Community in South Africa: A Pastoral Tool of the Local Catholic Church

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Abstract

This article is about the Catholic community in South Africa and a suitable pastoral tool of the Local Catholic Church. It exposes numerous issues that the community faces, such as a lack of cohesiveness, absenteeism, hostility, and gossip which permeate it. These are human-made problems that harm or impede the progress of the community. They are the result of human disregard for God's original plan. Despite these issues, the article explores and identifies the community as a significant instrument used by the "local Catholic church in South Africa" to enhance pastoral care in the church. The community is preferred over the family since it is larger. There should not be any divisions inside the Church or community body. As members of the body of Christ, either collectively as a congregation or individually, the members should be equally concerned about one another and love one another. Because when one portion of the body suffers, the entire body suffers along with it, and when one component is honored, the entire body rejoices. Each one of the church communities makes up the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:15-17). The article's technique is based upon a critical assessment of the social predicament of the people in South Africa in Catholic parishes. It is essential for all members in any community to serve one another as best they can. The Community must promote the Church's mission to live and communicate the *agape* and values of Christ in the world. It must share in the accountability of the ongoing life and development of the Catholic faith, and must therefore work together with parishioners to deliver support for their endeavors to live as true followers of Jesus Christ.

Keywords: Community, pastoral, local, catholic, church.

Introduction

This article is about the community. Communities in South Africa serve as a pastoral tool in the local Catholic church (hereafter referred to as the church). We may refer to religious communities. Etymologically, the word "*religio*" means that which ties together. When we build up particular communities we are also contributing to the building up of other inclusive communities, such as our neighborhoods and towns. In the Roman Catholic Church, religious communities are made up of groups of men or women who lead a communal life and swear to uphold the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, commonly known as the evangelical counsels. Religious

communities typically uphold a way of life that emphasizes modesty and giving-up worldly possessions and pleasures. The pursuit of Christian perfection and God-contemplation have always been the goals of such a life (theologically defined as 'perfect love'). The church must always be welcoming and vibrant in its approach because this helps to strengthen the community, and it also reaffirms what is important. There must be a reaching out to those who share the same Catholic values, so that a body of Christ is created by extending friendship to strangers and those in need.

Though monastic communities have frequently been important economic and cultural hubs, religious life has also been perceived as a flight from the outside world (Religious Community, 2022). Additionally, individuals like Langford connect the notion of some communities with pastors who 'don't get along with their families'. For Langford, a church setting like this is historical and an "inadequate model" since it creates "super-pastors" who are constantly busy, fearful of making mistakes, and available to everyone who needs their assistance (Langford, 1998:5-8). The approach consequently leaves little to no room for family care and similar issues. Because it does not imply that Protestant churches do not support preachers starting families, the argument is insufficient to elicit a response from the neighborhood or community Catholic church in South Africa. Contrarily, non-Catholic evangelical churches require that a male pastor be married and raise a family.

The term "church communities" is often used to refer to various laity groupings (Butcher, 2002). These people often take part in the diverse roles of Christ the King, Priest, Prophet, and so on. To enable the laity to actively participate in their own lives and in the work of the church, it is important to reflect upon the early Christian community's influence, as documented in the Acts of the Apostles. In Acts it says:

> [Baptized in] "the early Christian community … remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers. … The Apostles made a deep impression on everyone. The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed. They went as a body to the temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of reading; they shared their good gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved" (Acts 2:42-47)

This quotation also referred to many outstations, or chapels, that were part of a certain parish in South Africa, according to the local Catholic church. Communities and churches are both used to refer to these local churches that have been merged to form a parish. In South Africa, they are most frequently referred to as *"kereke ya Roma"* (in Northern Sotho, but translated as Roman Catholic church). Most of them struggle with liturgical issues which results from incomplete liturgical preparation for a successful celebration of the holy mass, which includes inter alia readings, hymns, and church decoration. Included as being problematic are the church's poor upkeep and the laity's underwhelming attendance at the Holy Eucharistic liturgy which is the most essential part of keeping the faith (Nicolaides, 2021).

As a result, young people do not participate as much in liturgical festivities, and the old are left to run the church without much needed assistance. The reading and the current day's songs don't go together very well. Included as problematic is the conflict of interest brought by playing multiple

songs by various artists at once. A visitor might mistakenly believe that the liturgical celebrations are theater in such circumstances, totally missing out on the deep spirituality that is to be engendered. Considering that Sunday liturgies are frequently prepared on the day of celebration in many Christian communities, cleaning of a church is challenging. In many locations, it is the pastors who ultimately get to carry out part of the essential tasks. For instance, setting up the altar and setting out the wine and requirements for holy mass are the preserve of a priest and he should focus on them.

The problems, which are brought on by people, impede or block progress in the community and these include unrest, absenteeism from church and malicious rumours which are the outcome of mankind rejecting God's original intention. Despite these issues, a pamphlet serving as a guide analyzes and identifies the community as a vital tool used by the "local catholic church in South Africa" to enhance pastoral care in the church. The community is preferred over the family because of its size. A critical assessment of the socio-economic circumstances of the people in South Africa has been used in this article. The central question is: how can the concept of community, as viewed through the pastoral lens of the local Catholic church, be of any assistance to Christians in South Africa? Further questions considered include   what is the community's situation in South Africa? What is causing the situation to arise? How can problematic issues be pastorally resolved? And finally whose task is it to resolve them?

The main purpose of this brief study is thus to study and describe the community of the local Catholic church in South Africa from a pastoral standpoint. Furthermore, the goal is to describe the significance of a community in the South African Catholic church. This will be accomplished by revealing some of the barriers to community development and progress, particularly in the South African Catholic Church, defining the essential term - community, and highlighting people as the principal causes of community setbacks (Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2013). The objective is to at least partly provide a restoration of life to adhere to God's original plan- thus an alternate solution to the dilemma through conversation and pastoral care is required. An argument for a greater understanding of church community life in the context of South Africa is included. This article is constrained by its limited context, focus, and language. As a result, non-South Africans, who do not speak or read English, may feel abandoned. "Non-Christians" (Paul VI's *Nostra Aetate,* 1965a), particularly those who do not profess the Catholic faith, might readily accuse the authors of bias by leaving them out. Nonetheless, the document is focused on creating a community in which everyone can feel at ease. This article could well be applicable to everyone who is Christian in a community. The target audience for this material is Christians, and particularly Catholics. Other religious denominations and groups are secondary, but may have similar issues to ponder.

Main concept

This work was not generated by a single concept, but rather by a combination of concepts. The most crucial is a sense of belonging. The English term "community" is derived from the Old French word "*comuneté*" (Modern French: *communauté*), which is derived from the Latin "*communitas*" ("Community" Oxford Dictionary, 2014). That is the "public spirit" (from the Latin *communis*, which means "common"). It is the singular community, which refers to a group of individuals who live in one location. The term "community" refers to "society." It also refers to "a community of people who share a common religion, race, or profession: the scientific community." It also means "sharing common views or interests" (Soanes, 2008:173). This concept gives rise to community

care, which is invariably considered to be long-term care. For example, caring for the mentally ill, the aged, and the crippled in the community of a church rather than in hospitals or institutions.

A community is a collection of people who share "a specific quality." A community is thus a social unit that shares characteristics such as location, norms, religion, values, practices, or identity. Through communication platforms, "communities" (Paul VI's *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 1965b: no.10) people can share a sense of location in each geographical area or even in a virtual space. Durable good relationships that transcend beyond immediate genealogical links define a feeling of community, which is crucial to their identity, practice, and positions in social institutions such as family, home, job, government, society, or humanity at large (James et al. 2012:14). Although smaller than a nuclear family (father, mother, and children), communities are frequently rather small. They are sometimes referred to as "smaller faith communities" in the church (Pickett, 2007:79). The issue with this community is that it might only have a pastor or priest, a parish administrator, or a parish life coordinator as professional staff members.

A community is a group or network of people who are related (objectively) to each other by relatively enduring social ties that go beyond immediate genealogical ties and who mutually define that relationship (subjectively) as fundamental to their social identity and social behavior. Although communities are typically modest in comparison to personal social ties, the term "community" can also apply to huge group affiliations such as national communities, international communities, and virtual communities (James, 2006:1). Human communities may have a common aim, beliefs, resources, interests, needs, and hazards, which affects the people's identities and degree of cohesion (Melih, 2011:1).

Local Catholic viewpoint

In the context of the South African local Catholic church, the community also extends to religious institutions such as catholic established chapels, which can also be called churches. These are places of public worship, and serve for the administration of sacraments. They additionally serve as places of pastoral care for the family members in that locality. These are the family members, for example, the parents, children, the youth, the elderly, the sick, parents, and children. They also serve as places of consolation, encouragement, and comfort for the bereaved (orphans, widows/widowers, mourners) in funeral services.

The definition is close to a semantic understanding of community, where the concept of "community" often has a positive connotation, exploited rhetorically by populist politicians and by advertisers (Alexander, 1968:39) to promote feelings and associations of mutual well-being, happiness, and togetherness (Everingham, 2003:21). Although a community may be small in the sense of chapels, it generally has a universal character. It is an international community. It is a voluntary residential community designed from the start to have a high degree of social cohesion and teamwork (Shenker,1986). The members hold a common social, political, and religious or spiritual vision (Butcher, 2002). They follow an alternative lifestyle and experiments or communal experiments. The multitude of intentional communities includes collective households, cohousing communities, co-living, ecovillages, monasteries, survivalist retreats, and housing cooperatives (Rubin, 2020:509-532).

Analyzing the South African social situation

Community is clearly a very troublesome word, having a wide range of meanings and connotations. It is particularly useful, for the local Catholic church, as a rhetorical device because of its democratic and populist connotations, being associated with 'the people, as distinct from 'the government or civil society. It is an influence on the relationship between the church and the government or civil society as indicated in the Vatican II document.

The local South African Catholic Church is not associated with any political groups in society because of its position and expertise. In their respective fields, the political community and the church are autonomous and apart from one another. Despite having different titles, both are committed to the personal vocation of a man or woman. Otherwise, if both institutions practice better cooperation in accordance with the local and current realities, their service will improve the welfare of all more effectively because the individual's horizons are constrained by both the integrity of his or her eternal destiny and the temporal order. Due to the local Catholic church's foundation in the Redeemer's love, it helps to extend justice and mercy to countries like Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and other places. It respects and promotes the political freedom and responsibility of the populace through its teaching and the witness of its people.

It never puts its faith in the privileges that the civil government grants it. This is done to always ensure that the church must communicate the faith to fulfill its mission among men and women without impediment, and to render moral judgment in matters of politics whenever the basic rights of man and woman demand it. Nevertheless, in all of these, the church, considering the difference in times and circumstances, employs methods that are consistent with the Gospel and the well-being of all men and women. (Paul VI's Gaudium et Spes, 1965c: no.76). Because of God's universal grace, Catholicism has attractive and similar ideas and practices in comparison to what South African culture offers. These values have previously been respected and valued. It was a society that valued the elderly. This indicates that children were raised with a strong sense of community and were taught how to be kind and help those in need. Today this situation has changed to one of degradation.

It would be simple to claim that the local Catholic Church in South Africa had a biological or natural concept of the church body, because it is made up of all the organisms that coexist in a specific environment and influence one another in different ways. As a result, a community resembles a forest, where the trees (community members) provide food, shelter, and shade for various animals, while the undergrowth plants, numerous animals that eat various plant species as well as one another, and soil bacteria and fungi make up the biological community. The community is strongly tied to its environment since these species support one another and absorb resources from the tree and from one other (University of Chicago, 1974:1027). Although many South Africans, especially those who identify as Catholics, do not adhere to it because of how things are now in South Africa, it is still a good principle to observe.

Changed situation

There is a lot of abuse and false information in the Christian communities, however with time, and as in any positive human relationship, things start to deteriorate (SACBC, 2022:21ff).

A child is not something that one owns but is instead viewed as a gift in the Catholic church. Marriage's greatest gift is for a human being to be created out of love. It's possible that a child shouldn't be viewed as property, which is where an asserted right to a child would lead. According to the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith (CDF), 1987: no. 8, only the child has legitimate rights in this regard: the right to be the unique act of his parents' conjugal love and the right to be acknowledged as a person from the moment of his creation" (CDF, 1987). When two partners, at least one of whom is married to the other partner, engage in sexual activity, it is considered adultery since Jesus forbids even adultery motivated by desire (Matthew, 5:27-28). People like St. Basil are convinced not to form a new union after divorce, even if it is sanctioned by civil law, which heightens the gravity of the split and places the remarried spouse in a position of open and ongoing adultery: "If a husband, separated from his wife, approaches another woman, he is an adulterer because he makes that woman commit adultery; and the woman who lives with him is an adulteress because she has drawn another husband to herself" (Basil, Moralia 73, 1:PG 31, 849-852, CCC, 2384). Nicolaides (2015) states:

> Marriage is one of the sacraments in which it is clear that one cannot separate human reality and sacramental reality. In the Mystery of Marriage, God the Holy Spirit by His grace unites two people, man and woman, for the special purpose of replenishing the Church of God according to His commandment (Genesis 9:1). This Holy Mystery was ratified by Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:5-6). He sanctified the spiritual and physical bond of marriage through His presence at the marriage in Cana of Galilee (John, 2:1). The Apostle Paul also declared to us that marriage is a great mystery (Ephesians, 5:32).

These are some of the challenges the local South African Christian community is currently facing. Living communally is now merely one of the cultural tenets. It is now one of the interactional principles that are misused. This has an impact on every aspect of human existence, including "marriage and family" connections. Compared to sacramental marriage, traditional marriage consumes an excessive amount of financial resources; marriage and wedding costs have increased, thus depleting needed resources for normal family life. These crimes not only hurt non-believers, but they also have a grave impact on the Catholic Church. because they are rapidly becoming the norm among many Christians.

Culturally, when one looks at South Africans, one cannot help but notice that they are community beings; only those who choose to live alone do so. People reside in neighborhoods. Both happiness and grief are shared. Their "funeral" is their neighbor's funeral. So, their "wedding" is their neighbors' wedding. Together, they cry, rejoice, struggle, and succeed. It is understandable why proverbs like "it takes a community to raise a child" exist. Their sense of self and delight stems from their local communities. Individualism is discouraged. Many Christian communities do not look to God first for their own success in life, including the celebration of their children's birthdays and happy relationships with their families both inside and outside of the church.

 As a result, as children get older, the community is less inclined to help their parents raise them. It doesn't bother the rest of the neighborhood, whether when students graduate from school, their accomplishments are celebrated at home or in church during the Eucharistic celebration. The sacrament of God in society is not what counts most when they are getting married; it is "their wedding." Many parents and kids who are struggling in life are not given advice on how to help develop a happy household.

Catalysts of evacuation

Because they are not acknowledged and welcomed by the congregation, visitors in certain church communities don't feel at home. Visitors are only acknowledged and welcomed when they need sacraments and have the necessary funds. When a guest presents an introduction letter from his or her home church, the receiving community occasionally either does not answer, or does not indicate whether the visitor has been accepted. It takes a very long time for the receiving party to answer. This demonstrates a weak communication network between communities. Different Christian community members are treated differently and this is not a suitable approach. As is frequently demonstrated by lay church committees. As a result, there is a sense of marginalization in the church and low involvement in most church activities. Most notably, worshippers observe only one person actively participating in the celebration of Holy Mass. Others are being ignored as if they are mere spectators. Readings and singing during church services can bring this fact to light, for example, every Sunday, only one individual takes all three readings. Every Sunday, one person sings throughout the liturgical event, thus excluding all the lovely young voices. The Gospel of Life lies at the core of Jesus' teaching, which they are not even aware of. It is to be taught with fearless fidelity as "God new to the people of every age and culture," as it is lovingly accepted day after day by the church (John Paul II, 1995:3).

It can often be difficult for the lower church officials to make plans for the parish's sacrament administration. The Christians are therefore unaware of the date of the upcoming baptisms or confessions. Some pastors may neglect to consider some of the issues affecting communities. They limit themselves to working solely through church committees, which might run into issues with other Christians. As a result, the other regular Christians are prevented from discussing the difficult issues in their lives with their pastors. Thus they can easily feel as though the pastor and the neighborhood have abandoned them. Such a church member may, in their dissatisfaction, choose to leave the church and join another denomination or even another religion. He or she might even suspect that the pastor and the church committee are gossiping about the members of the congregation rather than discussing the problems that the church community is facing. The pastors are not supposed to behave in such a fashion. Their sole responsibility is to address matters that concern the church, treating each Christian with the same respect and dignity as one created in the image of God.

The aforesaid demonstrates how many Christians who are not clergy are unable to support the priests who serve as their pastors. A complete opposite exists of what is expected, namely that "the laity should develop the habit of working in the parish in close union with their priests" (Leo XII, 1894:424-425). In many church groups, the wealthy Christians help the wealthy while ignoring the impoverished Christian families- thus a rich group works with each other and ignores the poor. This is exposed by the conduct of some South African Christian marriages and funerals: most Catholics, like Christians of other faiths, prefer rich families' funeral ceremonies as opposed to those of poor people. It indicates that many Christians in South Africa do not live lives that are deeply rooted in real life and the core teaching of Jesus Christ to us to love one another.

Jesus' teaching (Luke 16:19-31)

> There was a rich man… At the gate there lay a poor man called Lazarus.
> Covered with sores, 'who longed to fill himself with the scraps that fell from
> the rich man's table. Dogs even came and licked his sores. Now the poor
> man died and was carried away by the angels to the bosom of Abraham'

the rich man also died and was buried. 'In his torment in Hades', he looked up and saw Abraham long way off with Lazarus in his bosom. So, he cried out, 'Father Abraham, pity me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames. 'My son, Abraham replied 'remember that during your life good things came our way, just as bad things came the way of Lazarus. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony. But that is not all: between us and you, a great gulf has been fixed, to stop anyone, if he wanted to cross from our side to yours, and to stop any crossing from your side to ours (Luke 16:19-26).

In fictional Biblical interpretation, the above quotation is intended to compel the parabolic rich man to implore Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's home to warn his five brothers not to visit the place of suffering where he is. Abraham, however, emphasized to him that they must pay attention to Moses and the other prophets. Because even if someone rises from the dead to convince them, they won't be convinced if they don't listen to Moses or the prophets (Luke 16:27-30). As was his habit, Jesus used parables to teach. One of these, found only in the gospel of Luke, is the above parable. It is filled with several theological and spiritual tenets that have grown to be the foundations of the Jesus Gospel. Our Lord told this made-up tale to underline the duty it is incumbent upon each of us to look after our moral and spiritual well-being in the eyes of God. This story is meant to stimulate our attention rather than serve as a comprehensive morality lesson or an illustration of the complexities of the afterlife. It is a story about a competent person who chose to do wrong despite obvious good being in front of him or her. After being denounced, the person is informed that each of us has a moral obligation to live righteously before God and people and has been giving us everything we need to do so, excuses included. This parable aims to emphasize personal accountability; This is what our priests require to be effective.

Jesus epitomizes the personal neglect of the extremely wealthy, lived-in excesses rich man (Luke 16:19). Even though he could have spared some wealth without being personally impacted, decided to ignore the suffering of his neighbor, who was not only dispossessed but also hungry and in misery, outside his door (Luke 16:20-21). The carelessness was the result of a man's self-indulgent insensibility as one who did not care about anyone, not even about someone who was suffering in front of him. The state of all careless persons, who are only concerned with themselves when committing crimes, is represented by this degree of callousness. Furthermore, it should be noted that this careless conduct had nothing to do with criminal activity. The rich man was living large and apparently not hurting anyone, but he was careless enough to show no mercy and neglect in omission rather than action by refusing to do what any reasonable person would have done in his shoes: assist a fellow human being in need, especially when that person was right next to him. Because of the intricacy of some of the difficult tasks affecting the community, dialogue is required to help find solutions and especially in a community of faith.

Discussion

The term "community" encompasses more than just people. To create a community, many families (both nuclear and extended families) converge there. But God is also a part of the community's design. Theologians can now refer to the Triune God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—because of this. One God, three personalities. The community of saints ("The communion of saints") was a topic that the church fathers might discuss (The Roman Missal, 2011:505). Christians sometimes refer to Christian organizations of various kinds as the community of churches. The community of youngsters, professionals/experts, and so on can be

described as consisting of regular people and it is both communal and theological or pastoral in orientation.

Pastoral viewpoint

It is important to note that this does not mean that other sections of the essay are not pastoral in nature. They are analyses and descriptions of family pastoral care. But the point of this is to clarify some of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic church, which Christians hold in high regard. This outlines the procedures both followed when performing pastoral duties. Additionally, Christ is the most wonderful pastor and the ideal pastoral caregiver. He was born and nurtured by his mother Mary and her husband St. Joseph in a household that was both fully and partially a part of the community. He is always aware of a variety of issues that affect both family and community life. Because a healthy human family is the foundation of a healthy community, the family role is critical. "The domestic Church" is the "family." A setting where children can learn sound Christian principles. As a result, children enrich their parents' lives. It is a facility for enhancing human potential (SACBC, 2013:11; Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes* - GS 1965c:52). The love of parents and children for one another, for God, for the Church, for other people, and for all of God's creation develops within the family. The family is both "the domestic sanctuary of the Church" and "the basic vital cell of society" (Paul VI *Apostolicam Actuotitatem* – AA, 1965:11). It is a small community that encourages many generations to interact and support one another as they grow intelligently. Families also play a role in that they tend to balance people's rights with other social obligations.

The family, which represents a "fundamental social group in society typically consisting of one or two parents and their children," is close to the community. It is made up of "two or more people who share goals and values. Both have commitments to one another, and typically reside in the same dwelling place. The Family Communication Sourcebook section on "families within the bounds of legal (such as marriage, adoption) or biological (parent/child, grandparent) borders" is available here (2006:83). 'Family' is a collection of people who have a common lineage and origin, as opposed to just a "household under one roof," for the benefit of the entire society as well as the community (Feigelman, 1991:227). Concepts like "pastoral care," "the Church," and "nation-building" are consistent with this meaning of "family." As a result, the family can today be seen as a universal social institution that is essential for the well of the community/society (Feigelman, 1991:227).

Eternal family/community

The eternal family of God, also known as the Triune Godhead (Nicolaides, 2010; 2021), is represented by a human family as an analogy. They are three different individuals who together make up the one God, as was already stated. Everything is based on Him or Her, including the human family and the community (John Paul II revised, 2017:63, CCC, 239). In addressing a family in relation to a community, the language of faith refers to God as the Father, the Creator of all things, and the Supreme Power. The community of the Triune Godhead simultaneously becomes the family and community of the Triune Godhead. God is good and loves all His children. Calling God "Father" denotes that creation and creator are intimately connected as part of His immanence. This is illustrated by the metaphor of motherhood, which also illustrates God's compassionate paternal love (Isaiah 66:13; Psalm 131:2). The language of faith draws us into the human realities of parents. They can be thought of as God's first human representatives.

Divine versus humanity

Because they have the potential to damage, both parents' reputations illustrate their vulnerability as parents. God transcends human gender roles. He is not a man or a woman; He is God. even if He is their guide and benchmark (Psalms 27:10; Ephesians 3:14; Isaiah 49:15) of every family, whether spiritual or natural (Ephesians 3:15). He is superior to human parents in every way. Nobody can be a parent or a mother like God. Nonetheless, the human family continues to serve as the cornerstone of the church community despite these restrictions. Laity members of the church communities can contribute to and support them. Without them, it won't be enough to say that the church is a community. Aquinas (1948) states that the main aim of a Christian community is to commune with God and restore believers to wholeness.

Church as a community

This section briefly focuses on two topics: tiny Christian communities and the "Laity," or laypeople, who are usually referred to in the church (AA, 1). They are alternatives to some of the issues that Christian communities are dealing with.

Small Christian Communities

Any Christian Community serves numerous functions such as giving meaning and purpose to life, building deeper social unity, being an active agent of social control of behavior, promoting physical and psychological well-being, and also in motivating believers to strive for positive social changes that add value to all in society (Emerson et al., 2011).

The local church might employ this principle as an alternate method to overcome the problem of the church community in South Africa, contrary to the common missionary saying that indigenous Africans must be missionaries to save their indigenous Africans. The issue this paper addressed was one of 'community', and it needed to be resolved by introducing a community—the "Small Christian Communities," or SCCs. Even though it is a novel approach to church life and has not yet been adopted by many Catholic chapels, parishes, or dioceses in our nation (South Africa), it may be a viable alternative. In the *Instrumentum Laboris,* there are 12 references to SCCs; Joseph Healey cites No. 90 under "Church: Sacrament of Reconciliation." It reads: "In virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit, some ecclesial communities bear witness to their faith in Christ by having the courage to take initiatives for reconciliation among Small Christian Communities, separated couples, families in conflict and divided village communities" (Healy, 2009:3). When people have the chance to spend time in faith communities with others in the same faith, they have greater life satisfaction (Lim, & Putnam, 2010).

It is evidence that SCCs function as an alternate approach in various situations, particularly in times of church community crises. We need hope and rejuvenation in our struggling church communities, parishes, and dioceses, for instance, given the crises of abuses of various types, such as sexual misbehavior, the abrupt absence of young people from church-related activities, and the decline in priestly and monastic vocations. SCCs are an essential tool for our institutional church's regeneration and change. According to Healy and Hinton (2005), SCC is a method for creating a parish community in the diocese. It is an additional means of ensuring that members of the church community assume the multiple roles of Christ, priest, prophet, and king.

The Laity

The laity participates actively in the work and life of the church. The apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to achieve its full effect without their acts inside the church community because they are so essential to it. Women have historically followed in men's footsteps except for priesthood. In the past, there were people following in the footsteps of men and women who helped Paul spread the gospel (Acts 18:18-26; Romans 16:3). They are fed by their active participation in the liturgical life of their community. This often includes in giving all they have to the community's missionary endeavors. Some of the men who are drawn to the church but their wives and families may well live very far away. The women who live far may fervently advocate for the spread of the Bible through catechetical instruction. Additionally, with their knowledgeable assistance, they can increase the effectiveness of both the management of the church's resources and the critically important notion of taking care of souls.

Anyparish must as far as possible be set up as a superb example of community apostleship if it wants to advance the church community in general. All the human diversity presently there must be gathered into one body. This includes integrating them into the church's global nature (Pius X, 1905:65-67; Pius II, 1953:149-454; John XXIII, 1962:656-660). To bring individuals with their own difficulties and global challenges, the laity must work with priests on an ongoing basis. This involves debating issues relating to every man's or woman's salvation to be investigated and resolved as a group. It must be done in accordance with their diverse range of skills. The laity should participate in all missionary and apostolic endeavors of their ecclesial family at every opportunity to do so. The laity must learn to comprehend their local diocese, of which the parish serves as a kind of cell, on a deeper level towards an enhanced and positive relationship flourishing. The communal practice of religion in a Church house of worship brings people together and permits them to interact with one another and communicate better. This helps to reinforce social unity and creates greater social stability. Many studies show that attending services and meeting with others in a Church Community brings more happiness and life satisfaction (Koenig et al., 2012).

When their bishop invites them to participate in diocese-wide activities, they must always be willing and ready to do so. The laity can seek to increase their cooperation across parochial, diocesan, national, and international lines to fulfill the needs of both urban and rural areas (Pius XII, 1951:437-443; 14(1952-1953:5-10, 1953 March 27; 15(1953-1954:27-35); 1954 February 28: 585-590). The importance of the Laity's participation in the church body is growing all the time. No area of society can any longer remain isolated from others due to the daily increase in population movement, reciprocal relationships, and communication tools. Therefore, it is crucial that the laity and the clergy take their responsibilities towards the needs of God's people seriously. They can accomplish this by taking on missionary work as their own and by providing financial, material, or even personal support to those in dire need. Christians have a responsibility and an honor to give back to God a portion of the blessings they receive from Him through His loving Grace..

Conclusion

This story spurs discussion about the church's community. In contrast to what the church teaches and expects, which emphasizes caring for brothers and sisters regardless of their relationships with us, it posed several difficult situations. Keeping in mind the value of maintaining relationships with one another and concentrating on creating a loving community via both words and deeds.

The community ought to be a cohesive group of people with no rifts among them. They need to abide by God's design for fellowship between humanity and Christ. They should be patient with everyone, forewarn the lazy and disruptive, inspire the discouraged, assist the frail, and encourage the downtrodden. Many family members have never respected it despite the local South African church's best efforts to pull the community closer to the church. If any of them harbors a grudge against someone, they do this by never forgiving one another and never bearing with one another. Neglect to bear one another's burdens to uphold the commandment of Christ is contrary to God's will. Many people often avoid sharing their own areas of vulnerability with one another and instead focus on healing each other. In this regard there is a great need for more active involvement of the ministers including priests, sisters, brothers and seminarians in the total life of a Christian Community (Healey, 2012).

It is a disregard for the wisdom contained in the book of Proverbs, which states that a brother is born for suffering and that a friend is someone you can always count on (Proverbs 17:17). As 'iron sharpens iron', one person sharpens another (Proverbs 27:17). In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul discussed how Christ is made up of numerous parts that all work together to form one body, and that each component is a part of the others (Romans 12:5). Before Christ's simple demands to love one another and lay down one's life for friends, our Christian community church feels weak (John 15:12–13). Even though some continue to do so frequently, many people quit gathering in groups. No or infrequent support from one another is also required as you see the day approaching (Hebrews 10:25). In these circumstances, the document views the members of the local church as the body of Christ. There is therefore always a need to stress the reflection on the Word of God as the soul of any Christian Community (Omolo, 2006; Healey, 2012). A Christin Community performs the critical function of providing strong social solidarity in a society.

It implies there shouldn't be any divisions inside that body. As members of the body of Christ, either collectively as a congregation or individually, the members should be equally concerned about one another. Because when one portion of the body suffers, the entire body suffers along with it, and when one component is honored, the entire body rejoices. Each one of the church communities makes up the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:15-17). Above all, the members of the church family must have a deep love for one another, since love (agape) is the greatest atonement. They must be cordial towards one another and refrain from complaining at every opportunity. As faithful stewards of God's grace in all its manifestations, every one of them should use whatever gift they have been given to serve others well. Any speaker should convey their remarks as if they were God's own. Anyone who helps should do so lovingly with the power that God supplies so that, through Jesus Christ, God may be glorified in everything (1 Peter 4:8-11).

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