

Online Eucharistic Celebration and the Spiritual Well-being of the Students of St. Paul University Surigao during COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract - Spirituality plays a big role in the life of many people. Physical attendance to the Eucharist celebration has been hampered during the COVID-19 epidemic, with all the restrictions in social gatherings for health security reasons. Due to this, the people's spiritual nutrition was neglected. Despite the world's crises, the Catholic Church has responded by using various social media platforms to provide spiritual nourishment to the faithful by live-streaming the Eucharistic liturgy. The research patterned its study from John Fisher's Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure (SHALOM) which aims to learn more about the spiritual well-being of the Junior High school students at St. Paul University in Surigao City, and how online Eucharistic celebrations can help them cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Results have shown that with help attained in online Eucharistic Celebration students still exhibit the four domains of spiritual well-being in terms of ideals for spiritual health and lived experiences. Nonetheless, there are still struggles in finding common ground with their ideals and lived experiences for spiritual growth in terms of personal, communal, and environmental relationships. Despite the conflict, the result still shows the significant help of Online Eucharistic Celebration to the spiritual health of the Junior High School students of St. Paul University Surigao.

Keywords: Spirituality, COVID-19 Pandemic, Online Eucharistic Celebration, Spiritual Well-being, Catholic Church.

Introduction

The importance of having a good spiritual life is an indication of healthy spiritual well-being since spirituality is living a life that is inspired, in accordance, and leading to the Holy Spirit (Classen, 2012). Thus, the spiritual well-being of the Catholic faithful is an integral part of being related to God. According to Ellison (1983) spiritual well-being is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community, and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness and further suggests that it arises from an underlying state of spiritual health and is an expression of it. Spiritual well-being is a religious component but not the same thing as spiritual health, spiritual maturity, and a dichotomous variable (Ellison 1983). However, there is difficulty investigating the spirituality of a person because what can only be measured is the phenomenon or the consequences and not spirituality itself (Fisher, 2010).

With the current COVID-19 pandemic the world is facing, the Catholic faithful's spirituality has been greatly affected due to the restricted public gathering, community quarantine, and health concerns. Thus, the Church had taken steps to aid the faithful's spiritual needs with "online-based Church Masses, community prayers, spiritual recollections and retreats, and Eucharistic adoration and processions" (del Castillo, Biana, & Joaquin, 2020). Furthermore, CBCP President Archbishop Romulo Valles, D.D. has encouraged that every diocese must provide spiritual nourishments through the internet, television, or radio while the family, as a basic ecclesial community, must pray together while attending virtual celebrations (Soliman, 2020). Though the faithful are attending celebrations online, this cannot be the "status quo" of the Church because the ideal Church is always the people with the sacraments (Valles, 2020). The ardent desire of the faithful is no less than to be united in the celebration of the Eucharistic because the Church cares for every human individual through the incarnation of Christ. (Rosales, 2020).

The Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres ministry-wide Christian Formation Services in charge come up with the schedule of the ministry-wide online Eucharistic celebrations to adhere to the call of the government on community quarantine. The face-to-face Holy Mass celebrations with the students and employees in St. Paul University are suspended and they are encouraged to tune in to the live-streamed Masses sponsored by the different St. Paul schools.

The students and employees of St. Paul University Surigao are encouraged by the Christian Formation Services Office to attend all the live streamed Eucharistic celebrations. However, based on the students' Holy Mass attendance report only a few students heed the call to attend ministry-wide Holy Mass celebrations.

This study explores the spiritual well-being of the students at St. Paul University Surigao. It tries to describe the ideal spiritual well-being of the students compared to their lived experience and how the online celebrations/live streaming of the Holy Mass helped them in the four domains of Spiritual well-being through the questionnaire developed by John Fisher (2013) called Spiritual Health and Life Orientation Measure (SHALOM).

Framework

Spiritual health is a term that encompasses spiritual well-being and underlines all other aspects of well-being, including emotional, physical, mental, social, and occupational (Pham & del Castillo, 2020). In giving light to the measurement used in this study, the Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure (SHALOM) is used to know if there is harmony or dissonance in the ideal spiritual well-being and the lived experience of the participants where each person becomes the standard of which they are being measured, rather than being compared to other groups (Fisher, 2016). The four domains are personal, where one related to self in finding meaning, purpose, and values in life; communal, where the interpersonal relationship is related to morality, culture, and religion; environment, where they nurture and care for physical and biological, to the point of unity with the environment; and transcendental or God, where how one related to God or something beyond human level (Fisher, 2016).

The Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure (SHALOM) is composed of 20 items divided evenly into four domains to assess the quality of relationships people have with themselves, others, the environment, and God (Fisher, 2014). SHALOM is divided into two measures. On one hand, the Spiritual Health Measures (SHM) measure the personal feelings or lived experiences of the participants. On the other hand, the Life-Orientation Measure (LOM) measures the ideals of the participants regarding the four domains (Fisher, 2010). An additional column is integrated into the SHALOM, aside from ideal and lived experience. The help of the online Eucharistic celebration is students' spiritual health are asked for all the items. This is to know whether the online Mass helped the students maintain their spiritual health during the community quarantine.

Method

The study took the random sampling of students at St. Paul University Surigao as participants. There were 184 Junior High School students.

The research utilized the Spiritual Health and Life Orientation Measure (SHALOM) of Fisher (2011) as the research instrument. All participants were duly informed of the privacy and confidentiality of the results in answering the instrument via google forms. The SHALOM asked the respondents to give two responses to each of the 20 items to show their ideal spiritual health and their lived experience on their spiritual health. The results were analyzed to determine if there is harmony or dissonance in the four domains during the covid crisis: (1) personal spiritual well-being, (2) communal spiritual well-being, (3) environmental spiritual well-being, and (4) transcendental well-being. Participants responded using the 4-point Likert scale where the results were quantitatively analyzed to compare their ideals and lived experience during the quarantine.

An additional column was integrated into the SHALOM, aside from ideal and lived experience. The help of the online Eucharistic celebration in their spiritual health was asked for all the items. The added column also used the same Likert scale. This is to know whether the online Mass helped them maintain their spiritual health during the covid crisis.

In the statistical treatment of the data, paired samples t-test was employed to know if there was any dissonance or harmony between the ideals and lived experience of the participants in terms of spiritual well-being. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was employed to know if there was a significant relationship between the lived experience and the help of online Eucharistic celebration on their spiritual well-being.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Results of the ideals for spiritual health (Life-Orientation Measure) (N=184)

Spiritual Health	Mean	SD	VI	QD
Personal Domain	3.54	0.67	Very High	Always
Communal Domain	3.61	0.61	Very High	Always
Environmental Domain	3.55	0.65	Very High	Always
Transcendental Domain	3.76	0.53	Very High	Always

Legend:

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Qualitative Description
4	3.25-4.00	Very High	Always
3	2.50-3.24	High	Sometimes
2	1.75-2.49	Low	Seldom
1	1.00-1.74	Very Low	Never

Table 1 shows the ideals of the Junior High School students at St. Paul University Surigao on the importance of spiritual well-being. The participants always gave importance to their personal spiritual well-being (M=3.54; SD=0.67). This showed that they always give importance to the sense of identity, self-awareness, joy in life, inner peace, and meaning in life. The participants also always gave importance to communal spiritual well-being (M=3.61; SD=0.61). This showed that they always gave importance to their love of/for other people, forgiveness toward others, trust between individuals, respect for others, and kindness toward other people. Results also showed that always gave importance to the environmental domain of their spiritual well-being (M=3.55; SD=0.65). It showed the importance of connecting with nature, awe at a breathtaking view, oneness with nature, harmony with the environment, and a sense of “magic” in the environment. Lastly, the participants always also gave importance to their transcendental spiritual well-being (M=3.76; SD= 0.53). This showed that they always gave importance to their personal

relationship with God, worship of the creature, oneness with God, peace with God, and their prayer life.

Table 2

Results of the lived experiences for spiritual health (Spiritual Health Measure) (N= 170)

Lived Experiences	Mean	SD	VI	QD
Personal Domain	3.36	0.71	Very High	Always
Communal Domain	3.50	0.63	Very High	Always
Environmental Domain	3.45	0.71	Very High	Always
Transcendental Domain	3.71	0.60	Very High	Always

Legend:

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Qualitative Description
4	3.25-4.00	Very High	Always
3	2.50-3.24	High	Sometimes
2	1.75-2.49	Low	Seldom
1	1.00-1.74	Very Low	Never

Table 2 shows the lived experience of the Junior High School students in their spiritual well-being during the Covid-19 crisis, given the fact that there was a strict implementation of the “no public gatherings” policy of the local and national government. The participants always gave importance to their personal well-being (M= 3.36; SD=0.71). In their communal domain, they always gave importance to their spiritual being (M=3.50; SD=0.63). On the other hand, the participants always also gave importance to the environmental domain of spiritual well-being (M=3.45; SD=0.71). Lastly, the participants always gave importance to their transcendental spiritual well-being (M=3.71; SD=0.60). This means that despite the protocols implemented due to the Covid-19 crisis, the Senior High School students still have a very high level of lived experiences of their spiritual well-being.

Table 3

Results of the help gain from Online Eucharistic celebration to spiritual well-being (N= 170)

Online Eucharistic Celebration	Mean	SD	VI	QD
Personal Domain	3.53	0.62	Very High	Always
Communal Domain	3.61	0.59	Very High	Always
Environmental Domain	3.53	0.67	Very High	Always
Transcendental Domain	3.74	0.54	Very High	Always

Legend:

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Qualitative Description
4	3.25-4.00	Very High	Always
3	2.50-3.24	High	Sometimes
2	1.75-2.49	Low	Seldom
1	1.00-1.74	Very Low	Never

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Table 3 shows the results of the help gained from the online Eucharistic celebration on the spiritual well-being of the Junior High School students at St. Paul University Surigao. The personal domain showed that Eucharistic celebration always helps the spiritual health of the participants ($M=3.53$; $SD=0.62$). In terms of the help to the communal domain, the online Eucharistic celebration always helps the spiritual health of the participants ($M=3.61$; $SD=0.59$). On the other hand, the online Eucharistic celebration always helps the environmental domain of spiritual well-being ($M=3.53$; $SD=0.67$). Lastly, the results showed that the online Eucharistic celebration always helps the transcendental spiritual health of the participants ($M=3.74$; $SD=0.54$).

In summary, the results revealed that the Junior High School students at St. Paul University Surigao always gave importance to their spiritual well-being. This implies that spirituality has a role in their life may it be with their personal (intra-personal), communal (inter-personal), environmental (nature), or transcendental (God) relationships.

Table 4

Results of comparisons between ideals and live experiences for spiritual health

Paired Variables	Mean Difference	t	df	p-value	Description
Ideals Personal and Lived Experiences Personal	0.18	4.74	164	0.000	Significant
Ideals Communal and Lived Experiences Communal	0.11	3.53	164	0.001	Significant
Ideals Environmental and Lived Experiences Environmental	0.10	3.16	164	0.002	Significant
Ideals Transcendental and Lived Experiences Transcendental	0.05	1.85	164	0.066	Not Significant

Note: Significant if $p < 0.05$

Table 4 shows the comparison between the ideals and lived experiences of the Junior High School students of St. Paul University Surigao on their spiritual well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic. The personal domain (mean difference=0.18; p-value= 0.000), communal domain (mean difference= 0.11; p-value= 0.001) and transcendental domain (mean difference= 0.05; p-value= 0.066), the results show that there is a gap between the ideals and lived experiences of the participants in terms of personal, communal, and environmental domains of spiritual well-being. The results manifest that St. Paul University Surigao during the COVID-19 pandemic furnish a community where students can build and deepen their relationship with God, foster an intellectual culture oriented on the quest for Gospel, and to promoting ethical formation.

However, in the transcendental domain, the ideals and lived experiences of the participants showed a mean difference of 0.05 and a p-value of 0.066, implying that there is no significant difference between the ideals and lived experiences in the transcendental. It manifests that despite the efforts of St. Paul University Surigao in nurturing the students in faith and too strong academic

requirements, parents cherish the religious, spiritual, and values-oriented environment that the school provides there are vulnerable students to the impact of multimedia and consumer propaganda's most fashionable concepts and lifestyle that brings serious effects on the motivation of internalizing values to the students.

Table 5

Results of the relationship between lived experience and the effect of Online Eucharistic celebration

Source of Relationship	r-value	p-value	Description
Lived Experiences Personal and Effect of Online Celebration Personal	0.63	0.000	Significant
Lived Experiences Communal and Effect of Online Celebration Communal	0.65	0.000	Significant
Lived Experiences Environmental and Effect of Online Celebration Environmental	0.68	0.000	Significant
Lived Experiences Transcendental and Effect of Online Celebration Transcendental	0.73	0.000	Significant

Note: Significant if $p < 0.05$

Table 5 shows the correlation between the lived experiences and the help gained from the online Eucharistic celebration of the Senior High School students at St. Paul University Surigao. The personal domain showed an r-value of 0.63 and a p-value of 0.000; the communal domain showed an r-value of 0.65 and a p-value of 0.000; the environmental domain showed an r-value of 0.68 and a p-value of 0.000; the transcendental domain showed an r-value of 0.73 and p-value of 0.000. The results implied that there is a positive significant relationship between the lived experiences and the help of online Eucharistic celebration in all domains of the spiritual well-being of the participants. It means that the spirituality of the Junior High School students is nourished not just by being physically present in school liturgical activities but also by being personally willing to attend all the school liturgical activities by any means possible.

The result manifests that during COVID-19, St. Paul University Surigao made effort to help students develop a heart of conversion to the Lord, promote human dignity and care for the common good.

Conclusions

Based on the study conducted on the Junior High school students at St. Paul University Surigao using John Fisher's Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation (SHALOM), the said participants always exhibited the four domains of spiritual well-being in terms of ideals for spiritual health, lived experiences for spiritual health and help realized from online Eucharistic despite the constraints imposed by the city government of Surigao City's health standards in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. However, the results have shown that there is a struggle in finding a common ground between the ideals (Life-Orientation) and lived experiences (Spiritual Health) of the Junior High School students, particularly in their personal (intra-personal),

communal (inter-personal), and environmental (nature) relationships, while their transcendental (God) relationship traced no conflict at all.

Despite the conflict between the ideals for spiritual health and lived experiences for spiritual health simultaneously with the restrictions and protocols of the face-to-face liturgical celebration implemented due to the Covid-19 crisis, the Online Eucharistic Celebration has still greatly impacted the students to nourish their personal, communal, environmental, and transcendental relationship. St. Paul University Surigao during the COVID-19 pandemic furnish a community where students can build and deepen their relationship with God, foster an intellectual culture oriented on the quest for Gospel, and to promoting ethical formation.

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