on the tendency for adolescents to go through highly significant experiences of conversion. As far as religious and spiritual beliefs are concerned, the details of development are probably different for each adolescent, but much depends on the parents' attitudes, the religious education the adolescent has, the family faith and so on.

Whatever variation for individual adolescents, certain general patterns can be discerned. The vast majority of adolescents are spiritual in the sense that they believe in God, prayer, and life after death. As they grow older they begin to worry about simple personified ideas of Deity, the authority of the Bible, and specific sins (Wattenberg, 1955, p. 475). Spirituality is an extremely important area of numerous adolescents' lives, but in religious observances and in groups, they can find a source of security. If spirituality is one of the major aspects of adolescents, why is it that adolescents are moving away from spirituality? Parents, schools, churches, temples, pastoral counselors, and society at large have a lot to do with the spirituality of adolescents for adolescents

cannot develop apart from the social structure. This project is written so that the spirituality of the adolescents will be developed and nurtured. A key policy should be to provide ways in which adolescents can exercise their ideas in action. In ceremonies and group meetings, the significance of symbolism and observances should be recognized. In fact, parents, churches, schools, pastoral counselors and society should never underestimate the value of spirituality in adolescents' present psychic life. If this is kept in mind there will be fewer problems at the adolescent stage. The major problem for adolescents today is that churches, temples, schools, parents and of course society have failed to work together to develop and nurture the spirituality of adolescents to the utmost. In Africa, traditional religion permeates all the departments of life; and spirituality cannot be separated from the African traditional religion. Spirituality is seen at all levels of development in humanity; adolescence therefore as one of the stages of human development will be considered in this project as well as how the African traditional religion has helped to develop this spirituality.

There is no demarcation between religion and spirituality in Africa; there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, or between the religious and the nonreligious, or between the spiritual and the physical areas of life. Where the African is, there is his or her religion and the spirituality. He or she carries it to the fields when sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop. He or she takes it to a beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he or she is a politician it is taken to the house of parliament (Mbiti, 1969, p. 2). African traditional religion is not primarily for the individual, but for the community. Creeds of African traditional religion are written everywhere in the African world and in the traditional setting. There are no irreligious people in the African

community. The fullness of humanity for the African is to belong to the whole community and to participate in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, and festivals of that community. An adolescent or any other person cannot detach himself or herself from the religion of the community, for to do so is tantamount to cutting away from his or her roots, foundation, and the context of security, kingships and the entire community which makes his or her existence a reality. To be without one of these corporate elements of life in Africa is to be out of the whole picture and it is as good as self-excommunication.

Therefore, the African people do not know how to exist without religion, spirituality, and community life; there is no room then for individualistic life. One of my fears and, of course, the major reason for venturing into the writing of this project is the exposure of the African adolescent to modern change. With its increased metamorphosis through Western education, traveling abroad, urbanization, and industrialization, African adolescents have become detached from their traditional environment; this without any doubt is one of the sources of severe strain for the African adolescents. This leaves them in a vacuum devoid of a solid religious foundation; they are torn between the lives of their forefathers/mothers, which, whatever else might be said about it, has its historical roots and firm foundation. The life of our contemporary technological and computer age has as yet for many African adolescents no concrete form or depth for what life is all about. African adolescents are so embedded in the African sense of religion and spirituality, that Christianity or even Islam, the two major foreign religions in Africa, do not yet quench the spiritual thirst of adolescents. These two great foreign religions to Africa do not seem to remove for African adolescents the sense of frustration and uprootedness. Even if Judaism is taken to Africa in this twenty-first century, it will follow

suit like Christianity and Islam unless it too takes into account the development of the spirituality of African adolescents in the African traditional religion particularly in the rite of passage to puberty. There may be the sense of frustration and uprootedness for them in Judaism similar to Christianity and Islam; as they have not fully got their spiritual overhaul in them, it is just a matter of time. It is in this light therefore, that the first chapter of this project will address the historical background of the spiritual development of African adolescents, the need for all the custodians of African adolescent to develop and nurture the spirituality in them, and the relevance of the spiritual development of African adolescents to the wider pastoral ministry.

Chapter two will deal with the psychological model of Jean Piaget on the intellectual development of adolescents as well as the theological principle of Michael Carotta on the spiritual development of adolescents. In the third chapter of this project, the actual project is carried out with five African Catholic adolescents. Here a workshop takes place where these participants are heard and listened to. Their growth, both intellectually and spiritually will be assessed and assessment will be made of the outcome of the workshop with these African adolescents as well as whether the African religion has actually helped them to develop spiritually and intellectually. In chapter four, the results of the workshop will be outlined according to the assessment in chapter three. Any development that was not anticipated and shaped the project will be demonstrated with the final results of the project in chapter five. Here both the anticipated and nonanticipated results will be shown. The contributions of this project in clarifying and expanding the psychological model of Jean Piaget on the intellectual development of adolescents and the theological principle of Michael Carotta on the spiritual development

of the adolescents will be stated; the contributions of this project to the wider pastoral ministry will be demonstrated; and finally the implications of this project to the future pastoral ministry will be enumerated.

CHAPTER ONE

a. Historical Background of the Spiritual Development of Catholic African Adolescents

According to Mbiti (1969) any rite of passage for the Africans is surrounded by religion and spirituality. This rite of passage takes place at birth, at the stage of adolescence, marriage, the blessing of a new car, and at death--the final rite. The puberty rite of passage for African adolescents has many religious and spiritual meanings in addition to the physical drama and impact (Mbiti, 1969, p.121). Many spiritualities (religions) have founders. This is not the case with African traditional religion or the spiritual development of African adolescents. The spiritual development of African adolescents, like the entire African spirituality, evolved slowly through many centuries as Africans responded to the developmental changes in adolescents and reflected upon their experiences. Spiritual development of African adolescents as part of African religion arose and took shape in the process of the Africans' search for answers to the various questions and changes surrounding the stage of adolescence.

The Spiritual development of the African adolescents is very pragmatic and realistic; it is applied to the situations of adolescents as they arise. Historically, adolescents are ritually introduced to the art of communal living. This happens when they are withdrawn from the other people in the African society to live alone in the forest or in specifically prepared huts away from homes, they go through a period of withdrawal from society, absence from home, during which time they receive secret instruction from the elders before they are allowed to rejoin their relatives. This is a symbolic experience of the process of dying, living in the spiritual world and being reborn (resurrected). The

rebirth, that is the act of rejoining their families, emphasizes and dramatizes that adolescents are now new, they now lost their childhood, and they may even receive completely new names. They are now to share in the full privileges and duties of the African community. This incorporation of the adolescents into adult life also introduces them to the life of the living dead (Ancestors) as well as the life of those yet to be born.

Before modern civilization, boys at this stage of adolescence in African religion underwent circumcision, and girls underwent clitoridectomy. The physical cutting took place in the morning. There is no age limit attached to this rite; it is whether the adolescent has reached the age of puberty. This is ascertained through their physical appearances. The physical appearances for girls are: menstruation, pubic hair, enlargement of breasts, and widening of hips whereas for boys, it is marked by emergence of facial and pubic hair, voice deepening, and the enlargement of testis and penis. The foreskin of the boys' sexual organ is cut off; a small portion of the girls' clitoris is similarly removed. The operation is painful, but the children are encouraged to endure it without crying or shouting, and those who manage to go through it bravely are highly praised by the community. Afterward there is public rejoicing, with dancing, singing, drinking beer and pouring of libation and food offerings to the living dead (Ancestors). The shedding of blood into the ground binds the children mystically to the living dead who are reached symbolically in the ground, or are reached at least through the pouring of libation on the ground. The physical pain, which the children are encouraged to endure, is the beginning of training and developing them for difficulties and sufferings later in life.

In the history of the Africans therefore, the rite of puberty for the African adolescent is to aid and influence the spiritual growth and development of the African adolescent. This will also in turn teach the African adolescent to respect God, parents, elders, neighbors, peers, and the entire African community they live in, and that the adolescence stage is a time of education in all its ramifications for the adolescent. This rite of passage is a public recognition that the adolescent is now passing from childhood to adulthood. The cutting of the flesh is also a symbol of getting rid of the period of childhood, and getting ready for the period of adulthood. As long as the adolescent has not gone through the rite, he or she is regarded as a child. Therefore, he or she is not given full responsibility at home and in the community. Once the initiation has taken place, the adolescent is ready to enjoy full privileges and shoulder various responsibilities, both in the immediate family and in the larger community. This rite of puberty passage gives opportunity to the adolescent to be prepared for marriage. In fact, one of the features of this rite is the period spent in seclusion, during which they are taught many things concerning the life of their people, its history, its traditions, its beliefs and above all how to raise a family. The mysteries and secrets of married life are normally revealed to the young people at this point to prepare them for what is soon to come. Nobody is allowed to get married before going through this rite of puberty passage and therefore it is the gateway to marriage; many people get married soon after it, under normal conditions.

Puberty rite of passage is a central bridge in the lives of the Africans. It brings together one's youth and adulthood, the period of ignorance and that of knowledge. Separating a person from one life by dispersing the early state of passive life, it then integrates one into a productive state knitting the adolescent with the community. It is a

passage, which also bridges the male with female, fatherhood with motherhood, since it signals the official permission for one to get married and bear children. It also joins the living with the departed, the visible with the invisible, because after the rite of passage, an adolescent may perform religious rituals. The rite of passage for the adolescents is a solemn unity and identification. Through it the adolescent is sealed to his or her community and the community is in return sealed to him or her.

This is a deeply spiritual step, because during rite of passage the elders in charge offer sacrifices and prayers to God and ask for his blessings upon the young people. In other places, the spirits are believed or invited to be present to witness the occasion. From that occasion onward, the initiated boys and girls will forever bear the scars of what is cut on their organs, and these will be scars of identity. Through the scars, the initiated are henceforth identified as members of such and such a people. Without this identification scar, they cannot be fully integrated with their people. During the seclusion part of the puberty rite of passage, the adolescent undergoes a period of education or traditional schooling, which concerns tribal life and matters which equip them to live now as full members of their society. They also undergo physical training to overcome difficulties and pain, and to cultivate courage, endurance, perseverance, and obedience.

This educational experience equips them mentally, bodily, emotionally, and morally for adulthood. They are now young adults in the eyes of the society. Upon completion of their seclusion, the adolescents return to their homes. This is often a great occasion of rejoicing and feasting in the community. Returning home is like being born afresh into a new life. They go home as new people, full people, responsible people. In fact, in many parts of Africa, they are given new names following their rite of puberty

passage to show the radical change they have undergone. They may also wear new clothes and receive presents from relatives and neighbors. They receive respect from everyone. A new rhythm of life begins for them, and they start to play a new role.

In some parts of Africa, like Kenya, Tanzania, Sierra Leone and others, the adolescents are initiated in the same batch from age sets or societies. They consider themselves to be one. They share what belongs to them, as if they were real brothers and sisters. These initiation ties are lifelong and they are regarded as very binding (Mbiti, 1975, p. 97). In some parts of Africa, this form of rite of puberty passage takes place annually, while in some parts it is biennial or even less frequent. It is also very much a community and public affair. Therefore, the whole community makes a great occasion out of it. All the necessary preparations are carried out, the boys and girls who are due for this rite are told in good time, everyone talks about it and waits for it with joy.

Some details vary from people to people, such as the age when initiation is done, who carries out the operation, at what time of the year it is best done, where it is carried out, the type of preparation necessary for the boys and girls concerned, and the feasting which follows the great event. In many parts of Africa, the boys and girls due for this rite are taken into the woods for periods lasting from a few days to several months, or even longer in some cases when the population of adolescents that are due is high.

In the mind of Parrinder (1962) the rite for African adolescents is a great transition between childhood and physical maturity, and it is therefore an occasion for considerable ritual. This essential principle throughout Africa is to make the child into an adult, a full person, and to introduce him or her to sex life. Many African people have "societies" or "schools" for training adolescents, from Poro and Sande of Sierra Leone, to the

circumcision schools of Lesotho and Botswana. In these schools young men and women separately live in community and undergo hardships that aim at introducing them and fitting them for life as adults. There are hard tasks to be done, exercises, and severe beatings with sticks, eating of dry, or even disgusting foods, in order to teach obedience to the elders in charge. Training in the puberty schools involves instruction in the mysteries of sex. Songs and dances are learnt which refer to sexual functions.

The organs may be enlarged, but intercourse is prohibited; chastity at marriage and being a virgin on the night of marriage for girls are highly prized; and their lack in a bride would bring shame to her family. The idea of rebirth is characteristic of puberty rite; the adolescents withdraw from the world, live in a communal life, endure hardships, undergo rites which initiate them to adult mysteries, are directed by masked spirits, are given new names, sometimes even learn ritual dialects, and eventually emerge in new clothing and are restored to their families as born again to adult life. The rites of other religions may parallel the new names and new personalities being given to those of adolescents during their rite of passage. In some places, particularly East Africa, Christians have experimented with purified forms of initiation ceremonies for their converts. The analogy to baptism and confirmation is too clear to be missed and thrown away. According to Donkor (1997) this rite of puberty passage marks the advent of sex education. In the case of a girl at this stage the mother or older women in the community begin with pedagogical tasks of womanhood instructing the young woman about taboos and prohibitions of menstruation, marriage, dietary laws, societal responsibilities, and expectations. Whereas in the past little or no attention has been paid to her movements and activities as a child, her activities will now be circumscribed to prevent her from

engaging in dishonorable conducts. From now on her actions have ethical repercussions, so she is advised to be careful in public. Her concerns now have to do with relationships with social perspectives.

b. Specific Need for Ministering in this Project

African people with their adolescents inclusive are very religious and spiritual in their nature; therefore African adolescents cannot be excluded in the spiritual journey of the African world. The puberty rite of passage that has been described in this project strengthens their yearning for spiritual things and forms good and balanced relationships between them, and their friends, relatives, parents, and their community, and above all forms a balanced relationship between them and God. The value of ethical life that is being taught and instilled in African adolescents at various stages of initiation is therefore concerned with knowing the precise nature of the individual's purpose of being, the discovery of which may lead to ideal life, which is what spirituality is all about in every race and religion.

Therefore, the lingering nature of ethical existence, spirituality, and generativity are always present in the lives of African adolescents. Donkor (1997) ascertained that the lingering nature of ethical existence and generativity means that living must be acted out existentially to ensure the ideal life. This is what is being taught to the adolescents during the puberty rite of passage in Africa. The ideal is measured in terms of altruism, invariably construed as having found one's existential purpose of being. Ethical existence and generativity are thought of as an individual quest in the Western culture. It is incumbent upon the African community to safeguard its contents without excluding

adolescents. Because of this need of spirituality that the African adolescents are exposed to, it is almost impossible for them to cause any chaos or disorder in their community for they have been groomed to know through the puberty rite of passage that disorder engendered by unethical life has broader existential and metaphysical repercussions that threaten the homeostatic relationship between the mundane and the ancestral world.

All these are woven into the fabric of the spirituality of African adolescents through the puberty rite of passage. The specific need in this project is ministering to the spirituality of African Catholic adolescents; this project will seek a way to nurture this spirituality in the adolescents. It is the opinion of this project that it is when the adolescents are nurtured well spiritually that the future of the world will not be in chaos because for the adolescents of today are the adults of tomorrow. If the adolescents of today are not doing well spiritually and otherwise, the adults of tomorrow cannot do well either. It is this type of nurturing the spirituality of the adolescents that has contributed to the recent increase in the vocation to the priesthood and religious in Nigeria in particular and Africa as a whole. Baur (2001) alluded that another possible result of the spirituality of the African adolescents is the missionary vocation of so many Nigerian sisters and priests who have joined international congregations and work in foreign lands. Therefore, this project will minister to the spirituality of African adolescents so that the adolescents will mature well in their relationships to others, self, and God.

c. Relevance of this Project to a wider Pastoral Ministry

Since the plan of this project is to nurture and develop the spirituality of African adolescents, this plan will be relevant and useful to a wider pastoral ministry in ministering to adolescents in general. Adolescents are more or less the same everywhere and they are products of their environment. The problem of the contemporary adolescent is a universal one which needs a universal solution. If the contemporary adolescents are not doing well spiritually and otherwise, the wider pastoral ministry has a great role to play in nurturing the spirituality in adolescents. For pastoral ministry to play this role of nurturing the spirituality in adolescents to a greater degree, Benson (1997) had these recommendations:

1. Provide a caring, nurturing environment in which adolescents can effectively learn (assets of support).
2. Develop intentional ways to build partnerships with parents (support).
3. Ensure that school is safe for all students (empowerment).
4. Having clear expectations and behavior guidelines in school, ones for which adolescents take part in developing, monitoring, and enforcing (boundaries and expectations).
5. Expectations for learning that are challenging for students of all abilities (boundaries and expectations).
6. Provide strong connections to and opportunities for community based school and cocurricular programs (constructive use of time).

Therefore in nurturing and developing of spirituality of contemporary adolescents, pastoral ministry in the wider sense has to take the lead in returning the adolescents to

God (spirituality) and not leave science and technology alone to in develop them. Though science has helped humanity considerably up to this twenty-first century, it is becoming more and more clear that science alone cannot solve the problems of adolescents in particular and those of humanity in general. In order to solve the problems of adolescents spiritually to a certain and higher degree in this third millennium, pastoral ministry must be ready to take up the great challenge. What the future of the world will be spiritually and otherwise depends greatly on the contemporary adolescents, on how they relate to others, community, and to God, and not to the world of science and technology alone.

In the mind of Fontana (2003) the coming decades will prove testing times for religion and spirituality as new advances in science appear on the one hand to threaten its position and on the other to lend support to some of its beliefs. But one thing remains sure: those scientists, psychologists, and pastoral counselors who wish to study the role that religion and spirituality have played and continues to play in the lives of adolescents need not be deterred by fears that their work will lack either relevance or excitement in the twenty-first century. Carotta (2002) ascertained that to help those custodians of the adolescents like the pastoral counselors who are interested in the development and upbringing of adolescents spiritually, something urgent has to be done and he made the following suggestions:

1. Praise your teens; be specific and generous to them.
2. Religious beliefs and experiences should be shared and explained to the adolescents.

3. Expect teens to maintain strong but realistic values regardless of their environment.
4. Sensitivity is an important trait in parenting.
5. Examples shape your teens more than you will ever know.
6. No is a word you must be strong enough to use.
7. You must have the courage to give structure and set limits, despite the teens' resistance.
8. Express your emotions and help teens to do the same.

CHAPTER TWO

a. Psychological Model of Jean Piaget on Adolescents

One of the greatest revolutions that has happened to the contemporary world is that of the spirituality of the adolescent. It can be said that even though adolescents of the contemporary world are similar to those of premodernism, some differences have manifested themselves. At the same time, culture, education, sociocultural background and even religion have contributed greatly to the level of the spirituality of adolescents. According to Ginsburg & Oppen (1969) there are several major themes which run through Piaget's account of the adolescents' thought including the spirituality of adolescents. One is that the adolescent's system of mental operations has reached a high degree of equilibrium. This means that among many other things the adolescent's thought is flexible and effective; he or she can now deal with complex problems of reasoning not excluding that of spirituality (Ginsburg & Oppen, 1969, p.181).

In the stage of formal thought, the adolescent develops the ability to imagine the possibilities inherent in a situation. Before acting on a problem, which confronts him or her, the adolescent analyzes it and attempts to develop hypotheses concerning what might occur. These hypotheses are numerous and complex because the adolescent takes into account all possible combinations of eventualities in an exhaustive way. As he proceeds to test his ideas, he designs experiments, which are quite efficient in terms of supporting some hypotheses and disproving others (Ginsburg & Oppen, 1969, p. 206). The adolescent's thought is now so flexible and powerful that it has reached a high degree of equilibrium. It is apparent that Piaget has made a definite contribution to our understanding of adolescent's thought. First, the adolescent's methods of solution are shown fairly directly in the protocols. Little inference is required to decide what the adolescents were doing or thinking. Second, Piaget's findings suggest that there are basic differences between the adolescent and younger child as far as scientific reasoning is concerned and third, Piaget has made a beginning in the task of developing formal models to describe and explain the adolescent's behavior. The concrete-operational child does not consider possibilities on a theoretical plane. Instead, he or she works efficiently with the concrete and real, and has the potentiality to do to new things what he or she has already done to old ones. For the adolescent on the other hand, possibility dominates reality. Confronted with a scientific problem, he or she begins not by observing the empirical results, but by thinking of the possibilities inherent in the situation.

He or she imagines that many things might occur, that many interpretations of the data might be feasible, and that what has actually occurred is but one of a number of possible alternatives. Only after performing a hypothetical analysis of this sort does he or

she proceed to obtain empirical data that serves to confirm or refute his or her hypothesis. Furthermore, he or she bases experiments on deductions from hypothetical; he or she is not bound solely by the observed. In the pendulum problem, the adolescent might suppose that the length of the pendulum is a causative factor, and then deduce what must occur if such a hypothesis were true. This, the adolescent's thought, but not that of the concrete-operational child, is hypo-thelico-deductive. The second distinctive feature of formal operations is the child's and adolescent's "combinational" property. For purposes of contrast, recall again the behavior of the concrete-operational child. When confronted with several factors, which might influence an experimental result, the child of this stage usually tests each of them alone, but fails to consider all of their combinations. On the other hand, when given the task of discovering which mixture of five chemicals produces the color yellow, the adolescent combines them in an exhaustive way. He or she mixes one with two, and one with three, and one with four, and so forth, until all combinations have been achieved. This is another way, then, in which possibility dominates the adolescent's encounter with reality. If like the concrete-operational child, the adolescent had not beforehand conceived of all the possibilities, he would have designed a more limited set of experimental situations (Ginsburg & Oppen, 1969, p. 203).

It can be said, then, that adolescent's thought has achieved an advanced state of equilibrium. This means, among other things, that the adolescent's cognitive structures have now developed to the point where they can effectively adapt to a great variety of problems. These structures are sufficiently stable to assimilate readily a variety of novel situations. Thus, the adolescent's needs do not mean, of course, that the adolescent's growth ceases at age 16. He or she has much to learn in many areas, and Piaget does not

deny this. While these structures may be applied to new problems with the result that significant knowledge is achieved (Gindburg & Oppen, 1969, p. 204).

b. Theological Model of Michael Carotta on Adolescents

In the mind of Carotta (2002), research continues to show that adolescents do indeed have spirituality. They believe in and experience God, pray often, believe in an after life, and acknowledge that God expects them to live a loving life. But it is important to remember that there is a difference between religion and spirituality. Religion involves denominational membership, participation in religious traditions and understanding of religious teachings. Spirituality includes those with religious affiliation while at the same time includes those who are not active members of any religious denomination. When you think about the spirituality of your adolescent, think in terms of direction or dimension. There are three dimensions of spirituality in adolescents: - Vertical (relationship with God), Horizontal (relationship with other people), and Internal (emotional) (Carotta, 2002, p.18). Adolescents with a highly vertical direction in spirituality place most of their attention and energy with God. In the extreme, people with vertical spirituality invest so much in their religious and personal relationship with God that they do not invest anything in how they treat other people. Adolescents with horizontal direction of spirituality are mostly about treating other people with kindness and honesty. An adolescent with a highly horizontal direction of spirituality invests in caring relationships with others and in a moral life. In the extreme however, this sort of adolescent spirituality does not invest in the vertical dimension. Adolescents with highly

internal spirituality say things such as, "My spirituality helps me deal with the things that hurt me inside," "My spirituality helps me accept myself--with all my warts," "My spirituality helps me forgive myself," or "My spirituality challenges me to use my potential." This internal direction of spirituality centers on emotional management, which is good and much needed especially among adolescents who have very little help in dealing with their emotions.

Today, however, it seems that this internal direction of spirituality is the most popular of the three directions among North American adults. Spirituality of this sort seems to be at the heart of many of the adult spirituality books that appear on the bestseller lists. Unfortunately in the extreme, people with a highly internal direction of spirituality do not invest in helping others or in maintaining any religious practices or denominational affiliation. Carotta (2002) is of the opinion that all parents and guardians are to pay attention to the spirituality of their children and try to glimpse at the dominant direction of their spirituality. Once done you should affirm it and attempt to nurture the other less-developed directions or dimensions of their spirituality. If you cannot glimpse at a dominant direction within your teen's spirituality, then intentionally nurture one direction or dimension for a time, taking care to address all three directions within due time. Adolescents from every indication in the mind of Carotta have the ability for spirituality; at worst the tendency toward spirituality is in them. The potentials of spirituality in them must therefore be nurtured and geared toward the right direction. Spirituality and religion are not the same as some authors, churches, temples, and synagogues, and youth directors take them to be the same thing, and a person can belong to one sect of institutionalized religion without being spiritual and vice versa.

CHAPTER THREE

a. Execution of the Project

The aim of this project is to assist African Catholic adolescents in their struggle in life to maintain a balanced spirituality. This emphasis will be on how the puberty rite of passage helped them to attain this spiritual development. How can this African rite of passage be used to enhance the spiritual development of contemporary Catholic African adolescents in general. The approach that is used in carrying out the execution of this project is a narrative approach whereby every adolescent that participated is listened to: to tell his or her story of life without any interruption from either the coparticipants or the executor of this project. Each participant is given a unique and equal opportunity to do this. The goals of this Doctor of Ministry Project are:

1. Provide the adolescents participating in this project with an opportunity to establish more direct spiritual relationships with God, self, and the community.
2. Provide an environment in which adolescents can feel greater freedom to explore personal identity issues so that they can develop an increased level of spirituality even when they might have felt it was impossible.
3. Increase the perception of spirituality as a relationship with God, self, and the Community.
4. Provide each of the adolescents participating in the project an opportunity in our

parish to share their experiences which may help them overcome feelings of isolation, alienation, and being mere children.

This project involved group meetings with the adolescents that participated in the project sessions. I identified five adolescents in our parish, Sacred Heart Parish, Patterson, New York. They willingly participated in this project by telling the stories of their lives. At the time of carrying out this project, these five adolescents fulfilled the following criteria:

- a. Each has reached the ages between 13-19 years.
- b. Each was born and lived in Africa for sometime before coming to America.
- c. Each is a member of our parish--Sacred Heart Parish, Patterson, New York.
- d. Each has undergone puberty rite of passage in Africa before coming to America.
- e. Each was ready to talk freely about the stories of their lives.

One adolescent talked about the story of his life for forty-five minutes, at the second session two adolescents talked about the stories of their lives for forty-five minutes each, and at the third session, two other adolescents talked about the stories of their lives for another forty-five minutes each. In listening to the stories of these five adolescents that participated in this project, I was particularly attentive to possible sources of adolescent's ability of dealing with concrete situations, the flexibility of the adolescents' thought, and the ability of dealing with complex problems. I also listened to possible sources of the three dimensions of spirituality as regards relationships to God, self, and the community as they have been enumerated in this project. In telling the stories of their lives, there were some important points that were taken into cognizance. In the first introductory encounter, on November 5th, 2004, I invited each of the adolescents to tell the story of his

or her life according to their African cultural background, Catholic religious background, earliest childhood memories, and their present situation in life. I also asked the participants to focus on the influences of home, school, religion, significant others, African community or neighborhood, and peers in their lives. Some of the other general thoughts that were put across to them were divided into three major parts as follows:

General Thoughts

Part I

1. I would like to begin by asking you to describe your childhood years-- life at home, in school, among your peers, and in your local community.
2. What was your religious experience like at home?
3. What was your religious experience like back at home in the African community?
4. What was your religious experience like in your local Catholic parish church before coming to America?
5. During your adolescent years up to the age of 15 or 16, what was your religious experience like at home?
6. What was your religious experience like in the secondary school?
7. What was your religious experience like during your African rite of passage?
8. Who or what influenced you most during your childhood years (age 5-13 years)?
9. Who or what influenced you most during your adolescent years up to the age of 16 or 17?

10. Did the surrounding cultures have a significant influence on you during your adolescent years?
11. During the years you attended college/vocational training, what was your religious experience like there?
12. What was your religious experience like at home during this time?
13. What was your religious experience like in your parish back in Africa?
14. Who or what influenced you/ is influencing you most during your college years or vocational training period?
15. Were you aware then, or are aware now, of any particular influence of the surrounding cultures on your ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes, or behavior during your childhood and your adolescent years?
16. What do you think most influenced your peers' values, ideas, opinions, tastes in clothes and music, and general attitude toward life during
_____ your childhood?
_____ your adolescence?
17. As an adolescent, what kind of person did you imagine you would like to be?
What would you like your future to be? What kind of person would you like to share your future with?

Part II

Some of the thoughts that I put across to the adolescents that participated in this project in part II were as follows:

1. At the present stage of your life, what most influences your attitudes and way of living? How have the world around you and the African culture influenced you, in comparison to your family upbringing and religious education and formation?
2. Many commentators on contemporary culture claim that cultural influence is very strong and that it can determine the ideas, opinions, values, attitudes, and behavior of people generally, but especially the adolescents. Could you illustrate from the observation of your contemporaries whether this claim is valid?
3. To what extent do you think the African culture and tradition influence your outlook on life?
4. To what extent do you think that the contemporary culture influences the beliefs, values, and behavior of your peers?
5. As you look back on your life, what persons or what circumstances have most influenced your beliefs and values?
6. Excluding your immediate family, who were the people who cared most for you? Who were those who most influenced you? Was there a connection between care and influence?
7. Did your secondary school educational experience encourage or empower you to critique contemporary culture? Did your teachers help you to put this culture

in perspective; did they offer some critical distance from which to view culture?

8. In your rite of African rite of puberty, were you made aware of the process which form individuals and society?
9. During your adolescent years, were there any teachers or other significant adults who helped to develop your ability and to analyze your cultural production?
10. Did your school foster critical consciousness, based on the message and ministry of Jesus Christ and the social teaching of the Catholic Church?
11. In the religious education that you received at primary school, how much emphasis was given to the social dimension of the Christian message?
12. In your view, which institution in Africa has the greatest credibility:
Government, Education, African traditional Religion, Catholic Church?
13. What are your views on the teaching of the Catholic Church?
14. Do you think it is more or less rigid than other Christian Churches or other world religions?
15. Do you watch T.V?
 ____ Do you see the images there as disjointed or as forming a unity?
 ____ Do you find T.V. enjoyable?
 ____ In what way?
 ____ What is most appealing/nonappealing about it to your generation?
16. How would you characterize or describe your worldview or the vision you live out of at present?

Part III

In the part III, these thoughts were put across to the adolescents as follows:

1. How does meaning occur at this stage of your life?
2. What gives most meaning to your life at present?
3. Do you find yourself searching for the right perspective, or any perspective, on life or is your approach to life something like "Live and let live"?
4. What is your number one personal goal in life?
5. What is most important to you in life?
6. Do you think that there is any absolute truth, any absolute right or wrong?
7. How would you react to the statement: "If something feels right for me, then it is right or true, irrespective of what any higher human/religious authority says."
8. What do you value most in life?
9. What are the other things that you value, even to a lesser degree?
10. Who are the people who are most important to you?
11. Are there others who are also important? In what way?
12. What constitutes happiness for you?
13. What constitutes happiness for your peers?
14. Do you think individualism is increasing or decreasing in our world today?
15. Is belonging to a community important to you or are you content with just a few close friends?
16. Are you in a close relationship with a particular individual? If yes, how important is this in your life?

17. What is your image of God?
18. Is belief in God important to you?
19. Who do you have more relationship with: God, self, or others?
20. Is prayer important to you? If so, in what way?
21. When you hear the word "CHURCH" what comes to your mind?
22. Does the teaching of the Catholic Church influence your values, attitudes,
and behavior?
23. Is Church affiliation important to you? Please explain.
24. What is your involvement, if any, with the Catholic Church or African
traditional Religion at present?
25. How often do you join in the celebration of the Eucharist?
_____ What meaning does it have for you?
_____ If attendance is only occasional, why do you go when you go?
26. Do you see any connection between going to mass and everyday living?
27. Do you see any connection between African traditional worship and every
day living?
28. Does the religious education that you received while growing now
influence your beliefs and values?
29. Does the religious formation that you received at home now influence your
faith or beliefs and values?
30. What now gives meaning to your life?
31. If you have children, will you pass on to them the beliefs and values that
you received from your parents, why? or why not?

32. What is your primary reason for being/not being a committed member of the Church?
33. What meaning does Church affiliation have for you at this time in your life?
34. How would you react to the comment that Christianity is becoming more and more associated with the "middle" and "upper class" and less so with those who are poorer?
35. As you look to the future, what is your greatest hope for yourself? What is your greatest hope for the world?
36. As you look to the future, what is your greatest fear for yourself? What is your greatest fear for the world?

b. The Stories of the Lives of the Participants of this Project

In the first session of the stories of the lives of the participants, Akindele from Nigeria told the story of his life for forty-five minutes on November 23rd, 2004. Both Domebeika from Ghana and Odera from Kenya told the stories of their lives for forty-five minutes each in the second session on December 8th, 2004. Kagame from Rwanda and Emeka from Nigeria told the stories of their lives for forty-five minutes each in the third session on December 13th, 2004. When each participant was telling his or her story, all the other participants and myself listened with rapt attention.

The Story of Akindele

I am the first-born son, but the second born of the four kids of my parents. I was born in Abeokuta, Ogun State of Nigeria fifteen years ago. My parents, elder sister, younger brother and sister are very religious. I now remember vividly the day I underwent ritual passage of the African puberty rite just about two years ago, shortly before my uncle brought me here to America. There the elders who were in charge of all of us who underwent this passage taught us how to relate to God, self and the community. I was separated from home for seven days with my other peers, though originally my parents practiced African traditional religion before they were converted to Catholicism. But we still take the good values in African religion to Catholicism.

Though my parents are now fervent Catholics, our spiritual roots came from African religion, which I still value up till this day in my life. It was through prayer and the power of God that made the marriage of my parents stand till today. Mom is always responsible for our education, daddy claims not to have money, mom is as constant as ever with paying of school fees. If not for our mother we her children would have ended up in the gutter, it was not easy for her to bring us up; she continues to try her best for us up till today in order that we may be successful both academically and spiritually. It was a crime while I was growing up in the family not to participate in the African worship and when we were converted to Catholicism; it was also a crime in the family not to go to Mass on Sunday. In the primary school and secondary school before I came to America I started serving at the altar of God, which I really liked and enjoyed.

This experience has so many influences on me; even my mother told me that as a child I was acting like a priest. When I finish my secondary school here in America I hope to go back to Nigeria in two years time and go to the major seminary to study to become a Catholic priest. God has been so very kind and generous to us in our family and my mother taught us to be generous to people as well for we are always receiving from God, that is why I want to devote myself to the service of God in the holy Catholic priesthood and to serve humanity as well. I was also taught during the period of my rite of puberty passage that I cannot serve God without serving others in the community including myself. In the primary school that I attended in Nigeria, the Irish and African Catholic priests who were our teachers were very good at their job, in fact they have a nice job and they are taking good care of it, they have been a source of inspiration to me. The spiritual upbringing that I received as an African child especially during the rite of

puberty passage served as a solid foundation for my Catholic faith. I have no regrets at all being an African and a Catholic for that matter. I do not have problems with the social teachings of the Catholic Church whatever; the Catholic Church is full of various disciplines for its members just like the African traditional religion does for its own members as well.

It is true that as human beings, we have some potentials and abilities to do so many wonderful things; but we must discipline ourselves; this is where spirituality lies. The Catholic Church's law forbidding premarital sex is also found in the African religion, even virginity is being praised and honored among African youth. Even the law of celibacy for priests in the Catholic Church is very good, this will enable priests to be more devoted to the service of God and humanity, for if they were to marry their wives may be disturbing them from being efficient in their work.

Though there is no law of celibacy for the African traditional priests per se, but some of them practice it and they are placed in high esteem in the African community. Without any doubt, the laws of celibacy and that of forbidding pre-marital sex may be hard humanly speaking anyway, but it is a challenge to the adolescents of nowadays like myself in Africa in particular and in the world in general. Adolescents are known everywhere in the world today to be taking risks and challenges, celibacy therefore, without gainsaying it, is one of such challenges and risks that adolescents like myself should take, not for the world per se, but for the sake of the kingdom of God. I have no regrets for being a Catholic and an African at the same time and even when I become a priest I will have no regrets. I want to remain as an African in the Catholic Church and use my God-given talents to make God's kingdom to be realized here on earth. I know

like any other human society, there is bound to be some problems in the Catholic Church, but the people of my age should be ready to take disciplines and make sacrifices to bring about possible solutions to the problems in the Catholic Church and the world at large.

I am proud to be a Catholic, in two years' time I hope to be in the major seminary and prepare myself for the holy priesthood of the Catholic Church. St. Francis, St. Augustine, St. John Bosco, and St. Thomas Aquinas were once adolescents of their own era and they belong to the Catholic Church. They reached a very high level of spirituality. I am sure they made good impacts on their society then, the contemporary adolescents should emulate people like these. Presently, there is priestly vocation boom in Nigeria in particular and Africa as a whole; I want to join this boom and be the light and salt to the world (Mt. 5: 13: 15). Eventually if I make it as a priest, and I think I will make it as a good Catholic priest, there a lot of my dreams will be realized in serving the people of God, this is what we are created for, to love and to serve. The greatest and the happiest day in my life was the day I became an altar server and I believe some happy days are still on the way for me. My greatest fear and worry is that Western culture has greatly influenced Nigeria in particular and Africa in general; I am afraid that what happened to America and Europe as regards the sexual scandals of the Catholic priests of this twenty-first century may also happen in Africa eventually; it is only a matter of time.

The Africans may also drift away from the Church eventually like the Americans and Europeans, there may be a decline in the love of God and that of neighbor and the Africans are known to possess a great deal of love of God and that of neighbor through their traditional religion. This is why I want to become a Catholic priest and make my own contributions to the Catholic faith, and I believe the Catholic Church in Africa must

not fail. Since this worm of corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of every system of the society in the world at large and this may bring about the self-destruction of the world; this without a doubt is my saddest fear and sorrow for humanity. My joy is that some of my peers will also become priests and nuns in the future for the African continent and we will definitely renew the face of the earth with our determination, sacrifices, and discipline.

The Story of Domebeika

I am 18 years old. I was born into a family of five as the first son. Mom and Dad came to America just a few years ago. My parents were both Catholic. I remember my experience now when I underwent my puberty rite of passage in Ghana. I was taught throughout the course of this passage, which lasted for about nine days how to love God and my neighbor as well. It was a nice experience for me in which I was overwhelmed. I was taken to the woods in the company of others of my age group for this spiritual stage that we have to undergo. Dad and Mom were deeply rooted in the African traditional religion before they were converted into Catholicism; this has good implications on them as later Catholics. In the rite of puberty passage I was taught that I am always part of the society in whatever I do and that I must always relate to the society as such. This has great influence on me since then. I still have sweet memories of all these when we were growing up with other kids in our neighborhood; we were taught to be respectful to our parents and our elders in general, though some of them were Moslems and Protestants.

My parents up till now in America are good Church goers, on the average they can be said to be religious, they are trying always to do the will of God and that of the Catholic church; going to the Mass on Sundays is a common phenomenon in our family, when there is a threat or unavoidable chaos in the family, there is always a family prayer with the recitation of the rosary, not excluding the booking of novena Masses. I remember now that era of my first Holy Communion coincided with my rite of puberty passage. I went through a rigorous training, that made me think that, I will be okay spiritually, but the reverse was the case when I started growing up. Those who received the first Holy Communion before me were not giving the good example for me to follow either, in comparison to the African traditional religion that gave me the rite of passage, there is a lot of hypocrisy in the Catholic Church. How can someone receive the Holy Communion and still be committing adultery? The primary school that I went to was very religious; the nuns and the priests there taught us very well. I think they have a nice job and they know it. Some of these missionaries were from Ireland; there was once Fr. Carroll, S. M.A, he made sure that every child of my age that time was educated, but when he left for Ireland because of ill health, things really fell apart for me religious wise. All the other priests tried their best, but they could not fill the gap that Fr. Carroll left behind. This was the dawn of my not taking going to Mass serious again; I started missing Mass on Sundays, no frequent confession for me again. I think the Catholic Church is too much like God in most of its social teachings, though some of these teachings are very sound, like the love of neighbor, caring for the sick and the needy in which the Irish nuns and priests had have the credit. But the Catholic Church has no right whatsoever in interfering with the people's private affairs, especially the area of premarital sex, even to the extent

of imposing the law of celibacy on the priests, this is not fair enough, is the Catholic Church claiming to be wiser than God? God created sex and wanted it to be enjoyed in a right way, not denying it to somebody like the priest totally. People need to be given freedom to exercise their God-given potentials. I believe though that these potentials must be controlled, but not being suspended or destroyed anyway. Although young people of my age are not taking the Catholic Church serious on the issue of premarital sex, for we still do it anyway, nevertheless we still believe in God and we stay in communion with him always.

We also want at least to express ourselves sexually before we go into the business of marriage proper, so that the experiences will not be too strange and difficult for us when we enter into marriage proper. The Catholic Church will only progress well if it has listening ears for young people like me; the young people of today are the adults of tomorrow. To me, love is the ultimate thing for me in life, without it life has no meaning. I would have left the Catholic Church before now, but thanks be to God for using the nuns and priests that I have had as teachers in life and for my dearest uncle who is now a Catholic priest. I think these people have made meanings in my life, especially my uncle, who is very open-minded, loving and caring and ready to help anybody at any time, it does not matter whether you are related to him or not. I wonder why he became a priest? Otherwise he would have been a very nice father and husband for that matter. Because of priests like my uncle who are good, the Catholic Church should do something very soon about the law of celibacy. As I was taught during my rite of African puberty passage, I believe there should be unity and harmony in the whole of the universe where human beings, animals and even with the smallest part of an atom will live in a peaceful

community. When I look around today in the world especially in Ghana, for Dad and Mom are from Ghana, there is greediness among our various leaders from secular to religious levels and poverty can be seen walking naked in the streets among the masses. This dangerous worm of corruption has started eating up deep into the system of even the Catholic Church, although on the average the Catholic priests in Africa are still trying their best to maintain their sanity. But I am afraid from the very little experience I have now as a medical doctor in training, the sexual scandal among the priests in America, Europe, and Asia may eventually take its toll on Africa, for more or less people are just the same everywhere. Presently, there is vocation boom in Ghana in particular and the whole of Africa as a whole. But because of the high corruption and economic recession that are taking place in Africa, there may be a decline in vocation not long from now. For many of my age are now at crossroads asking the questions like: "Does the Catholic Church really have the answers to our spiritual thirst?" "Is the Catholic Church really sincere like the African traditional religion?" "Can the Catholic Church lead us to God as it has always claimed to do?" or "Can the Catholic Church lead us to a spiritual fountain that we are longing for?" Though I do not intend to leave the Catholic Church, but all these questions beg for answers from the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church has a lot to do so that young people like me do not drift away from the Church eventually. I thank God for what I have been able to get from the African traditional religion and the Catholic Church as well, but the Catholic Church must be ready to move with the waves of time. One of the waves of time is that of the adolescents. The big question is: "Is the Catholic Church ready to listen to the young people and invest money, time, and energy fully in the program of the adolescents?" Though I got good religious and spiritual

backgrounds from both the African traditional religion and the Catholic Church, at present the Catholic Church has no serious impact on me, maybe the African traditional religion does? Now I contact God directly without the assistance of any priest. It does not matter whether I sin or not. God still loves me as I am. When I eventually get children, I hope to bring them up in a good way and impact on them that it is good to be nearer to God and be spiritual.

My joy is that my future partner and myself would eventually marry in the Catholic Church and smell the roses. My joy for the world is that there will be love and happiness at the end of the struggle. My one sadness is that my future marriage may not last and Africa and the rest of the world may be destroyed because of greediness and corruption.

The Story of Odera

I was born in a small village in the northern part of Kenya. I am 17 years old. My parents are both from the southern part of Kenya, though Mom and I moved to America about five years ago. I remember my early years at home during the era of my puberty rite passage; I was excluded with my peers from home into the forest for nine days; we were taught how to relate to God, others and ourselves in our community. We were taught that we exist because of the community. Respect to others was being taught, especially to our parents and those who are older than us. This continues to linger on in my memory; it has helped me to get some desire to serve God, others and the community as such. I have a lot of happy memories about my childhood. I have an older sister and

two younger sisters. Although we were later converted to Catholicism, some of our best friends were Protestants and traditional believers. This was quite unusual and was probably due to the fact that Mom and Dad were not from the North. My parents were fairly religious, but we did not pray as a family, at least not in the sense of saying the rosary every night. At special times we had family prayers. Around the time of my first Holy Communion, I went through a very religious phase and I even wanted to be a nun.

All this was probably due to the influence of the Primary Three teacher that I had then, as she was a very nice person and very religious as well. It was a convent primary school and we had a lot of fantastic nuns there who put great emphasis on religion. Throughout the primary school we went to Mass as a family every Sunday; that went without saying. Going to Mass with my family each week, as well as other religious events, gave me a sense of belonging to a parish community. There was a sense of camaraderie about all of that. I think that a lot of the teachings of the Catholic Church are really, really great. But the Church goes too far when it gets into the specifics of people's lives, when it condemns people for what they do. For example, I think the Church has no right to go into the sex lives of married people and into celibacy for priests. I think that people need to be given a lot of leeway in how they live their lives, especially in the sexual area. Anyway, most young people do not observe the Church's teachings on pre-marital sex anymore. Love constitutes happiness for me. I do not think I could be complete without love. Inner peace and knowing that I am on the right path are also very important for me. I believe in living in a way that is helping other people or things or animals. Among my friends and the small community of people that I am part of, happiness is primarily about love. However, I think there are many people in our society

who believe that they can buy happiness. It is something of the future rather than of the present. I would say that most of my generation of Kenyan youth put too high a value on material things and I think that if they concentrate more on their spirituality and look inside more, they would have a better chance of finding happiness. Many young people today are moving away from individualism that was characteristic of the era that we seem to be leaving behind, the kind of individualism you see in modern Kenyan society even here in America today. That self-individualism is reflected in people who care only about themselves, having little regard for the community or other people in the society.

There is another type of individualism that is good. Because there are fewer microcultures and more macrocultures today, young people are being exposed to different systems of belief and to different ways of life. This gives a much greater opportunity for people to seek out their path instead of just conforming to the religion in which they were raised. Individualism is good if it is about searching for your path in life and looking for a route to help others with that. I think young people like myself are becoming less and less likely to project their set of moral values onto other people and this form of individualism is good. More and more of us young people are looking inside for our answer to what is morally right and that is good; it is certainly much better than just taking a strict guidelines from, say the Catholic Church. Even though I have moved away from a Church that I consider being a very nonflexible rigid institution with a rigid set of values, belief in God is still very important to me. The image I have of God is that of a very creative energy, an energy that exists all around us, a life force. God is always very honest, true, kind, and patient. The God that I believe in is very, very good and caring.

The notion of a God who sends people to hell never really rings true with me. I believe that all life forces have a unity and that God is in the connection of all that has life--all human life, animal and plant life, the air, the rivers, the seas, and the mountains. God is absolutely everything around us. When we pray to God, it takes the form of giving thanks for everything that is around me; it is an appreciation of the giftedness of life. So while I have grown very cynical or suspicious about institutionalized religion, my belief in God and my prayer life are very strong. Although my personal belief in God and my personal philosophy is not in complete accord with that of the Catholic Church or that of the African traditional religion, it is hard to know today how much of my makeup comes from growing up in the Church. I supposed the Catholic Church has influenced me all my life, though with African traditional religion background, especially in childhood years.

If I had never been exposed to that Church, my values might have been different in life. While I do not think it influences my values at the moment, there could be an implicit influence there all the time. The deep appreciation I have found for rituals really comes from Catholicism and African traditional religion. I intend to pass onto my children many of the beliefs and values that I received from my parents, the centrality of love and sharing, as well as the importance of education. I definitely want to pass on a concept of God to them, even if it will not be quite the concept that my parents gave me. I want to pass on spirituality to them and an attitude that will never condemn other people for their ways of life, whether they are homosexuals, unmarried couples or whatever. I want to really educate my children to make up their minds about what is right or wrong for them. As I look to the future, my greatest hope is that my future partner and I will always love each other, have a happy and healthy family life and raise happy children.

My strongest hope for the world is that there would be peace in every corner of the earth. I wish we would stop our act of ecological wastage and stop the destruction of the world. My greatest personal fear is that something might go wrong in my marriage and my one fear for the world is that we will destroy the delicate ecosystem in which we live.

The Story of Kagame

I grew up in a socially deprived area of Rwanda. I am 19 years old. I came to America three years ago through a lottery visa. My father was one of the few men in Rwanda who had a job and my mother was always at home. We were a reasonably happy family and father and mother got on well, apart from the occasional row. One of the outstanding memories of my childhood was my first day at school; I had hated it; I threw a tantrum and was slapped around the legs by the teacher. From the very beginning, I could not handle being in a school system and I have always had an aversion to it. All my memories of primary school are negative. One of the teachers said to our class that at the age of thirty, four of us would be dead and that a lot of us would end up in the gutter for the rest of our lives. It was not the way to motivate children from a deprived area. As a result, I left primary school feeling stupid and good for nothing. It was at this point that I went for my rite of puberty passage with a group of children who were of my age then. The teachers here were not like the ones I had in the primary school; they were very caring and understanding. The experience here was a nice one. We were isolated from our various homes only to reside in the forest with some elders for seven days. We started the ceremony in the forest with a fast for a whole day; this was the first time that I ever

fasted. The elders were so nice to us. We were taught how to be responsible in life, especially to God, our parents, the elders, ourselves and the community as a whole. We were told that God must be first in our lives-- it is through this that we could be connected to our ancestors. We were also taught that sex was sacred and that premarital sex is against the will of God and that of the community and that virginity is praiseworthy at marriage. All these are the elements that will always draw me to God and to my African community in Rwanda. At the age of twelve I entered one of the secondary schools in the town, a school run by a religious order. I still carried the negative attitude toward the education system from primary school to secondary school and had a very turbulent three years there before I was asked to leave. I began secondary school in the lowest stream. This was traditionally the class of "messers" and "headers." I thought "this is not for me; I'll just have fun there." Homework and books were just alien to me and I tried to get through the school day with the least amount of hassle. After Junior Certificate, I enrolled in a Vocational Preparation and Training Programme (VPTP) for a course in Art. I was not very interested either, but it was good because we got paid, monthly, by the government. Before the end of one year, I was asked to leave because of bad behavior. However, at this stage I began to realize that there was an academic side of my character and, despite my very negative experience of the education system, I also realized that I had other talents. This realization came through the work of a youth leader who involved my age group in plays and other activities in the local community center. I then went back to the secondary school and humbly asked the authority to take me into fifth and sixth grade. I was accepted back and I ended up completing my leaving certificate. Our home wasn't very religious, but weekly Mass was important. All the

members of the family went to Mass each Sunday. In fact, I attended Mass until I left home for America. I always believed in God. Since my days when I went back to secondary school, I began to formulate who God was. I received help from the Christian doctrine class during the last two years at the secondary school. We had a female religion teacher who gave a lot of time to discussion and who gave us the opportunity to sort out our beliefs. I got the feeling that it was okay to believe in whatever you believed in and to formulate your own beliefs.

When I look back on my life during childhood years, the big thing that stands out in my mind was a parish youth trip to the Marian shrine; I went there with an open mind. When I got there, I was not interested in the recitation of the rosary beads, but I did climb the mountain and directed the whole experience there, one that awakened me to my spirituality. On returning from this Marian shrine, a prayer group was set up. I joined this, but I got turned off too quickly because of the fundamentalist Catholic teaching that was so much part of it. The whole focus was on the devil and sin, and I found their spirituality very dark. The other thing that stands out about parish life was the presence of some nuns who came to live in one of the council houses. I became very friendly with one of them and built up a good relationship with her. I was looking for answers and this helped me a lot in those years. I did not have much contact with priests, apart from one of the curates who was friendly with my mom and called to our house sometimes. In fact, I had no contact with a parish apart from Sunday Mass. It was around this time that I stopped going to Mass. I did not pack in the Church completely, but I did not call in the Church for another one year or so. I did not make a conscious decision to sever any connection that I had with the Catholic Church; it just happened. The only Church-related religious

experiences that I had at college were a visit to a small Protestant church with a Protestant friend and a visit to a cathedral on my own. During my time at the college I read a lot about the Eastern religious writings and I liked the whole train of thought there, especially the unity of body, mind, and soul. This also led me to believe that there is more than one way to God and that neither the Catholic Church nor the African traditional religion has a copyright on the whole issue about God. I now believe in a higher power and I do believe that Jesus Christ was on this earth. Jesus was a very real figure but I think that is lost in the Church's teachings. He had to be proclaiming a powerful message and there had to be something very charismatic about him to get people to "down tools" and follow him. It would be unfair to say that I have not been influenced for the better by both the Catholic tradition and the African tradition. Without these two backgrounds, I might not have been able to develop the spirituality that I have today, such as it is. I believe very strongly in some of the sayings that I heard or read, such as: "It is easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven." As I look to the future, my greatest hope is that I do myself justice and do justice to those connected to me. My hope for the world in general is that we would wake up one day and the world will be at peace, that we would realize that we are burning the fuse of an ecological time bomb. How much do we have to own? Where does success end? My greatest personal fear is that, amid all the chaos in the world, we shall disintegrate and become broken. My fear for our world is that people will become less and less important, especially the poor, and that greed will destroy the whole ecosystem.

Emeka's Story

I was born in the eastern part of Nigeria 16 years ago. I grew up on a farm, the youngest of five children in the family, in what you might call an African traditional religion family, who later converted to Catholicism. It was a rather quiet household and my parents were the type of people who were not able to express emotions or feelings very well. I came to America just six months ago with my uncle who is presently a medical doctor. My mother, in particular, was a perfectionist and I always felt that I had to prove myself to her. However, no matter what I did, it was never good enough. I did not grow up as a happy child as I was always looking for acceptance and looking for love, but never really experienced it. Luckily enough the era of puberty rite of passage gave me some sense of happiness and belonging. The elders who taught us during the nine days in the woods were very loving and caring. This afforded me with the possibility of an outdoor life with a high level of spirituality and it was there, in the heart of nature that I found some happiness as it were, and I was able to give free reign to my imagination. I went to local primary school at the age of six, but unfortunately, I did not find much happiness there either. I was quiet and rather bright, so I became the subject of envy by my colleagues in the class. I did not feel accepted and this served to make me even more withdrawn. My only experience of parish life during the primary school days centered on attendance at weekly Mass and other religious occasions, thereby being part of a large group of people. My family members were not very outgoing, so these were the only times I would have met other members of the parish. Furthermore, there were no parish-based programs for children or young people like myself.

Regarding my religious experience at home, the clearest memory I have is that of saying the rosary. My dad always led the rosary and it was rattled off as if he was selling cattle. He knew it so well and words just rang out in a mantra style. I also remember dad kneeling down beside my bed when I was very young and saying the night prayers.

Religion was just part of life in my home; it was woven into the family farm. There was also a history of clergy in the family, a tradition of which it was very proud. Having completed primary school education, I then attended the vocational school in a nearby town. This allowed me to move a little bit more into the world. However, since I was not a very outgoing person owing to my family background, my main sphere of influence was still the home. My days were the most depressing, uncertain and insecure, especially the latter years at the vocational school, when I was trying to become my own person.

What contributed most to my unhappiness was a lack of self-esteem, self-belief, not knowing who I really was, and not being able to accept myself as a person. I had a sense of guilt just about everything, a sense of everything I did was wrong, since nothing I ever did was good enough for my mother. I even felt that everything I ever did hurt her in some way. All of this was reinforced by the fact that every time I went to Mass I heard that I had sinned. One of my abiding memories of the Church is that you are a sinner and therefore, you are a bad person. During my childhood years, I was always struck by the wonder and beauty in nature all around me, for example, a magnificent sunset, but I never found that in the people I encountered or indeed in myself. More recently, I have come to see people as those who are ruining the beauty of our world. One of the positive experiences of the vocational school that I attended was the growing realization that I was very intelligent and that I was good at art. This helped to improve my self-esteem. It also

gave me the confidence to go into the art business before I came to America with my uncle. Looking back now, I can see that practice of religion did not change me very much in my earlier years. I was very good at attending Mass, not only on Sundays, but also on many weekdays; a factor that probably influenced me was my friends--they all studied theology and were very much into attending Mass. Eventually, I began to experience Mass as being boring and dead and, consequently, attended less frequently.

During the era of my art business, I felt the need to work on my spirituality through my art works, as I was no longer connected to anything religious in the academic field. I gave a significant amount of time to prayer and reflection, making much use of the New Testament. Ironically, the more I became spiritually alive, the less I appreciated the Mass. Gradually, I became very frustrated and ended up at not going to Mass every Sunday. My biggest influence in life is my uncle who brought me here to America. He has always appreciated me and has always taken time to listen to my story and provided a place where I felt wanted, accepted, and cared for. At last I found somebody in my uncle who cared enough to listen to my story. It was my first real experience of someone giving unselfishly. The many hours I spent in his presence turned into a sort of religious experience for me because that is what I had seen in Jesus Christ, a person who was willing to give and provide space. This has had an extraordinary healing effect on my life. Right now, I believe in the goodness of people and in the presence of Jesus in my life and in other people's lives. I believe in my call to follow Jesus and do as he did: to accept everyone as he or she is and where he or she is. I have reached this stage through a lot of personal reflection as well as reflection on scripture and my artwork. However, none of this might have been possible without the help of my uncle, who freed me from much of

what enslaved me personally and affirmed my goodness. When you receive care from someone, that person touches you, challenges you and influences your beliefs, values and general outlook on life. Looking back now, I do not think that I got much from formal religious education or formation. What I now have has come from my own personal development and through the help of a few people like my uncle. I think that modern society in general is a society of people that are alienated. Young people of my age are searching to belong somewhere; many of them are very empty and are searching to belong to somewhere; many of them are very empty and are in great need of care and love. Contemporary culture tells us that we can buy happiness, but this is shallow and empty. It does numb the pain temporarily, but deep down the pain remains. People of my generation need someone there for them. They are not finding this in the culture and not even in the institutionalized religion in which they grew up. It is as if the young people are having one conversation and the Church is having another and neither is talking to the other. It is like two people having dinner together who are having totally different conversations as they talk to one another. Young people are living on one level and the Church is living on another level without connecting at all. I am a young person of great faith and value, but I have lax views on the teachings of the Catholic Church. I probably do not know half of them and I do not think it affects my life or spirituality very much one way or the other. I believe the teachings are not the most important things.

One does need a certain amount of teaching because one needs some sort of boundaries or limits, but I think the Catholic Church has far too many rules and regulations. The Church's teaching is reminiscent of that of the Pharisees versus Jesus Christ. It does not allow for human experience to be lived and the teachings do not allow

for the opportunity to touch human experience. I believe that the Church is a structure that has potential if it could only move away from all rules and regulations to a more life-filled experience of the truth and of spirit. The word of God was never meant to grow into old age as the Church has done. I do need the Eucharist, even if I experience it as painfully boring and frustrating. Eucharist is very important to me and I think it is the essence of Christian faith. I also desperately need community, this has been imbibed on me by the African rite of puberty, but not the traditional authoritarian, hierarchical community where there is no sharing and no input from young people. I believe that there is potential for both a liturgy that is relevant and for a community of shared faith and experience. What gives most meaning to my life at present is to be there for other people, to be a presence or to be the human face of God for people and to be able to live out of an experience of being loved. I think that faith or spirituality or the truth as Jesus Christ proclaimed it is something that is lived and experienced, and that it is going to be a very subjective or very individual experience. I do not think that anybody can ever grow or mature spiritually unless they experience and experiment with life and one cannot do that if there are any absolutes. Authority for me is the wisdom of the people who have gone before me, but that is not an absolute authority because situations change, people change, and culture changes. In order for something to be right or moral, it has to be right in relation to the people around me and not do any damage to them. This is what I consider the balance or cycle of life in general. As I look to the future, my personal hope is that I can continue to be critically committed to the Church. I have a vision of a Church that will offer a place where many people will find belonging and will find truth and hope and love. If given a chance, I can help bring that about. My fear is that my commitment to the

Church would chain me down, that the freedom and the spirit that I hold would be chained down and destroyed in rules and regulations. While I have a strong desire to be an active member of the Catholic Church, it is hard to be yourself in the Catholic faith community. My greatest hope for the world is that we would realize the value of people above things, that we would treasure the earth and protect both. Conversely, my greatest fear is that human beings would destroy their own planet and in the process destroy themselves.

c. Group Dynamics

During the interactions of the adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project, Akindele was not happy that the participants supported premarital sex and questioned so many doctrines in the Catholic Church. He said, "They are not ready to be disciplined and they want to be wayward in life, and whatever they want to be in the future, the foundation has to be laid now." The rest of them were not too happy with him either, they said that he is "more roman" than the Romans; the fact that he wants to be a celibate priest does not mean that everybody has to be a celibate like him. Emeka and Odera challenged Akindele that everybody in life has to grow in his or her way toward God; to them people are different and they are entitled to their opinions.

Odera and Kagame were full of anxieties and tensions. They were afraid whether someone will use their stories against them. They demonstrated this fully when Akindele was not happy with whatever they said about premarital sex and the doctrines of the Catholic Church. It was Emeka who played the role of peacemaker among these

adolescents, saying, "I have so many things in common with each of you despite our differences, that is what life is all about, life is unity in diversity." Odera and Kagame, the two girls in the workshop, felt that the three boys were not taking the stories of their lives seriously. They felt the boys were oppressing and marginalizing them. According to them Akindele demonstrated this marginalization to a certain extent. They said: "We do not like the situation where we will be condemned for whatever we say or stand for".

Domebeika said, "The purpose of the workshop is to help them to grow; it is not to create any bitterness or hatred among them." He was disappointed that they were attacking each other on whatever they said about the stories of their lives. He felt that this workshop should be a bond of love and unity among them. Odera said: "I like the approach of Emeka and Domebeika to issues in life; it is through this workshop that we can grow and be friends to each other not enemies, as Africans and Catholics; our stories resonate with each other, despite our differences." She is of the opinion that life does not have to be rigid and that the experience of the workshop should make them strong and facilitate their growth in life.

Most of the stories of these adolescents resonate with the story of my own life especially that of Akindele. When they were telling the stories of their lives, at times I experienced countertransference reactions. For example, my uncle whose name I mentioned in the acknowledgement of this project- Chief Ayo Omodara-has always cherished my being and supported my growth and even paid part of my tuition in this program. I found myself annoyed at certain times when some members criticized some of my beliefs and values about the church to which I subscribe, in particular about premarital sex, celibacy and the many doctrines of the church. However, I did not allow

them to interfere with my ability to listen on an empathic level. I was able to control myself from reacting personally, realizing that the goals and objectives of the workshop would be defeated. Even though I am their spiritual leader, I was able to put aside whatever honor is attached to being a Catholic priest and to control myself to accept these adolescents as they are, I did not allow my vision of these adolescents to change. I see them as my brothers and sisters who are trying to grow through the many struggles in life. The experience of this workshop has also enhanced me grow through the many challenges that the stories of these adolescents have given me. Akindele later said, "I am sorry for what I said that you annoyed me about what you said about premarital sex, celibacy, and the doctrines of the Catholic Church. I did not mean to hurt any of you; I was only saying things from my own perspective." Immediately after Akindele said this, the others were relieved and they thanked him for his courage and sincerity. An aura of alliance, support, and love for each other grew in the process of the workshop. I was also happy for the adolescents and myself at the end of the interactions that took place between them.

I was afraid when they started challenging and annoying each other that the workshop was going to be disrupted and that the goal and objective of the workshop would have been defeated. All the adolescents thanked me. They voiced that even though I am their spiritual leader, I treated them like my equals. They were very happy about this; to them it is a sign of good things to come to them in the Catholic Church in the near future, for they are sure that a few priests could do what I did by listening to them and accepting them as they are. They said: "Fr. Peter, our lives have been touched by you."

d. Assessment of the Outcome of the Project

The assessment of the five adolescent participants' stories in this project shows that these young African Catholics are spiritual not in a similar level but in different levels. They value individualism, freedom from any kind of authoritarian structure, and being true to oneself, except Akindele who is at home with the authority of the Catholic Church, therefore having the inspiration of using his spiritual energy in the Catholic Church as a priest eventually. On the other hand, the human and religious experiences of most of these adolescents are shot through with many aspects of the culture of Africa and the African traditional religion. While they value the freedom of the individual, they reject the concept of the autonomous individual that is characteristic of modernism. In their search for community, whether of a small group of peers or a specifically religious community, most of them reject the postmodern hierarchically structured concept of community in favor of the modern perspective, whereby a participant takes part as an equal and both influences and is influenced by that community. This would be a sphere of healing and support. Some of these adolescents that participated in this project clearly reject religious hegemony and intolerance, they have "knowledge control" in faith or spiritual commitment. To them, knowing is embodied; truth is contextualized and experienced; it arises out of one's own experience of relating and reflecting. As one of the participants put it, the Church is so removed from what the spirit of life is meant to be about. It is so removed from real life, of real living, of real truth as something that is experienced. For example, Emeka, one of the participants, has this to say:

"It is as if the young people are having one conversation and

the Church is having another and neither is talking to the other. It is like two people having dinner together who are having totally different conversations as they talk to one another. Young people are living on one level and the Church is living on another level without connecting at all."

The epistemological stance of these adolescents varied, but most of them seem to reject the epistemology of modernism, which holds that truth can exist apart from the knower. They favor diversity over absolutes, laud a plurality of viewpoints, and celebrate differences. They prize both community and individualism, but communities that are open to diversity are most appealing to them. This is reflected in Odera's story: "I think it is important to recognize that we all have different needs and different ways of living and different ways of being, that we are all different, and provided we can live without damaging each other or damaging the earth, we need to have a lot of tolerance for each other." Regarding the Catholic Church's teaching on sexual morality, she believes that the only absolute wrong is: "Do not take what is not freely given." In coming to a decision as to what is right or wrong, Odera would not be controlled by what any higher religious authority says or teaches. Instead, she would really look inside herself and to other people for their opinions, not to any religious authority. Data from the stories of the participants illustrates another level, which has been referred to by many commentators, that is, the openness of this new sensibility to the mystical dimension of human and religious experience. The nature and extent of this penchant for the spiritual varies from one adolescent to the other. Emeka's spirituality is nature-centered, God, and Christ-

centred. When asked what gives most meaning to his life at present, he responded that his life, everybody's life, is a gift from God, the creator God, and that the appreciation of a gift so graciously given should be passed on. He values every moment of life because it is an opportunity to live, to just be, to celebrate life with people around him. He has a keen presence of God as the greatest force of love in the world, and love is life, and this spirit of love and life is everywhere; that spirit of God is made personal, is made real and relational in Jesus, in human form. This particular spirituality finds expression in a variety of prayer forms, ranging from drawing, writing, and experiencing nature to more structured meditation. A somewhat different illustration of postmodernity's openness to mystery is exemplified in Odera's spirituality. God is not always like a person. God is primarily a creative energy, a life force that exists all around. She believes that there is a unity of all life forces and that we are very connected. God is in the connection of all, of all that is life, all human life, animal and plant life, the air, and the rivers. God is in absolutely everything around us. Although this understanding of God is very impersonal, Odera experiences God as very honest, true, kind, and patient. The God that I believe in, she says, is very good and caring. Prayer, which is largely unstructured, is a matter of giving thanks for animate and inanimate life as well as for the life forces itself. Unlike Emeka's spirituality, this postmodern stance reflects a marked shift away from faith in a historically specific revelation, such as that articulated in the doctrine of Incarnation and in the nature of God as expressed in the Trinity. In the narrative approach that was used in the execution of this project, each participant demonstrated that there is an element of spirituality in him or her not necessarily affiliated to any particular religion. Each participant also demonstrated the importance of a significant other in his or her life. They

all demonstrated the constant need to figure out who they are. There is also the demonstration of the spiritual hunger, which is strong in them. From the analysis of this project, the five adolescents that participated were satisfied with their involvement in this project, they were happy that somebody was able to listen to their stories of life.

In all of them, there is the need for structure that they want to succeed in life; they keep on trying and renegotiate and test their limits in life. Four of these five adolescents had a very happy childhood at home, during the African puberty rite of passage, and in school. In fact the spiritual upbringing that these adolescents received through this is of great value and importance to them. Only one of the adolescents, Emeka, had a rather unhappy childhood; he grew up in a traditional farming family. His was a quiet household and his parents were the type of people who were not able to express their emotions or feelings. He felt that whatever he did was not always good enough for his mother. On the positive side, Emeka spent a lot of time outdoors and enjoyed the natural surroundings that provided free rein of imagination, no wonder then that he ended up in the art business.

In general, the childhood experience of these five adolescents was quite deeply religious. The African traditional religion pervaded their lives and they were later converted to Catholicism; the African traditional religion therefore was a basis for their conversion to Catholicism. They were even already spiritual and religious at the same time before their conversion to Catholicism. Most of the instructions they received at the rite of passage opened the gate to any religious or spiritual inclination in them. It was like the energy for spirituality was already burning in them before conversion and if anything their conversion to Catholicism was much easier. Odera describes her home as extremely

happy and imbued with religious atmosphere. Religion was very prevalent in it, to her Mass was the central of her Sunday activities. Her parents grew up in a rural area and they both had a very strong religious commitment. The puberty rite of passage experience for these adolescents is the same and they all appreciate it up till today. Even though they are now converted to Catholicism, they still cherish their African traditional religion.

Kagame said that:

“ One of the teachers in primary school said to our class that at the age of thirty, four of us would be dead and that a lot of us would end up in the gutter for the rest of our lives. It was not the way to motivate children from a deprived area. As a result, I left primary school feeling stupid and good for nothing. It was at this time that I went for my rite of puberty passage with a group of children who were of my age then..... The teachers here were not like the ones I had in the primary school, they were very caring and understanding.”

This experience from the African rite of passage made a deep meaning in his life. He has since then cherished the African traditional religion and it has made him grow up to be responsible in life.

**e. Application of the Psychological Model of Jean Piaget on the
Adolescents that Participated in the Workshop of This Project**

Most of the adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project demonstrated that their thought is flexible and effective. They manifested that they can now deal with complex problems of reasoning and that their system of mental operations has now reached a high degree of equilibrium. They demonstrated in this workshop that they are no longer concrete-operational children who cannot consider possibilities on a theoretical plane. They also demonstrated in this workshop that they could now come to term, with concrete and real issues in life. They manifested in telling the stories of their life that there are various possibilities in life; they are ready to stand for their convictions in life.

i. The Manifestation of the Psychological Model in Akindele

Akindele did not think as a child in the workshop; he talked as an adult who could perceive reality in concrete terms. Akindele has this to say:

It is true that as human beings, we have some potentials and abilities to do so many wonderful things; but we must discipline ourselves, this is where spirituality lies. The Catholic Church's law forbidding premarital sex is also found in the African traditional religion, even virginity is being praised and honored among the African youth. Even the law of celibacy for priests in the Catholic Church is very good. This will enable priests to be more devoted to the service of God and humanity, for if they were to marry

their wives might be disturbing them from being efficient in their work.

ii. The Manifestation of the Psychological Model in Domebeika

This psychological model was manifested in several ways during the worship in Domebeika and he had this to say as follows:

I think the Catholic Church is too much like God in most of his social teachings, though some of these teachings are very sound, like the love of neighbor, caring for the sick and the needy, which the Irish nuns and priests had the credit, but the Church has no right whatsoever interfering with the people's private affairs, especially the area of premarital sex, even to the extent of imposing the law of celibacy on the priests. This is not fair enough. Is the Catholic Church claiming to be wiser than God? God created sex and wanted it to be enjoyed in a right way, not denying it to somebody like the priests totally. People need to be given freedom to exercise their God-given potentials. I believed though that these potentials must be controlled, but not be suspended or destroyed anyway.

iii. The Manifestation of the Psychological Model in Odera

Odera manifested this model in narrating the story of her life and she stated:

There is another type of individualism that is good. Because there are fewer micro-cultures and more macro-cultures today, young people are being exposed to different systems of belief and to different ways of life. I think young people like myself, are becoming less and less likely to project their set of moral

values onto other people and this form of individualism is good. More and more of us young people are looking inside for an answer to what is morally right and that is good; it is certainly much better than just taking strict guidelines from, say Catholic Church.

iv. The Manifestation of the Psychological Model in Kagame

While Kagame was telling the story of her life, there was an indication that she has stopped thinking as a concrete child; she has started thinking in terms of what was available in reality and this could be seen in her story as she said:

However, at this stage I began to realize that there was an academic side of my character and, despite my very negative approach to education system, I also realized that I had other talents. The other thing that stands out about parish life was the presence of some nuns who came to live in one of the council houses. I became very friendly with one. I was looking for answers and this helped me a lot in those years.

v. The Manifestation of the Psychological Model in Emeka

Emeka narrated his story in such a concrete manner that it appeared, as if he is an adult. He was conscious of everything that had happened to him in life. He is very ready to face the reality of life as he made the following statements:

What contributed most to my unhappiness was a lack of self-esteem, self-belief, not knowing who I really was, and not being able to accept myself as a person.

Young people of my age are searching to belong somewhere; many of them are very empty and are searching to belong somewhere, many are in great need of care and love. Contemporary culture tells us that we can buy happiness, but this is shallow and empty. It does numb the pain temporarily, but deep down the pain remains.

All five adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project told their stories not like concrete children for they reason and have thought in the abstract and they have opinions on life. They are ready to stand by it regardless of what the Church, parents, school, friends, and society tell them. They are on the road to a mature adulthood.

f. Application of the Theological Model of Michael Carotta on the Adolescents that Participated in the Workshop of this Project

All the adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project manifested their spiritual inclination. They believe in their hearts that there is the certain connection to a higher power in them. In all of them, there is the inclination toward God, community, and the self; this is spirituality in these adolescents. How these adolescents manifested this individually will be enumerated below:

i. Spiritual Manifestation in Akindele

Akindele manifested his inclination toward spirituality by saying that he wants to serve God in humanity and he wants to make God's kingdom realized here on earth, hence he has this to say from his story of life:

Presently, there is a priestly vocation boom in Nigeria in particular and Africa as

a whole; I want to join this boom and be the light and the salt to the world(Mt. 5: 13-15). Eventually if I make as a priest, and I think I will make it as a good Catholic priest, there a lot of my dreams will be realized in serving the people of God, this is what we are created for, to love and to serve.

ii. Spiritual Manifestation in Domebeika

Domebeikaa has a deep spirituality in him. Though he does not want to leave the Catholic Church, he wants the Church to listen to the adolescents of his age and he has this to say while narrating the story of his life:

Though I got good religious and spiritual backgrounds from both the African traditional religion and the Catholic Church, and at present the Catholic Church has no serious impacts on me, maybe the African religion does? Now I contact God directly without the assistance of any priest; it does not matter whether I sin or not, God still loves me as I am. When I eventually get children, I hope to bring them up in a good way and impact on them that it is good to be nearer to God and be spiritual.

iii. Spiritual Manifestation in Odera

Odera manifested her spiritual inclination and does not want to belong to any institutionalized religion and she stated as follows:

More and more of us young people are looking for an answer to what is morally right and that is good; it is certainly much better than just taking strict guidelines

from, say Catholic Church. Even though I have moved away from a Church that I consider being a very non-flexible rigid institution with a rigid set of values, belief in God is still very important to me. The image I have of God is that of a very creative energy, an energy that exists all around us, a life force. God is always very honest, true, kind, and patient. The God that I believe in is very, very good and caring. The notion of a God who sends people to hell never really rings true with me. I believe that all life forces have a unity and that God is in connection with all human life, animal, and plant life, the air, the rivers, the seas, and the mountains. God is absolutely everything around us.

iv. Spiritual Manifestation in Kagame

Kagame has the spiritual inclination in him, but she wants to be closer to God without connection, without any Church or anybody serving as intermediary, though she did not break completely with the Church. Kagame has this to say while telling the story of his life:

During my time at the college I read a lot about the Eastern religious writings and I liked the whole train of thought there, especially the unity of body, mind, and soul. This also led me to believe that there is more than one way to God and that neither the Catholic Church nor the African traditional religion has a copyright on the whole issue about God. I now believe in a higher power and I do believe that Jesus Christ was on this earth.

v. Spiritual Manifestation in Emeka

Emeka was able to connect to God through his artwork not through any religious institution. Emeka's spirituality was demonstrated in the story of his life as follows:

During the era of my art business, I felt the need to work on my spirituality through my artwork, as I was no longer connected to anything religious in the academic field. I gave a significant amount of time to prayer and reflection making use of the New Testament.

g. Psychological and Theological Values of being listened to and listening to The Stories of the Adolescents that participated in this project

So many people in the world today have nobody to listen to the stories of their life including the adolescents. People in the world seem to be so busy that they tend not to listen to one another; if the husband could listen more to the wife and vice versa, there would be a decrease in the divorce rate in our present day society. If adolescents are listened to adequately and regularly, there would be a decrease in suicide rate that is becoming very rampant. Hickman (2002) alluded that in the West the suicide rate has fallen by a fifth in the last forty years, but in the last twenty it has increased dramatically among adolescents across the world. Young male suicides have tripled. In the United States suicide is the third leading cause of all teenage deaths-one every two hours. As a pastoral counselor or a spiritual guide, my most important duty in counseling or spiritual direction sessions is to listen very well during my encounter with an individual. My

relationship with the individual should foster the acceptance of the person and let him or her know that I care and I am willing to help and listen to him or her.

As a pastoral counselor, if I choose to be the anchor through my profession to another, I need to be able to listen to these adolescents that participated in this workshop. The encounter was an eye opener for me. Eventually when I go back to Africa and continue my work as a Catholic priest and a counselor, I will be more than ready to listen to my parishioners and clients alike. This workshop has also left some lasting impression on the adolescents that participated; they now realize there is somebody also in the Catholic Church who can listen to them. This has served as a validation for them and raised their self-esteem in life as human beings.

One of the participants in the person of Emeka says:

"People of my generation need someone there for them. They are not finding this in the culture and not even in the institutionalized religion in which they grew up. It is as if the young people are having one conversation and the Church is having another and neither is talking to the other. It is like two people having dinner together who are having totally different conversations as they talk to one another. Young people are living on one level and the Church is living on another without connecting at all."

Emeka also demonstrated being listened to in life as having positive effects on him. He has a significant other in the person of his uncle who cared and listened to him at a certain point in life when his own mother was isolating him in a way and he had this to say:

"My biggest influence in life is my uncle who brought here me to America. He

has always appreciated me and has always taken time to listen to my story and provided a place where I felt wanted, accepted, and cared for. The many hours I spent in his presence turned into a sort of religious experience for me because that is what I had seen in Jesus Christ a person who was willing to give and provide space. This had an extraordinary healing on my life."

Spiritual guidance is an art of listening to people so that the spiritual guide can lead the seeker to God. The guide is not to get in the way of the seeker; this is listening. The guide will do this well by listening to the seeker adequately. The relationship between the seeker and guide is that of equals. This was what I tried to do with the adolescents in this project. That was why they were able to open up and gave me all the details of the stories of their life without any fear or suspicion. The stories of these adolescents have helped me greatly to deepen my own spirituality and most of their stories resonate with my own life story, especially that of Akindele. Their stories have been a challenge to me also since the encounters. The stories of these adolescents have also helped them to realize that they are not alone in their striving for spiritual value, that their counterparts are also struggling like themselves. This has served as a sort of strength for them in the parish. They now want to meet each other frequently and exchange views about spirituality in particular and life in general. All this has helped them to deepen their spirituality. It has been very transformative for them and for myself in particular. Ochs & Olitzky (1997) said that so often, far too often to be accidental, those who come to us raise issues that we have recently been struggling with or that we are still confronting on our own journey. On the other hand, that is what allows us to hear their story and understand it. In listening

to the story of another person, it serves as a road map for us to find our own bearing on our spiritual journey in life. The stories of the great men and women in the Bible are written as a road map for the Christians. The stories of the great men and women in the Torah are written as a road map for the Jews. Each of us in life needs a road map to find our direction in life, but we must write our stories in life also just as these great men and women in the Bible and in the Torah. The stories of these adolescents helped me to find my own bearing in life. Some of the issues in life that were not clear to me while I was growing up as an adolescent have now become very clear.

These African Catholic adolescents have also given to one another a sense of belonging as well as giving me a sense of belonging at the same time. They have helped to answer some of the questions I had raised when growing up as an adolescent. The story of Akindele coincided closely with the story of my life. Most of the anger, agitation, resistance, and transference that these adolescents are having against the Church were being transferred to me. Most of the questions that they did not get answers for in life, they were expecting answers from me. I understood all this and I did not take any offence. That was why I was able to listen to them. I believe the children of today are adults of tomorrow and since they are all Africans, I want them to go back eventually transformed and contribute their quota in developing Africa spiritually, economically, and physically. Even though I did not give a particular answer to their questions, but was there for them through listening, I think that is what they need at this point in their lives as they are growing to adulthood.

CHAPTER FOUR

a. The Results of the Workshop Of this Project

An analysis of the five participants' stories reveals that these Catholic African adolescents have a great and deep spirituality in them. They do not have it consistently in the two religions that influenced their lives, namely, Catholicism and African Traditional Religion, but the two religions seem to have helped them in a way, especially the African Traditional Religion. The modernist perspective is illustrated in them in a number of ways. Most of the participants have a high regard for the education system in Africa and spirituality. They value individualism, freedom from any kind of authoritarian structure, and being true to oneself--the constitutive ideal of modernity. According to Taylor (1991), another feature of modernity, the atomism of the self-absorbed individual, is also evident at times. In the mind of Taylor, what Tom Beaudoin describes as the postmodern youth's penchant for irony and parody is present in the stories of the participants of the workshop in this project. On the other hand, the human and spiritual experiences of most of these adolescents are shot through with many aspects of the cultures of post-modernity, Catholicism, and African Traditional Religion.

While they still value the freedom of the individual, they reject the concept of the autonomous individual that is characteristic of modernism. In their quest for community, whether a small group of peers or a specifically religious community, most of them reject the premodern hierarchically structured concept of community in favor of the postmodern perspective, whereby a member participates as an equal and both influences and is influenced by that community.

Moreover, this would be a sphere of healing and support through pastoral counseling sessions. Some of the Catholic African adolescents that participated in this workshop clearly reject religious hegemony and intolerance, and this is what Foucault (1984) describes as "knowledge control" in faith commitment. For these adolescents, knowledge or knowing is embodied; truth is contextualized and experienced; it arises out of one's own experience of relating and reflecting in life. As Emeka, one participants put it, the Church's teaching is reminiscent of that of Pharisees versus Jesus Christ. It does not allow for human experience to be lived and the teachings do not allow for the opportunity to touch human experience. I believe that the Church is a structure that has potential if it could only move away from all rules and regulations to a more life-filled experience of the truth and the spirit. The epistemological stance of these adolescents varied, but most of them seem to reject the epistemology of modernism, which holds that truth can exist apart from the knower. They favor diversity over absolutes, laud a plurality of viewpoints, and celebrate differences. They prize highly both community and individualism, but community that is open to diversity is most appealing to them.

Data from the workshop illustrate another dimension of postmodernity, which has been referred to by many commentators as the openness of this new sensibility to the mystical dimension of human and religious experience. The nature and extent of this penchant for the spiritual varies from person to person. Odera's spirituality is nature-centered, God, and Christ-centered. In the story of her life, she made it clear that her reason for wanting to live at all is the belief that her life, everybody's life, is a gift from God--the creator God--and that the appreciation of a gift so graciously given should be passed on. She values every moment of life because it is an opportunity to live, to just be,

to celebrate life and celebrate life with people around her. She has a keen sense of the presence of God in nature, in the trees, the rivers, the flowers, the mountains, and in the very air she breathes. Yet, while God is the greatest force of love in the world, and love is life, and this spirit of love and life is everywhere, that spirit of God is made personal, is made real and relational in Jesus Christ in human form. This particular spirituality finds expression in a variety of prayer forms, ranging from drawing, writing, and experiencing nature to more structured meditation. A somewhat different illustration of post-modernity's openness to mystery is exemplified in Odera's spirituality. God is primarily a creative energy, a life force and we are all very connected. God is in the connection of all, of all that is life—all human life, animal and plant life, the air, the rivers. God is absolutely everything around us. Although this understanding of God is very impersonal, Odera experiences God as very honest, true, kind, and patient.

"The God that I believe in," she says, "is very, very good and caring." Prayer, which is largely unstructured, is a matter of giving thanks for animate and inanimate life as well as for the life force itself. All of these five participants were born into, and grew up in, homes that were characterized by a firm commitment to both African Traditional Religion and Catholicism. This was especially exemplified in weekly attendance of Mass and other church devotions as well as participation in the African puberty rite of passage. While the fifth participant, Emeka, may not have experienced an equally strong attachment to the church, he did participate in the Sunday Eucharist each week with his parents during childhood and before coming to America with his uncle. Furthermore, each of these adolescents attended Catholic schools for the duration of their primary and secondary education. Data from the workshop showed that home, school, parish, African

Traditional Religion and peers influenced all of these adolescents as they progressed through their childhood and adolescent years. Most of these adolescents had a happy or very happy childhood at home and in school. Only one adolescent in the person of Emeka had a rather unhappy childhood. He is from a traditional farming family. He is the youngest of the family of four. His was a quiet household and his parents were the type of people who were not able to express their emotions or feelings. His mother was a perfectionist; therefore he was always looking for acceptance and love but never experienced it. In general, the childhood experience of these five adolescents was quite deeply spiritual. The African Traditional Religion and Catholicism pervaded their homes, schools, and parishes. Each of these adolescents participated in the activities of the church and were deeply rooted in the African Traditional Religion during the rite of puberty passage while growing up. The parish experience of these adolescents was fairly similar during their childhood years with parish involvement being more or less confined to attendance at church liturgies. Life at home varied from being very happy to being rather unhappy. Family prayer, in the form of the Rosary, was recited. In their respective primary schools, the religious atmosphere was not as all-pervasive; through the African Traditional Religion their rite of passage implanted in them the love of the community and respect for others. Although the usual Catholic Religion lessons were held, their memory is mainly confined to preparation for their first communion and confirmation.

Kagame, who grew up in a socially deprived area of Rwanda, had a very negative experience of primary school and this was to have a lasting impact on his life. One teacher told her class that a lot of them would "end up in the gutter" for the rest of their lives, a statement that he now has difficulty reconciling with the supposed ethos of a

Catholic school. All of these five adolescents underwent African rite of puberty and it impacted on them a spiritual foundation upon which the rest of their lives was built. Their parents were practicing African Traditional Religion before they were converted to Catholicism. Akindele said that his experience during the rite of puberty had laid a solid foundation for his spirituality and yet he is the only one among them who wants to become a Catholic priest eventually and serve God in humanity. He had this to say:

I now remember vividly that I underwent puberty ritual passage just about two years ago, shortly before my uncle brought me here to America. There the elders who were in charge of all of us who underwent this passage taught us how to relate to God, self, and the community. I was separated from home for seven days with other peers, though originally my parents practiced African Traditional Religion before they were converted to Catholicism. But we still take the good values in African Traditional Religion to our practice of Catholicism.

Domebeika, another participant, alluded to the foundation of his spirituality in African Traditional Religion as he stated in the story of his life:

My parents were both Catholic. I remember my experience now when I underwent my puberty rite of passage in Ghana. I was taught through out the course of this passage, which lasted for about nine days on how to love God and my neighbor as well. It was a nice experience for me in which I was overwhelmed. I was taken to the woods in the company of others of my age group for this spiritual stage that we have to undergo. Dad and Mom were deeply rooted in the African Traditional Religion before they were converted to Catholicism;

this has good implications on them as later Catholics. In the rite of puberty rite of passage, I was taught that I am always part of the society in whatever I do and that I must always relate to the society as such. This has great influence on me since then. I still have sweet memories of all these when we were growing up with other kids in our neighborhood; we were taught to be respectful to our parents and our elders in general, though some of them were Moslems and Protestants.

The spirituality of Odera is nature-centered, but the basis of her spirituality is found in African Traditional Religion. She has this to say as follows:

I remember my early years at home during the era of my puberty rite of passage; I was excluded with my peers from home into the forest for nine days; we were taught how to relate to God, others and ourselves in our community. We were taught that we exist because of the community. Respect to others was being taught, especially to our parents and those who are older than us. This continues to linger on in my memory; it has helped me to get some desire to serve God, others and the community as such.

Even though Kagame grew up in a socially deprived area of Rwanda, her spirituality was deeply rooted in African Traditional Religion. She narrated it in the story of her life as follows:

It was at this point that I went for my rite of puberty passage with a group of children who were of my age then. The teachers here were not like the ones I had while in the primary school; they were very caring and understanding. We were isolated from our various homes only to reside in the forest with some elders who were our teachers. The experience here was a nice one for me. We started the ceremony in the forest with a fast for a whole day; this was the first time that I ever fasted. The elders were so nice to us. We were taught how to be responsible in life, especially to God, our parents, the elders, ourselves, and the community as a whole. We were told that God must be first in our lives--it is through this that we could be connected to our ancestors. We were also taught that sex was sacred and that premarital sex is against the will of God and that of the community, and that virginity is praiseworthy at marriage. All these are the elements that will always draw me to God and to my African community in Rwanda.

Emeka who grew up on a farm, who now derives his spiritual energy from his artwork, has his spiritual foundation in the African Traditional Religion and he stated in the history of his life as follows:

Luckily enough the era of my puberty rite of passage gave me some sense of happiness and belonging. The elders who taught us during the period of nine days in the woods were very loving and caring. This afforded me with the possibility of an outdoor life with a high level of spirituality and it was there, in the heart of nature, that I found some

happiness as it were, and I was able to give free reign to my imagination.

All these adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project demonstrated that African Traditional Religion has helped them to develop their spirituality. They did not seem to have any negative feelings about the African Traditional Religion, unlike Catholicism that four of them have negative feelings about. Only Akindele has great positive feelings about Catholicism; no wonder then he wants to become a Catholic priest in the future. It is also in the African Traditional Religion that their senses of community, respect, love, moral values, and God was deepened. The elders who were in charge of these adolescents during their puberty rite of passage were the significant other in their lives. They have some positive impacts on them unlike some of their teachers in the primary and secondary schools who had a minimal positive impact on them. The African Traditional Religion afforded them through the rite of puberty passage a religious retreat by going to the woods away from the noise of the day- to-day activities to be able to listen to God and themselves, as if they were taken to the desert of their spiritual journey toward God. This is what religious experience, spiritual journey/spirituality, and prayer life is all about. Jesus Christ at the dawn of his public ministry or spiritual journey went into the desert for forty days to pray (Mt. 4: 1-11). This is also what the Christians all over the world do during the period of Lent, a time of repentance, prayer, and retreat for them. One of the participants in the person of Kagame mentioned specifically that they fasted for a whole day during the stay in the woods.

All these elements of looking for a lonely place to get in touch with the divine in the African Traditional Religion have helped the adolescents to have a sense of spirituality that is solid regardless of whether they belong to any institutionalized religion like Catholicism or not; they are spiritual. Their spirituality is therefore that of relationships with God (Vertical Dimension), self (Internal or Emotional Dimension), and with others or their community (Horizontal Dimension). Any spirituality without all these dimensions is deformed according to the mind of Carotta (2002).

b. Nonanticipated Development that Shaped This Project

There are two major developments that came up during the process of the workshop of this project that I did not envisage even from the beginning of the workshop. I am still very amazed at how the developments came into reality. The two major developments are as follows:

1. The spiritual richness of the African Traditional Religion.
 2. The request of the adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project.
1. THE SPIRITUAL RICHNESS OF THE AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Until the time that I facilitated the workshop in this project with the five African Catholic adolescents, even as an African for so many years, I never realized the spiritual richness of the African Traditional Religion. Most of the missionaries that evangelized Africa saw our values, practices of African Traditional Religion, as not good enough. The missionaries tried to destroy most of these values and practices for the missionaries saw them as being fetish. At best there has always been a tension between Christianity and African Traditional Religion in Africa. Mbiti (1975, p.191)

said yet we must also take note of the fact that there are conflicts between Christian life and the life of those who follow only African Religion. Part of the reasons for this conflict is the large number of moral requirements demanded and put upon African Christians by their missionary masters. It is more of a clash between Western or European Culture and African culture, than a specifically religious conflict. Some of the areas where conflicts arise concern traditional African rituals, especially those of offerings in connection with the departed, African initiation rites, marriage customs, the place of sorcery, evil magic and witchcraft in African life, and methods of dealing with disease, misfortune, and suffering.

Now I know better through my interactions with the adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project that some of the values and practices of the African Traditional Religion could be a source of developing spirituality in the African instead of throwing everything away that pertains to the African Traditional Religion, just like some of the missionaries did when they went to Africa for evangelization. What Carotta propounded in this twenty-first century, namely the three dimensions of spirituality, is found in the adolescents that participated in the workshop. Therefore these dimensions have always been in the spirituality of the African Religion. This awareness has therefore made me proud of the African Traditional Religion in particular and Africa as whole. This is a big non-anticipated development in this project that will linger on in my memory. If these major dimensions of spirituality in Christianity are found in African Traditional Religion, the question now for me is: Why did the early missionaries to Africa try to destroy values and practices of the African Traditional Religion? Even through the

involvement of these adolescents in the workshop, I was able to realize that the center teaching of African Traditional Religion is love of God and that of neighbor just as it is in Christianity. This is being clarified in all the stories of the adolescents that took part in the workshop of this project. Even the symbol of going away to the desert like the Monastic fathers, like St. Anthony did in Christianity, is to be closer to God. This symbol of going to the desert ran through the stories of the adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project. Fasting has always been recommended in the history of Christianity; Jesus Christ started it first; this is also not very strange to African Traditional Religion. One of the participants in the person of Kagame said this about fasting: "We were isolated from our various homes only to reside in the forest with some elders for seven days. We started the ceremony in the forest with a fast for a whole day; this was the first time I ever fasted." Premarital sex has always been condemned in the Catholic Church; it is clear from this workshop that the African Religion has always condemned it and also favors virginity just like Christianity. One of the adolescents in the person of Kagame again said:

We were also taught that sex is sacred and that premarital sex is against the will of God and that of the community and that virginity is praiseworthy at marriage.

Christianity has always believed in work and prayer (*ora et labora*), for faith without work is dead (Jas. 2: 17-20). All this has served as eye-opener for me to appreciate the spiritual richness of the African Traditional Religion. Prayer or spirituality for these adolescents was demonstrated when they were separated from their family to spend some days in the woods and work was demonstrated as when they left the

woods and continued as adults who are responsible to God, community, and themselves. These adolescents also demonstrated the importance of mentors or spiritual guides in the rite of passage. For any meaningful journey in life, a spiritual one for that matter; a mentor or spiritual guide is always needed. Ochs & Olitzky (1997, p.1) stated that frequently we need the help of someone other than ourselves to understand our own heart's desire. Finding a spiritual guide can be the prelude to a transformative experience.

2. REQUEST OF THE ADOLESCENTS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE WORKSHOP OF THIS PROJECT

It was a surprise to me when all these adolescents came back to me on January 14th, 2005 and suggested to me that maybe I will be able to listen to them as I did in the workshop once every month. They said that since they had their puberty rite of passage, nobody has ever listened to them like I did in the workshop, that they experienced the workshop as a sort of retreat for them, that it was a place where they met God. They now realize more than ever their journey toward God or their relationship to God in life as African Catholic adolescents. They told me that they were happy that somebody in my person was able to listen to them. To them a priest has never listened to them even when they were in Africa. This was a challenge to me and I am ready to take it. Since my ordination eighteen years ago, I always had the privilege of taking care of the youth in Nigeria. But I never had a workshop where I listened completely to them. Without any doubt, the experience of this workshop has made me grow spiritually. I have therefore decided to grant the request

of the participants, I will be meeting with them once a month as of July 2005 when I will have full time and attention for them. They were very happy that I granted their request, since I will always be ready to listen to them just like I did in the workshop. I never envisaged that this workshop with these adolescents would result in meeting them once every month as of July 2005. My experience with these African Catholic adolescents has enriched me greatly as a pastor and a pastoral counselor. In the future, when I go back to Africa finally, I will be happy to use this approach that I have used in the workshop of this project for the youth in Africa.

Before the adolescents departed from me, they made some suggestions that will help us in our subsequent workshops from July 2005. Their suggestions are as follows:

1. Akindele suggested that adolescents of their age want to internalize their beliefs and values within a supportive community and their vocation in the world.
2. Domebeika is of the opinion that adolescents will only respond positively when the Church invites their participation and engages them in the planning of activities for the spiritual life of their community.
3. Odera suggested that visitation from the pastor of the church to the adolescents will not be out of place, either visitation to them in their workplace, the home, school, or the civic community.
4. Kagame requested that the church should provide adequate opportunity for the adolescents to ask questions and to discover answers present in the teaching and tradition of the Catholic church.
5. Emeka is of the view that the Church should be ready to facilitate and engage

adolescents in an awareness of and an invitation to the work of justice, peace, and compassion.

I was also surprised again with all the suggestions as stated above that the adolescents made. I was happy with them that they made the suggestions. I did not anticipate this either. I thanked them for all their contributions and promised them that all their suggestions will be included in all our subsequent meetings. The workshop of this project with these adolescents has been a source of joy and happiness for me. It has improved upon my attitude now toward pastoral ministry. I am happy that I was able to touch their lives and they also touched my life in a special way; this would not have happened ordinarily apart from this project. When I started this workshop, I never knew that I was in for a big and good surprise. This experience will continue to linger on in my memory; it will also help me to strive as a pastor, pastoral counselor, and youth coordinator.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

a. Anticipated Results of the Workshop of This Project

The anticipated results of the workshop of this project were that the adolescents would demonstrate that they are no longer concrete operational children, that they can experience their environment, and make decisions, for themselves as regards, so many aspects of life including spirituality. The adolescent's system of mental operations has reached a high degree of equilibrium; the adolescent's thought is now flexible and effective; he or she can now deal with complex problems of reasoning not excluding that of spirituality (Ginsburg & Oppen, 1969, p.181). All the adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project demonstrated this a great deal in the stories of their lives.

Akindele, one of the participants, has this to say:

It is true that as human beings, we have some potentials and abilities to do so many wonderful things, but we must discipline ourselves; this is where spirituality lies. The Catholic Church's law forbidding premarital sex is also found in the African Traditional Religion, even virginity is being praised among African youth. Even the law of celibacy for priests in the Catholic Church is very good; this will enable priests to be more devoted to the service of God and humanity for, if they were to marry, their wives may be disturbing them from being efficient in their work.

Domebeika demonstrated his thought being concrete and flexible by saying:

I think Catholic Church is too much like God in most of its social teachings, though some of these teachings are very sound, like the love of neighbor, caring for the sick and the needy, for which the Irish nuns and priests have had credit, but the Catholic Church has no right whatsoever interfering with the people's private affairs, especially the area of premarital sex, even to the extent of imposing the law of celibacy on the priests. This is not fair enough, is the Catholic Church claiming to be wiser than God? God created sex and wanted it to be enjoyed in a right way, not denying it to someone like the priest totally. People need to be given freedom to exercise their God-given potentials. I believe Though that these potentials must be controlled, but not being suspended or Destroyed anyway.

Odera in affirming her effectiveness and concrete thinking has this to say:

I think that a lot of the teachings of the Catholic Church are really, really great. But the Church goes too far when it gets into the specifics of people's lives, when it condemns people for what they do. However, I think there are many people in our society who believe that they can buy happiness. Self-individualism is reflected in people who care only about themselves, having little or no regard for the community or other people in their society.

In the affirmation of her concrete and flexible thinking, Kagame has this to say:

However, at this stage I began to realize that there was an academic Side to my character and, despite my very negative experience of the

education system, I also realized that I had other talents.

Emeka confirms his flexibility and concrete thinking in the story of his life when he said:

What I now have, has come from my own personal development and through the help of a very few people like my uncle. I think that modern society in general is a society of people that are alienated. Young people of my age are searching to belong somewhere; many of them are very empty and are in great need of care and love. Contemporary culture tells that we can buy happiness, but this is shallow and empty. It does numb the pain temporarily, but deep down the pain remains. People of my generation need someone there for them.

Another anticipated result of the workshop of this project was that the participants were to have a spirituality that has relationships with God, self, and others according to the theological model of Michael Carotta. All five participants in this project demonstrated these three dimensions of spirituality.

Akindele demonstrated this by saying:

Presently, there is vocation boom in Nigeria in particular and Africa as a whole; I want to join this boom and be the light and salt to the world (Mt. 5: 13-15). Eventually if I make it as a priest, and I think I will make it as a good Catholic priest, there a lot of my dreams will be realized in serving the people of God, this is what we are created for, to love and to serve.

Domebeika reiterated his own three dimensions of spirituality by saying that:

I believe there should be unity and harmony in the whole universe where human beings, animals and even the smallest part of an tom will live in a peaceful community. I was taught through the rite of passage, which lasted for about nine days, on how to love God and my neighbor as well.

Odera manifested the three dimensions of spirituality by saying that:

The image I have of God is that of a very creative energy, an energy that exists all around us—a life force. God is always honest, true, kind and patient. The God that I believe in is very, very good and caring. The notion of a God who sends people to hell never really rang true me. I believe that all life forces have a unity and that God is in the connection of all that has life—all human life, animal and plant life, the air, the rivers, the seas, and the mountains. God is absolutely everything around us.

Kagame showed her own three dimensions in relationships to God, self, and others. Her own spiritual dimesion is Christ-centered; this is Christology. She has this to say in the story of her life as follows:

I now believe in a higher power and I do believe that Jesus Christ was on this earth. Jesus was a very real figure but I think that is lost in the church's teachings. As I look to the future, my greatest hope is that I do myself justice and do justice to those connected to me.

Emeka in the affirmation of his three dimensions of spirituality that is also Christological had this to say in the story of his life as follows:

Right now, I believe in the goodness of people and in the

Presence of Jesus in my life and in other people's lives.

I believe in my call to follow Jesus and do as he did: to accept everyone as he or she is and where he or she is.

b. Nonanticipated Results of the Workshop of This Project

As has been demonstrated in chapter four of this project, there are two major nonanticipated results that were not expected to happen in the workshop of this project, but they did happen; these nonanticipated results are: the spiritual richness of the African Traditional Religion and the requests of the adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project. All five participants alluded to the role that African Traditional Religion through the rite of puberty passage has played in the nurturing and development of their spirituality. Akindele said that:

I now remember vividly the day I underwent ritual passage of the African puberty rite of passage just about two years ago, shortly before my uncle brought here to America. The elders who were in charge of all of us who underwent this passage taught us how to relate to God, self, and the community. I was separated from home for seven days with my other peers. Originally my parents practiced African Traditional Religion before they converted to Catholicism. But

we still take the good values in African Traditional Religion to Catholicism.

The realization of the spiritual richness of the African Traditional Religion was very clear in the story of Domebeika when he said as follows:

I remember my experience now when I underwent my puberty rite of passage in Ghana. I was taught through the course of this passage, which lasted for about nine days, how to love God and my neighbor as well. It was a nice experience for me in which I was overwhelmed. I was taken to the woods in the company of others of my age group for this spiritual stage that we have to undergo. Dad and Mom were deeply rooted in the African Traditional Religion before they converted into Catholicism; this has good implications on them as later Catholics. In the rite of puberty passage I was taught that I am always part of the society in whatever I do and that I must always relate to the society as such. This has great influence on me since then. I still have sweet memories of all these when we were growing up with other kids in our neighborhood. We were taught to be respectful to our parents and our elders in general, though some of them were Moslems and Protestants.

Odera had this to say about the spiritual richness of the African Traditional Religion when she said in the story of her life:

I remember my early years at home during the era of my puberty rite of passage; I was excluded with my peers from home into the forest

for nine days; we were taught on how to relate to God, others, and ourselves in the community. Respect to others was being taught, especially to our parents and those who are older than us. This continues to linger on in my memory; it has helped me to get some desire to serve God, others, and the community as such.

In the story of Kagame, the spiritual richness of the African Traditional Religion was demonstrated as follows:

It was at this point that I went for my puberty rite of passage with a group of children who were of my age then. We were isolated from our various homes only to reside in the forest with some elders for seven days, who were supposed to be our teachers. The teachers here were not like the ones I had in the primary school; they were very caring and understanding. The experience here was a nice one for me. We started the ceremony in the forest with a fast for a whole day; this was the first time that I ever fasted. The elders were so nice to us. We were taught on how to be responsible in life, especially to God, our parents, the elders, ourselves, and the community and that virginity is praise-worthy at marriage. These elements will always draw me closer to God and to my African community in Rwanda.

In the story of the life of Emeka he had this to say about the spiritual richness of the African Traditional Religion as follows:

Luckily enough the era of my puberty rite of passage gave me some sense of happiness and belonging. The elders who taught us during the nine days in the woods were very loving and caring. This afforded me with the possibility of an outdoor life with a high level of spirituality and it was there, in the heart of nature that I found some happiness as it were, and I was able to give free reign to my imagination.

Even though as an African, having undergone this puberty rite of passage when I was growing up as an adolescent, I never realized the spiritual richness of the African Traditional Religion as I now do through my interactions with these five African Catholic adolescents in the workshop of this project. Without any doubt, I have now realized more than ever the spiritual richness of the puberty rite of passage in particular and that of African Traditional Religion in general. I never anticipated that much could be realized as regards the spiritual richness of African Traditional Religion in the stories of the adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project. No wonder then, Carol Ochs (2001) said that because of the story we tell ourselves of who we are, it is our informal theology; it greatly influences how we perceive other people and situations. As we seriously examine this informal, and frequently unconscious—theology, we discover a new domain of freedom: our story can be modified.

c. i. Contributions of This Project in Clarifying and Expanding
the Psychological Model of Jean Piaget on The Intellectual
Development of the Adolescent

As has been demonstrated by the adolescents who participated in the workshop of this project, they are now flexible and concrete in their thinking unlike the concrete operational child. The clarification and expansion of this psychological model was very vivid in this project through the adolescents who participated in the workshop of this project. The theory of Jean Piaget is that the adolescent's system of mental operations has reached a high degree of equilibrium. These adolescents demonstrated that their thought is flexible and effective. They dealt efficiently with complex problems of life. They saw many possibilities that are inherent in a situation; they did not function like the concrete operational child, whose thought is only tied to the concrete. These adolescents transcended the immediate here and now and expanded on the immediate here and now. They did compensate mentally for transformation in reality.

The determinants of their equilibrium were demonstrated and they were able to say what they actually need and want in life. For example, Akindele demonstrated and expanded on this by saying in the story of his life as follows:

Though there is no law of celibacy for the priests of the African Traditional Religion per se, some of them practice it and they are placed in high esteem in the African community. Without any doubt the laws of celibacy and that of forbidding premarital sex may be hard humanly speaking anyway, but it is a challenge to the adolescents of

nowadays like myself in Africa in particular and in the world in general. Adolescents are known everywhere in the world today to be taking risks and challenges. Celibacy therefore, without gainsaying it, is one of such risks and challenges that adolescents like myself should take, not for the world per se, but for the sake of the kingdom of God. I have no regrets for being a Catholic and an African at the same time and even when I become a priest I will have no regrets. I want to remain as an African in the Catholic Church and use my God-given talents to make God's kingdom realized here on earth. I know like any other human society, there is bound to be some problems in the Catholic Church, but people of my age should be ready to take discipline and make sacrifices to bring about possible solutions to the problems in the Catholic Church and the world at large.

Domebeika clarified and expanded this independent thinking by saying in the story of his life as follows:

When I look around the world today in Ghana, for Dad and Mom are from Ghana, there is greediness among our various leaders from secular to religious levels and poverty can be seen walking naked in the streets among the masses. This dangerous worm of corruption has started eating deep into the system of even the Catholic Church, although on the average the Catholic priests are still trying their best to maintain their sanity. But I am afraid from the little experience I have now as a medical doctor in training, the sex scandal among the priests in America, Europe, and Asia may eventually take its toll on Africa,

for more or less people are just the same everywhere.

Odera in her own independent thinking demonstrated in the story of her life as follows:

However, I think there are many people in our society who believe that they can buy happiness. It is something of the future rather than of the present.

I would say that most of my generation of Kenyan youth put too high a value on material things and I think that if they concentrate more on their spirituality and look inside more, they would have a better chance of finding happiness.

Many young people today are moving from individualism that was characteristics of the era that we seem to be leaving behind, the kind of individualism you see in modern Kenyan society even here in America today.

That self-individualism is reflected in people who care only about themselves,

Having little regard for the community or other people in the society.

The independent thinking of Kagame was clarified and expanded in the story of her life as follows:

However, at this stage I began to realize that there was an academic side of my character and, despite my very negative experience of the education system, I also realized that I had other talents. This realization came through the work of a youth leader who involved my age group in plays and other activities in the local community center. My hope for the world in general is that we would wake up one day and the world will be at peace, that we would realize that we are burning the fuse of an ecological time bomb. How much do we have to own? Where does success end? My greatest personal fear is that, amid all all the chaos in the world, we shall disintegrate and become broken. My fear for

world is that people will become less and less important, especially the poor, and that greed will destroy the whole ecosystem.

Emeka reiterated his own clarification and expansion on concrete thinking by saying in the story of his life as follows:

Authority for me is the wisdom of the people who have gone before me, but that is not an absolute authority because situations change, people change, and culture changes. In order for something to be right or moral, it has to be right in relation to the people around me and not do damage to them. This is what I consider the balance or cycle of life in general.

From all the indications in the stories of the adolescents that participated in the workshop of this project, their thinking is different from the thinking of the concrete operational child who will only stick with what he or she can perceive with the five bodily senses. But in the mind of Jean Piaget, the adolescent goes beyond what he or she can perceive with five bodily senses; the adolescents in the workshop of this project have demonstrated it beyond any reasonable doubt and their stories clarified and expanded on this psychological model of Jean Piaget on the intellectual development of the adolescents. Therefore, the contributions of these adolescents who participated in the workshop of this project have clarified and expanded the psychological model of Jean Piaget on the intellectual and mental operational systems of adolescents.

ii. Contributions of This Project in Clarifying And Expanding the Theological Principle of Michael Carotta on the Spiritual Development of Adolescent

When you think about the spirituality of your adolescent, think in terms of direction or dimension. It is helpful to think of spirituality consisting of three different, yet related, directions—in sense, a 3-D view of spirituality. The three directions are vertical (relationship with God), horizontal (relationship with other people), and internal or emotional (relationship with self) (Carotta, 2002, p.19). All these three dimensions were clarified and expanded by the adolescents who participated in the workshop of this project. In the clarification and expansion of all these three dimensions, Akindele had this to say in the story of his life as follows:

When I finish my secondary school here in America, I hope to go back to Nigeria and go to the major seminary to study to become a Catholic priest. God has been so very kind and generous to us in our family and my mother taught us to be generous to people as well for we are always receiving from God, that is why I want to devote myself to the service of God in the holy Catholic priesthood and to serve humanity as well.

Even though Akindele was the only one among the five participants of the workshop of this project who wanted to become a Catholic priest eventually, he demonstrated his spirituality in relationship to God, self, and others. The three dimensions of spirituality according to the mind of Carotta were present in Akindele as he further clarified and expanded on it by saying in the story of his life as follows:

Presently, there is a priestly vocation boom in Nigeria in particular

and Africa as a whole; I want to join this boom and be the light and salt to the world (Mt. 5: 13-15). Eventually If I make it as a priest, I think I will make it as a good priest, and then a lot of my dream will be realized in serving the people of God. This is what we are created for, to love and to serve.

Domebeika clarified and expanded on these dimensions of spirituality in the story of his life as follows:

I believe there should be unity and harmony in the whole of the universe where human beings, animals and even the smallest part of an atom will live in a peaceful community. Now I contact God directly without assistance of any priest; it does not matter whether I sin or not. God still loves me.

Odera in her own story clarified and expanded the three dimensions of spirituality as follows:

Love constitutes happiness for me. I do not think I could be complete without love. Inner peace and knowing that I am on the right path are also very important for me. I believe in living in a way that is helping other people or things or animals. Even though I have moved away from a church that I consider being a very nonflexible, rigid institution with a rigid set of values, belief in God is still very important to me. The image of God is that of a very creative energy, an energy that exists all around us, a life force. God is always very honest, true, kind, and patient. The God I believe in is very, very good and caring. The notion of a God who sends souls to

hell does not really ring true with me. I believe that all life forces have a unity and that God is in the connection of all that has life, all human life, animal and plant life, the air, the rivers, the seas, and the mountains. God is absolutely everything around us. When I pray to God, it takes the form of giving thanks for everything that is around me; it is an appreciation of the giftedness of life. So while I have grown very cynical and suspicious about institutionalized religion, my belief in God and my prayer life are very strong.

Kagame in her own story clarified and expanded on the three dimensions of spirituality as she said:

I now believe in a higher power and I do believe that Jesus Christ was on this earth. Jesus was a very real figure but I think that is lost in the Church's teaching s. He had to be proclaiming a powerful message and there had to be something very charismatic about him to get people to "down tools" and follow him. As I look to the future, my greatest hope is that I do myself justice and justice to those connected to me.

Emeka clarified and expanded the three dimensions of spirituality in the story of his life as follows:

I believe that there is potential for both a liturgy that is relevant and for community of shared faith and experience. What gives most meaning to my life at present is to be there for other people, to be a presence or to be human face of God for people and to be able to live out of an experience of being loved. I think that faith or spirituality or truth as Jesus Christ proclaimed it is something that is lived and experienced, and it is going to be very subjective

or very individual experience. I do not think that anybody can ever grow mature spiritually unless they experience and experiment with life and one cannot do that if there are any absolutes.

d. Contributions of This Project to the Wider Pastoral Ministry

One of the major contributions that this project has made to the wider pastoral ministry is that there is spiritual energy in adolescents and that it must be nurtured and developed. This project is also of the opinion that spiritual energy in adolescents makes a call to duty for the wider pastoral ministry. Therefore the wider pastoral ministry and Western culture must take a lead in developing and nurturing the spirituality in adolescents to a greater degree and not leave it for science or technology to help adolescents. To this end, it is part of the contributions of this project to the wider pastoral ministries that the upbringing of adolescents at various levels needs a universal approach, for the adolescents of today are the adults of tomorrow. What the future of the world will be spiritually and otherwise depends greatly on the contemporary adolescents, on how they relate to themselves, others (community), and God. This project is also of the opinion that the wider pastoral ministry has no excuse not to develop and nurture the spirituality of adolescents. If the contemporary adolescents are doing well spiritually and otherwise, the future of the world will therefore be very uncertain; of course the wider pastoral ministry has a certain duty to perform in developing and nurturing the spirituality of the adolescents. Carotta (2002, pp. 158-159) alluded that to help those who are interested in the development and upbringing of adolescents in all aspects of life

including spirituality, and the progress of humanity as a whole, something urgent has to be done and he made the following suggestions:

1. Praise your teens; be specific and generous to them.
2. Religious beliefs and experiences should be shared and explained to the adolescents.
3. Expect teens to maintain strong, but realistic, values, regardless of their environment.
4. Sensitivity is an important trait in parenting.
5. Examples shape your teens more than you will ever know.
6. No is a word you must be ready to use.
7. You must have the courage to structure and set limits despite the teens' resistance.
8. Express your emotions and help teens to do the same.

One of the contributions that this project is making to the wider pastoral ministry is that wider pastoral ministry should be ready to learn from the African Traditional Religion that has been able to develop and nurture the spirituality of its adolescents through the rite of puberty passage as evidenced in the stories of the five adolescents who participated in the workshop of this project; their spirituality has relationships to God, others and themselves. This project challenges the wider pastoral ministry and the Western culture of course to shun off their arrogance, wake up and do something urgent about the spiritual development of adolescents. Though Western culture has advanced technologically in this twenty-first century, the wider pastoral ministry and the Western culture should make humility their watchword and learn from the African Traditional

Religion that continues to instill in its adolescents through puberty rite of passage the values of morality, spirituality, love of neighbors, and God. Otherwise the current state of adolescents in America with regard to all the anti-social behavior like crimes of all categories, sexual misconduct, drug abuse or addiction, and suicide to mention but few, points to the danger of future self-destruction. Bee & Boyd (2004) lamented that in the United States, there are no universally shared initiation rites.

Thus passage into adulthood is much fuzzier for American youth, perhaps contributing to a greater sense of "identity crisis." Africans, still embedded in their cultural, religious and sense of community, are now worried about the development of their adolescents who are gradually being influenced by the Western culture. The American society and the wider pastoral ministry should be more worried.

The Nigerian Newspaper, *The punch*- (Friday, December 10th, 2004) stated that: Now that this country is becoming more stable politically, I think young people should be educated about many things that will make them better citizens and future leaders.

Therefore, this project is challenging the wider pastoral ministry and the American society to take the lead in addressing the issues of the spirituality of the adolescents and their development in general. America and the wider pastoral ministry should borrow a leaf from the so many cultures around them. Bee & Boyd (2004, p. 278) alluded that the experiences of many youth rites of passage for Africa, bar mitzvah and bas mitzvah for Jews, and quinceanera for young Hispanic girls suggest that there may be some real advantage to providing teens with formal instruction into adult roles. What many see as vestiges of bygone era may actually serve a very important function in adolescent identity

development. Spirituality therefore should allow any adolescent to relate to God, church, synagogue, mosque and the world at large with its creatures.

This type of nurtured spirituality that this project is advocating for the wider pastoral ministry. This project is also suggesting to the wider pastoral ministry that the spirituality of the adolescent must continue to be developed and nurtured. Unless the wider pastoral ministry fully occupies the whole person of the adolescent much as, if not more than, African Traditional Religion does, most adolescents who are converts to Christianity, Judaism, and Islam will at best always find solace in their old beliefs and practices for perhaps seven days a week, and certainly in times of emergency and crisis, or at worse, deny the faith and God and continue to live a very egocentric life without reference to anyone or the community. The whole environment and time of the adolescents must be occupied with societal and religious meanings, so that at any moment and in any place, the adolescent feels secure enough to act in a meaningful, religious, spiritual consciousness. This is the fact of our human existence and development. It is not satisfactory therefore to embrace a faith by African adolescents, or any other adolescent for that matter, confined to a church, synagogue or mosque which is locked six days a week and opened on Friday for the Moslems, Saturday for the Jews and the Seventh Day Adventists and Sunday for the Christians. This project is also of the opinion that the wider pastoral should be ready to bridge the gap between the level of the spirituality the African Traditional Religion has placed in its adolescents and that of their new faiths, be it Christianity, Islam, Judaism or any other faith. African Traditional Religion occupies the whole person of the adolescent; therefore the wider pastoral

ministry should embrace the language, thought, patterns, fears, social relationships, attitudes, and philosophical disposition of the adolescent.

e. Implications of This Project to the Future Pastoral Ministry

As has been demonstrated in this project, the spirituality of the African adolescents in particular and that of adolescents all over the world cannot be underestimated or overlooked, therefore the future pastoral ministry has a duty to perform in developing and nurturing the spirituality of adolescents. For the future pastoral ministry to be able to perform this duty well, Benson (1997) had these recommendations to make:

1. Provide a caring, nurturing environment in which young people can effectively
Learn (assets of support).
2. Develop intentional ways to build partnership with parents (support).
3. Ensure that school is safe for all students (empowerment).
4. Have clear expectations and behavior guidelines in school, ones young people take
part in developing, monitoring, and enforcing (boundaries and expectations).
5. Set expectations for learning that are challenging for students of all abilities
(boundaries and expectations).
6. Provide strong connections to and opportunities for community-based after school
and curricular programs (constructive use of time).

The Council on Adolescent Development (1995) is also of the opinion that pastoral counselors should engage in meaning training in media literacy skills for adolescents during the out of school hours. Another implication of this project to the future pastoral ministry is that of openness to adolescents with regard to their particular perspective on

human and human religious living. Just as this project has been able to listen to the stories of the adolescents in the workshop of this project, it is implied for the future pastoral ministry to be able to listen to the stories of the adolescents.

The paradigm of the workshop of this project revealed that adolescents today are willing to engage in dialogue with the clergy of their faith in matters of mutual interest. They want their views and feelings about religion and religious practice to be listened to and treated in a nonjudgmental and respectful manner. All of the adolescents who participated in the workshop of this project expressed an explicit desire to be listened to. Therefore the future pastoral ministry cannot shy away from listening to contemporary adolescents. The principle of listening and openness to the stories and perspectives of the rising generation applies to many aspects of future pastoral ministry. It is therefore imperative upon pastoral ministry that from the dawn of adolescence, adolescents should be encouraged to have an input in whatever program is given to them. The listening principle has an important place in the art of pastoral counseling as a whole, therefore this is not a heavy load for the future pastoral ministry to carry, and it is just a reminder. The implication of this project for the future pastoral ministry is that it has become an urgent need in this third millennium to set a youth pastoral ministry where the views and the experiences of contemporary adolescents will be aired. This may include the clergy who are trained in the area of youth ministry. In this way, the rising generation will feel part of their community, influence its vision, and contribute to its development.

According to Warren's notion of cultural production in Benson (2001), the principle of openness to the stories and perspectives of the youth will make them develop ~~maturely~~ maturely and responsibly. Just as the human person significantly influences the world of

meaning in the secular sphere, so also he or she should be allowed to participate in producing the world of spirituality. Adolescents in particular feel excluded from the institutionalized religion's processes of the production of meaningful spirituality.

By listening to, and taking on board, the views of adolescents, future pastoral ministry can genuinely involve the rising generation in the formation of a good journey toward spirituality, this will give adolescents a sense of belonging, a vital ingredient that is lacking in the pastoral ministry today. Without openness to the perspectives of adolescents, there is no hope that future pastoral ministry will continue to strive well. Therefore, by investing in the area of listening and openness to adolescents, the future pastoral ministry will yield much fruit in the form of future stewardship, leadership, and vocations. Furthermore, by investing in this openness and listening to adolescents on the part of future pastoral ministry, there will be a hundred percent folds because of their interest talents, abilities, education, and desire to serve. This is what spirituality is all about. It has also been demonstrated in this project that physical, emotional, mental, economic, academic, political, social, cultural, religious, and above all spiritual growths cannot be separated from contemporary adolescents. It is therefore the responsibility of the future ministry to nurture all these in adolescents. In fact, it is when future pastoral ministry takes this responsibility with keen interest that adolescents can grow well into fully matured and spiritual adulthood. In this vein, the hope of humanity will be relived; and "the culture of death" that is ravaging all over the world especially among the adolescents; will be minimized and the world at large will be more secure and humanity will be in union with God; that is spirituality.

In considering the scope and the time limit of this project, it has not been presumed that all contributions as regards the nurturing and developing of the spirituality of adolescents to the wider pastoral ministry have been exhausted. But as part of this project's contributions to the wider pastoral ministry, it has put across that for any community or pastoral ministry worthy of the name, it must take into cognizance the physical and spiritual development of its adolescents, for the young shall surely grow and this project raises the question: "How do we want our adolescents to develop physically and spiritually?" This project supports the idea of the proverb in Ghana (Africa) that: "It takes a whole village to rear a child." The extent to which the contributions of this project are valuable will depend greatly on the exposure and openness of the reader of this project, but without any doubt this project is an eye-opener to the pastoral ministry of this twenty-first century, and of course to future pastoral ministry.

Definition of Terms

A. Meaning of Spirituality

Plato as cited by Rolheiser (1999) said that we are fired into life with a madness that comes from the gods and which would have us believe that we can have a great love, perpetuate our own seed, and contemplate the divine. Spirituality therefore is about what we do with the fire inside of us, about how we channel our Eros. And how we do channel it, the disciplines and the habits we choose to live by, will either lead us into a greater integration or disintegration within our bodies, minds, and souls, and to a greater integration in the way we are related to God, others, and the cosmic world. We see this

lived out one way in Mother Teresa, another in Janis Joplin, and still in a different manner in princess Diana (Rolheiser, 1999, p.11). It is clear from above that spirituality is about what we do with our spirits, our souls, and our bodies. It is also clear that a healthy spirit or healthy soul must do a dual job: It has to give us energy and fire, so that we do not lose our vitality, and all sense of the beauty and joy of living. Thus the opposite of a spiritual person is not someone who rejects the idea of God and lives as a pagan. The opposite of a spiritual person is someone who has lost his or her identity, namely, the person who at certain point does not know who he or she is anymore. A healthy spiritual soul keeps us both energized and ready to put the energy from the soul into action.

Wicks, Parsons & Capps (1993) said that spirituality is the actualization of the human self-transcendence, i.e. the capacity for relating, knowing, and committing ourselves to whatever is acknowledged as the ultimate or the Holy.

B. Meaning of Adolescence

According to the class notes on Psychology in Religious Life by Dr. Mark R. Banschick on November 24th, 2003, the adolescent's cognitive apparatus achieve an important milestone during the first few years after puberty--the development of formalized operational thinking. This accomplishment for those who achieve it permits the adolescent to consider things and experiences in the abstract. He or she can reason from particular to the general as well as challenge rules and ideas that had been presented as givens during an earlier period of life. In the mind of Banschick, there are few ideas as abstract as the experience of God or one's place in the universe.

The adolescent wonders about the world outside of his or her domain. Whereas during latency, the child had been fascinated by rules and of the concrete world of action, the adolescent becomes a philosopher in the rough. Existential questions can appear as real problems. What are the meaning of life and the origins of the universe? Where do I fit in the grand scheme of things? How does church or synagogue fit into my life? Is "organized religion" irrelevant to what's really important to me or does it provide meaningful answers? While such questioning is important in and of itself, there are deeper developmental struggles that are often addressed by the same questions simultaneously and just out of consciousness. The adolescent's struggle to define a working relationship, which can also be a rejected relationship with his or her God or house of worship, also serves the parallel but crucial function of engaging similar but more emotionally charged problems of a person "fit" in his or her family. The attempt to define this fit can be dealt with as a reassessment of one's relationship to the beliefs and ideas of one's parents and teachers. The rejection of the Jewish God or Christian God, for instance, is often replaced in early adolescence by the concept of "a force" that somehow directs things in the world. Such spirituality maintains an ongoing relationship with a "God experience" while, in a safe way, rejecting parental beliefs. The common example of a renegotiated "God-experience" demands abstract formal thinking as a prerequisite but more fundamentally serves the developmental issues of separation and identity.

Atkison (1997) said that one of the most assiduous challenges of adolescence is discovering who he or she is, the task of what psychologists call "identity formation."

Crain (2000) said that at approximately the same time—10 or 11 years—children's moral

thinking undergoes other shifts. Younger children base their moral judgments more on consequences, whereas adolescents base their moral judgments on intentions.

Muss (1996) defined adolescence as the period of resolving early childhood conflicts and learning to control aggressive and sexual impulses as well as achieving affective detachment from parents, often referred to as the "individuation process." In the mind of Parks (2000) adolescents do many things. They seek work, find work, and change their work. They party and play. They have a yen for travel, from one country to another, from one company to another. Sometimes they protest and make demands, for themselves and on behalf of others. They create art, claim adventure explore and establish long-term projects, serve internships. They also go to prison; deal with major health and other physical and emotional challenges and some die too young.

Schaefer (1993) alluded that some people have described adolescence as an affiliation, others as too wonderful a time of life to waste on the young. Americans may fail to realize that adolescence is not the same in all cultures, where it is a socially defined period; the timing of rites of passage into adulthood can differ from culture to culture.

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NEWSPAPER FROM NIGERIA

The Punch—December 10th, 2004