

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Finding God, Finding Me: Catholic Moral Development
And Catholic High School Service-Learning

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Department of Education

School of Arts and Sciences

Of The Catholic University of America

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

©

Copyright

All Rights Reserved

By

Cristiana Ritchie-Carter

Washington, D.C.

2012

Finding God; Finding Me: Catholic Moral Development and Catholic High School
Service Learning.

Cristiana Ritchie-Carter, Doctor of Philosophy, 2011

Dissertation Director: Professor, Merylynn Schuttloffel, Ph.D
Catholic Educational Leadership

The primary goals of my study were: 1) to provide an understanding of the processes through which the socio-cultural tools provided by Catholic high-school service-learning pedagogy, mediate moral action. 2) to explore the experiences of Catholic service-learner exemplars and the processes, tools, language and symbols used to describe their experiences and subsequent moral action, and 3) to seek the possible connections between moral action and religious identity as it develops within a particular socio-cultural context.

This study is qualitative and uses a multiple-case study design. I choose this methodology as it provides rich descriptions and deeply explores the phenomenon of continued moral action of young adults after participation in Catholic high school service-learning.

The findings of my study determined that Catholic high school service-learning programs are a means for forming young persons who are not only committed to service, but are committed to living their faith in a way that is consistent with their moral identity. Furthermore, these young people demonstrate a distinctly Catholic moral identity that is consistent with the Catholic socio-cultural context of their high school programs.

Implications for practice are presented.

This dissertation by Cristiana Ritchie-Carter fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Catholic Educational Leadership by Merylann Schuttloffel, Ph.D., as Director, and by Rona Frederick, Ph.D and Joan Thompson, Ph. D as Readers

(Merylann Schuttloffel, Ph. D) Director

(Rona Frederick, Ph. D) Reader

(Joan Thompson, Ph. D) Reader

Dedication Page

This dissertation is dedicated to my son, Zachary Quinton Carter, to my six nephews and Zachary's best friend Cameron Goforth. These fine young men, especially Zachary, taught me to seek God in all things, and to see the good in the world.

Table of Contents

Chapter One-Introduction	
Catholic Moral Development	2
Purpose of the Study	5
Research Questions	6
Conceptual Framework	7
Theoretical Framework	8
Definition of Terms	12
Limitations	18
Contributions	18
Chapter Two-Review of the Literature	
Background of the Study	20
Academic Service-Learning	21
Catholic Service-Learning	21
Socio-Cultural Context and Moral Action	23
Moral and Religious Development Research	28
Catholic Service-Learning	31
Chapter Three - Methodology	
Introduction	36
The Researcher	36
Research Questions	40
Context of the Study	45
Participant Selection	47
Collection Methods	49
Interview Protocols with Nominators	50
Document Analysis	54
Exemplar Interviews	54
Data Storage and Retrieval Strategies	56
Data Analysis Procedures	57
Validity	59
Internal Validity	60
External Validity	62
Summary	63
Chapter Four-Findings	
Introduction	64
Vignette Overviews	64
Vignette One – Anna	
Background	67

Table of Contents

Vignette One – Anna cont.	67
Service Experiences	70
Pivotal Relations Through Service	77
Identity: Finding God: Finding Me	83
Vignette Two – Mia	
Background	101
Service Experiences	104
Pivotal Relationships Through Service	118
Identity: Finding God: Finding Me	124
Vignette Three – Rebecca	
Background	135
Service Experiences	140
Pivotal Relationships Through Service	149
Identity: Finding God: Finding Me	156
Vignette Three – Aaron	
Background	162
Service Experiences	164
Pivotal Relationships Through Service	174
Identity: Finding God: Finding Me	179
Chapter Five – Discussion and Conclusion	191
Summary of Findings	193
Major Themes	
Meaningful Service a Key to Understanding the Self	204
Immersion Experiences: A Place to Grow	205
Support Structures that Lead to Growth	206
Reflection	210
Key Relationships	212
Service as a Path to Vocation	217
Love: The Well Spring of the Spirituality	
Of Moral Action	218
Implications for Practice	222
Components of Effective Service-Learning Programs	226
Areas for Further Research	228
Researcher Reflections	229
Conclusion	231
Appendices	
Appendix A – Colby and Damon Permission	232
Appendix B – Interview Protocol for Nominators	233
Appendix C – Interview Protocol for Exemplars	234
Bibliography	236

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my dear family for their relentless support. I especially thank my husband, Larry, for all the transcribing, patience and summers without a wife. Thank you for all of those hours of hearing me talk about “my dissertation”. Mom and Dad, thank you for helping me see the value of perseverance. Dad, you inspired me to do this, and I am grateful.

Also, I wish to express my gratitude to my mentor and head cheerleader, Sr. Catherine Powers, CND who saw something in me, and gave me the opportunity and courage to go forward. Words cannot adequately express my appreciation for your confidence in me and for your wisdom.

Next, thank you Archbishop Eusbius Beltran, for your kindness and for the gift of a wonderful Catholic education.

Last but not least, thank you to my wonderful professors and dear friends at the Catholic University of America. I am so grateful to be a member of the illustrious Cohort One and for the summers filled with a few challenges, but mostly learning and great joy.

Dr. Mimi Schuttloffel, Dr. Len DeFiore, Dr. John Convey, Dr. Rona Frederick and everyone who played a role in this process, please know that I am grateful for you and for the program at the Catholic University of America. Catholic schools matter, and your passion and dedication keep us going. I am truly humbled by the gifts God has given me.

Catholic Service-Learning and Catholic Moral Development

Chapter One

Introduction

Catholic education has a specific mission that is not only grounded in Scripture, the lives of the Saints, Church doctrine and tradition, but also centered upon the development and formation of a specific kind of person, a Christian person. Catholic educational leaders develop programs, curricula, and experiences in which students are asked to know Catholic doctrine, the metaphorical “head knowledge”. Also they are to know and live the “heart knowledge”; God’s presence and abiding love through liturgy, prayer, theological reflection and service (Schutloffel, 1999). Catholic education occurs within a particular socio-cultural context, which means it is framed by a distinctly Catholic culture and history, with its own language and symbols. This context is intended to foster the growth of not only the individual but also the Catholic community and the entire human family. The integration of head knowledge, theology and doctrine, with the heart, spirituality and faith; inspires and moves persons to serve others. (Schutloffel, 1999; Groome, 2003). Consequently, Catholic education is dedicated to forming persons who are to labor and serve out of concern for others. Such care for others is grounded in an understanding of the Gospel message that is clearly articulated in Church documents (National Conference Of Bishops, 1972; Congregation For Catholic Education, 1988; United States Catholic Conference Of Bishops, 1998; United States Catholic Conference Of Bishops. 2000).

Catholic Moral Identity Development

How such a person, a Catholic person who is committed to service to others, is formed is less understood. Before the words found in the Gospel and echoed by the Bishops can be internalized and assimilated into one's identity, they must first be brought to life. The words must not only be heard, but also experienced. Service-learning is a pedagogy used by Catholic schools to accomplish these goals. Although some studies found service-learning to be a means to foster identity development, (Hart & Fegley, 1995; Hart, Yates, Fegley, and Wilson, 1995; Youniss and Yates, 1997) no studies have explored the Catholic socio-cultural context and its possible role in the formation of moral and religious identity. The Catholic socio-cultural context and its integration into the moral and religious understanding of Catholic service-learner exemplars is the focus of this study.

In spite of the contextual nature of service-learning, the constructivist theories of Lev Vygotsky, are often absent from service-learning literature. Vygotsky viewed the development of persons through what James Wertsch, (1991), a Vygotskian scholar, termed the "socio-cultural" lens. Wertsch, in translating Vygotsky's work, defines socio-cultural as the historical, cultural and social settings that frame human development. These contexts undergird the ways in which persons learn and come to understand their identity (Wertsch, 1991, p. 16). Therefore, human action is impacted by experiences, relationships, history, language, etc. (Vygotsky, 1962; Meshcheryakov, 2007; Wertsch, 1991). According to Vygotsky, our existence within a particular time and place, and our

relationships with other persons, parents, teachers, peers and others influence our development (Vygotsky, 1962).

This does not mean that the individual is a sieve through which socio-cultural processes pass. Socio-cultural contexts provide tools such as language, symbols, human relationships and concepts that impact our actions and the context in which persons are operating. Vygotsky called these tools mediators. Through careful study of human action, and the choice of tools they select to carry out or mediate the action, Vygotsky posited that it is possible to understand the socio-cultural context as well as the individual's understanding of the action or concept. Although persons internalize concepts in a highly individual way, these concepts and mediational means still bear the imprint of the culture through which they were acquired. This is the argument for why service-learning is such a powerful pedagogy. It provides tools and experiences which students not only integrate into an emerging understanding of the self, but also potentially impact the world in which they live. Furthermore, this study offers thick descriptions of the distinct nature of Catholic service-learning, while providing insights into individual moral development and its relationship with religious understanding. Service-learning in the Catholic context should be intentional and devoted to the mission to form moral persons who view moral action as an expression of their religious beliefs. Catholic service-learning is a context, that provides persons with a view of the world as understood by Catholic Doctrine and Tradition and provides a means for persons to choose and integrate moral and religious understanding.

Vygotsky's theory of development is particularly salient in the analysis of the moral actions of persons who experienced service-learning. To go one step further, analysis of the moral actions of those who learned in a Catholic socio-cultural context should reveal the mediational means or tools offered by a Catholic understanding of moral judgment. To date, no studies have described the mediational choices of moral exemplars. These descriptions provide service-learning programs, churches and schools with greater insight into efforts to frame a particular socio-cultural context that is intentional about its efforts to foster the development of moral and religious identity in adolescents. This relatively unexplored aspect of service-learning and identity development was the central focus of my study. Statement of the Problem

Service-learning is one of the many programs Catholic high schools have developed in an attempt to accomplish the moral and religious formation of students and to improve our communities and world. Ultimately, the aim of such programs is for students to become moral persons who not only know right from wrong, but also engage that knowledge through service to others. Catholic moral action, therefore, is rooted in an understanding of God's presence within us and among us. It is framed by love for God and for God within other persons (Keating, 2005) . In other words, moral identity, in the Catholic sense, should be mediated by religious understanding. Because Catholic service-learning provides a particular socio-cultural context, Catholic service-learners should relate their moral action in terms of a Catholic understanding of the role of the individual in the world (National Conference Of Bishops, 1972) . Currently, the literature lacks analysis of service-learning framed by the theories of Lev Vygotsky. Furthermore, only a

small number of studies have examined the role of service-learning on moral and religious development. No studies have linked a particular service-learning socio-cultural context with moral and religious development. This study addressed this gap in the literature.

Purpose of this Study

This study of service-learner exemplars' viewed Catholic service-learning as a distinct socio-cultural context. Furthermore, service-learning offers students' mediational means and concepts that foster the development of moral identity. Of particular interest are the processes through which the socio-cultural context of Catholic high-school service-learning, with its unique vocabulary, religious experiences and relationships mediate moral action. Exploration of the experiences of Catholic service-learner exemplars, and the processes, tools, language and symbols used to describe their experiences and subsequent moral action, provided thick descriptions and insight that is currently lacking in the literature. Furthermore, explorations of the connections between moral action and religious identity as it develops within a particular socio-cultural context are lacking in the literature.

This study sought to further the understanding and development of service-learning pedagogy in ways that provided adolescents with a socio-cultural context from which they may integrate Catholic moral and religious understanding into their developing identities. Using a framework for identity development that is informed by the work of Lev Vygotsky, this study connects Vygotsky's theories to Augusto Blasi's

(Blasi & Milton, 1991; Blasi, 1993; 2004) theory of moral identity. Furthermore, religious understanding as a mediator for moral action were of particular interest.

Research Questions

- What key experiences and relationships provided Catholic service-learner participants with insights into their moral, religious identity as well as their movement toward moral action?

Experiences:

- a) What experiences influenced participants thinking about service-learning?
- b) What experiences influenced participants desire to continue serving after high school?

Relationships:

- a) What relationships influenced participants thinking about service-learning?
 - b) What relationships influenced participants desire to continue serving after high school?
- Do service-learner exemplars use the language that reflects Catholic moral identity when describing their understanding of service-learning?

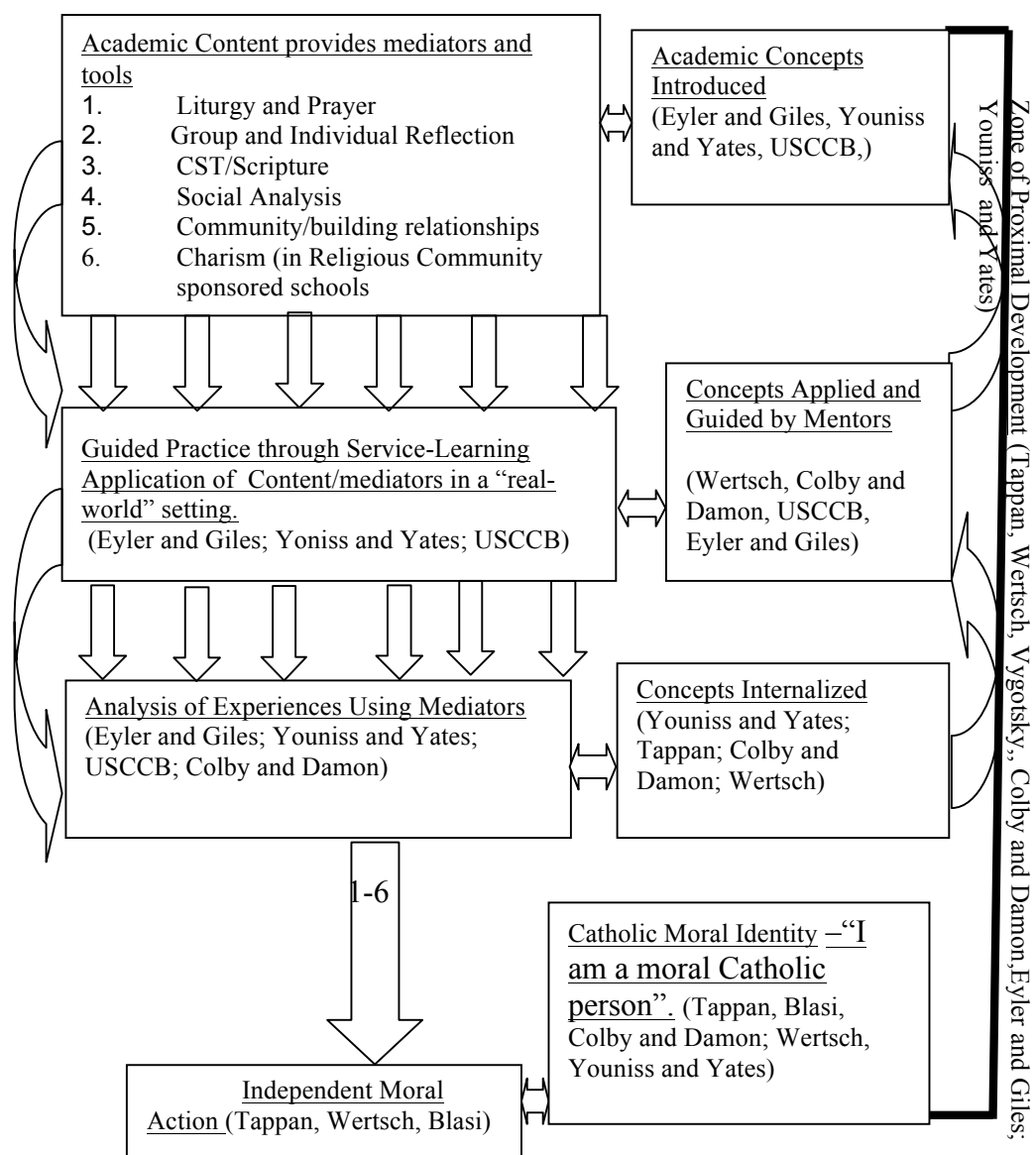
Language:

- a) What language, words and ideas do participants use to describe their service-learning experiences?
- b) What language, words and ideas do participants use to describe their subsequent service experiences

Conceptual Framework

Catholic Service-Learning External Plane

Catholic Moral Identity Development Internal Plane



Theoretical Framework

The cognitive development theories of Lev Vygotsky lens were the lens through which the actions and insights of Catholic moral exemplars were viewed and coded. Ultimately, the goal of all learning is for students to be able to perform a skill or demonstrate understanding of a concept independently. Vygotsky calls the process of moving from the initial introduction of a concept or task and the movement towards independent understanding or performance of the skill, the zone of proximal development. Within the zone of proximal development, external forces, the teacher, the school, or a parent, guide learners, and provide the socio-cultural tools or mediators that learners will use to perform a task. Once guidance is no longer needed, the learner has internalized the concept, and is able to perform the task without guidance. In the case of Catholic service-learning, the goal is to give students the tools to perform moral action, or service, that are grounded and supported by a Catholic understanding of the world.

Vygotsky, posits that human development occurs on two planes (Daniels, Cole, & Wertsch, 2007). First, higher mental functioning, that which we are to learn, begins within the external plane as interaction between people, such as between teacher and student, peer and peer, parent and child, etc. Simultaneously, within the internal plane, learning, ideas, and concepts are grappled with, and internalized by the learner (Vygotsky, 1978). Once the learning is conceptualized within the person, independent action can occur. This process culminates in the learner's ability to perform a skill or action independently. The distance between initial introduction of the concept and

independent action make up the zone of proximal development. Service-learning as a pedagogy is uniquely structured and flows in a cycle of learning, serving, reflecting and then repeating the process. The structure of this cycle reflects a clear zone of proximal development that is closely linked to the real-world experiences students will eventually face. The service-learning cycle dovetails with the learning theories of Lev Vygotsky. The columns on the left of the conceptual framework that indicate the cycle of service-learning are the external plane, and the columns to the right are the internal plane, or the learner's internal connection to service-learning.

On the external plane, service-learning begins with academic content, where students are introduced to an intellectual understanding of the value and importance of service. In Catholic service-learning, this content should be rooted in Liturgical experiences (Mass and prayer services, individual and guided prayer) and the mission, and philosophy of the program. The academic content is to be supported by a scriptural understanding that has been articulated in the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church. In schools that are a part of a religious community, such as the Jesuits and the Mercy Sisters, a particular charism or guiding principle that is rooted in the founding principles of the religious community are also a part of the course and the school's ethos. These tools, or in Vygotskian terms, are mediators and used to guide and facilitate action. They are reflected by the numbered arrows flowing out of the box containing the corresponding academic content of interest to this study.

On the internal plane, students are grappling with and assimilating Church Doctrine, methods of social analysis and perhaps a particular charism. However, in the

beginning stages, learning has not been applied to a service context. Learners may be trying to make connections to previous learning, preconceived ideas and stereotypes or theories about the world (Conrad & Hedin, 1989;Youniss & Yates, 1997;Eyler & Giles, 1999; Furco, 2001). At this point, the learning is somewhat theoretical.

Followed by head knowledge, or academic content, the tools learned in the service-learning course are applied to the service-learning context. On the external plane and through active service, students are expected to put into practice the concepts they have learned. In this “real world” context, teachers, mentors, peers, and persons who are a part of the service placement guide students. Students come into contact with persons and situations that are new to them. The work becomes a focus, and all the other ideas and concepts about people and the academic context are still not connected to one another, but are registered in the internal plane. Guiding adults are necessary to alleviate the disequilibrium created by a new experience, new relationships and new tasks.

Next, within the external plane, after each service action students should reflect and analyze their service-learning experiences and perhaps more deeply connect academic understanding with experience. Through revisiting the tools, or mediators, students evaluate and integrate them into their own understanding. Class discussions, debates, prayer, and social analysis provide the process by which experience and knowledge intertwine and connect to the learning in a deeply personal way. This connection occurs on the internal plane and this connection helps to form self-understanding (Youniss & Yates, 1997; Eyler and Giles, 1999; Furco, 2001).

During service-learning, and paralleling the external actions, persons are learning and growing. Within the internal plane, students begin with only a vague notion of the academic content, and when they move into the external plane of the service-learning, their previous understandings, preconceived ideas about people and about social issues are confronted with the world they have entered.

The final goal of the repeated cycle of service-learning is to motivate persons to make service and social action a part of their life after the high school. In Catholic service-learning, such moral action should be grounded in an understanding of the Gospel call to love one's neighbor. The focus of this study was the independent moral actions of Catholic service-learning exemplars who continue to serve after high school, and the aspects of identity their actions reveal. These two foci are indicated in the boxes at the bottom of the conceptual framework. Descriptions of moral action occur on the external plane, and key moments of self-understanding, although connected, occur on the internal plane. The exemplars rich descriptions also include analysis of the tools that mediated their judgments and the subsequent roots from which they emerged. These tools are the numbered arrows that indicate the concepts learned through Catholic service-learning.

Identity and self understanding are powerful forces, and they are developed and shaped by experiences, relationships and beliefs. In other words identity develops as concepts gleaned from the socio-cultural context are integrated into the self (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). Because the socio-cultural context of service-learning plays a pivotal role in the lives of service-learner exemplars, descriptions of their service-learning experiences are linked to their understanding of who they are and the process by which

their identity developed. The qualitative descriptions provided by the exemplars offer insight into the processes and subsequent choice of mediators or tools that shaped Catholic moral exemplars.

Academic service-learning integrates student community service into an academic course, and the service-experience is a text that fosters both academic and civic learning (Howard, 2001, p. 10). Learner outcomes are clearly articulated, and grades are given based upon stated objectives and goals (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Howard, 2001).

Catholic service-learning: Catholic service-learning has all the components of academic service-learning. However, Catholic service-learning emphasizes Catholic social teaching, which includes principles outlined by the Bishops, analysis of social structures and advocacy efforts and activities that challenge students to become civically engaged. In addition, the Catholic socio-cultural context will include experiences of individual and group prayer, theological reflection, doctrine, and tradition (National Conference of Bishops, 1972; United States Catholic Conference Of Bishops; 1998; United States Catholic Conference Of Bishops, 2000; Groome, 2003) .

Definition of Terms

Academic service-learning: Academic service-learning is a course, which balances academic learning with service to the community. It is defined as learning that is experiential in form and occurs through a cycle of action and reflection, not simply through being able to recount what has been learned through reading and lecture.

Vygotsky's Theory of Development:

Action: The assumption that in order to understand human functioning, one must view the human person in context with his or her environment. Action is influenced by the environment and cannot be viewed in isolation. Human action and interaction is the entry point in which Vygotsky analyzes human behavior and its relationship to the socio-cultural context (Wertsch, 1991, p. 8).

Socio-cultural: The cultural, historical and institutional settings in which one develops and matures. Socio-cultural context is rooted in the contention that all mental action is inherently social and is carried out through language, symbols and tools (Wertsch, 1991, p. 15). Therefore all action is social and bears the imprint of its context.

Mediated action: All human action is carried out through the use of tools, such as dialog, both internal and external, symbols, and social context. These tools impact the actions of persons, and are a mediational means for carrying out our actions (Wertsch, 1991, p. 12) . Our tools, language, dialogue, and socio-cultural context, are relational. Therefore, our actions impact and are impacted by society. Consequently human action does not occur in isolation.

Mediators: The tools used to carry out human action, such as dialogue, symbols, words, etc.

Internalization: Aspects or patterns of activity that occurred on an external plane become internal (Wertsch, 1985, p. 61). Consequently, the ideas learned from the socio-cultural context, are analyzed and adapted to the self. Concepts, that have been internalized, are not necessarily carbon copies of what was learned or practiced on the external plane.

Zone of Proximal Development: The distance between potential development, the ability to solve problems with help, and the ability to solve a problem independently.

Moral Development

Agency: “The ability and disposition to become critically reflective of one’s own assumptions as well as those of others, to engage fully and freely in discourse to validate one’s beliefs, and effectively take reflective action to implement them” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 25) .

Empathy: The ability to “spontaneously and naturally tune into the other person's thoughts and feelings, whatever these might be. There are two major elements to empathy. The first is the cognitive component: Understanding the others feelings and the ability to take their perspective . . . the second element to empathy is the affective component. This is an observers appropriate emotional response to another person's emotional state” (Baron-Cohen, 2003, p. 10).

Exemplar: A highly dedicated person who is committed to making the world a better place (Colby & Damon, 1992, p. 27).

Moral Development: The process through which persons develop a concern for that which is “worthy of praise or blame”(Blasi, 2004, p. 338). Mature moral development is characterized by the association of one’s sense of self with a desire to remain consistent with that sense of self. Consequently, when the self is centered upon moral concerns it provides powerful moral motivation (Blasi, 2004).

Moral Judgment: The act of determining the nature of a moral dilemma and assessing one’s level of responsibility to act upon it. Judgments lead to action when “not

to act according to one's judgment should be perceived as a substantial inconsistency, as a fracture within the very core of the self, unless neutralizing devices are put into operation" (Blasi, 1983, p. 201).

Moral Action: Blasi's description of moral action will be used for this study. In order to be moral an action, at the minimum, must have the following characteristics: (a) any moral action should be intentional. It cannot be accidentally produced, or result from causes outside the agent's consciousness. It must be the result of reasons. (b) The reasons that generate moral action must be moral; namely, they must be related to what is morally good or bad in the agent's understanding. If either of these two conditions is not met, moral blame or praise is not present and neither is moral responsibility (Blasi, 2004, p. 339).

Moral identity: Moral identity is defined as the synthesis of personal identity and the joint operation of reason and truth as motivators for action. Mature moral identity integrates an understanding of the self, with moral understanding and is able to make moral judgments leading to ethical actions. Moral identity does not mature until late adolescence or early adulthood, and in many cases never matures (Blasi, 1983, 1993, 2004).

Religious Development:

Religious Judgment /Religious Understanding: The ways in which persons frame their understanding of God. "When persons (a) process their life experiences in a religious mode (e.g., interpretations, conversation, prayer), (b) assimilate narrative texts (doctrine, proclamation, Bible), in a religious mode, or (c) participate in the life of

religious communities (liturgy, cults, group reflection), then they actually employ a regulative meaning making structure which represents their relation to an Ultimate [God, Buddha, Hindu, etc.]” (Oser & Gmunder, 1991, p. 19). Because Oser and Gmunder developed their theory to fit all religious beliefs they use the word Ultimate. For the purposes of this study, which sought data regarding Catholic frames of understanding, the word God is used.

Catholic Moral Identity: Coupled with moral identity, Catholic moral identity, synthesizes a Catholic view of one’s obligation to others. This obligation stems from knowledge of one’s sacred nature, and knowledge of God’s love for all humanity. Consequently, the tools to carryout moral action flow from a sense of service to God and to others. Furthermore, the self is a mediational tool that in essence becomes God’s instrument on earth. “As in Jesus the divine became incarnate in the human, so to in the Church, the divine works through the human”(Curran, 1999, p. 12). Therefore, Catholic moral identity frames moral action as the recognition that the human person is called to be God’s hands and God’s love on earth. Mediational tools also include dialogue with God through Liturgy and prayer, understanding, the doctrine, and the social teachings of the Catholic Church as well as a sense of community both within the Church and the world.

Catholic Social Teachings of the Church:

- 1) The Life and Dignity of the Human Person, all persons are sacred and created in God’s image.

- 2) The Call to Family, Community and Participation; persons are social by nature and the family is the basic structure of society.
- 3) Human Rights and Responsibilities; all persons have a right to life and work, and participation in society and corresponding with our rights are our responsibilities to one another and to society.
- 4) Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable; a measure of society is how its most vulnerable persons are faring. Our responsibility to care for the weakest among us.
- 5) The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; Work is an expression of the gifts God has given persons. Our work is not to serve the economy but in service to one another, to family and to the greater good.
- 6) Solidarity; We are one human family. No matter where we live, our faith tradition or lack of faith, we are connected to one another as sacred persons. Whatever happens to the least of us impacts all persons.
- 7) Care for God's Creation. The earth and all its benefits are gifts from God. We are to be stewards of those gifts. (United States Catholic Conference Of Bishops, 2000, p. 33-34).

Persons: Throughout this study I make the intentional choice to use the word persons.

This term reflects the both the unique character of individuals while at the same time recognizing the Greek origin of the word, *prosopon*, which means “turned toward the

other” (Groome, 2002, p. 60). First and foremost we are made in God’s image and likeness. Furthermore, we are in partnership with God and with one another.

Limitations

This research is limited to a small number of subjects who have been purposefully selected. The small sample provides a rich source of data about service-learning experiences and its impact on moral and religious development. Furthermore, data will be sought through service-learner exemplar’s recollections of high school service-learning experiences. A possible concern is the extent to which statements are accurate or glossed over as a result of new understandings.

Contributions

Although an extensive body of research has been conducted in the areas of service-learning, cognitive, moral and religious development, only a handful have looked at all of these areas in an integrated way. In addition, the socio-cultural context of Catholic service-learning offered a means for studying identity development within a particular setting. Such a setting provided a unique view of the juxtaposition of the cultural forces at work in identity development as well as the individuals unique integration of them. Such exploration sparsely populates the literature.

In spite of its large presence in Catholic schools, service-learning in this context has not been the subject of a great deal of research, and no studies focus on moral and religious development using a Vygotskian and qualitative perspective. This study offered an in depth understanding of the experiences of young adults who have participated in

Catholic service-learning. Descriptions of their particular socio-cultural context and the resulting moral actions were the focus of this study. In addition, this study sought to contribute an understanding of the ways in which persons integrate moral understanding with religious judgment within identity. To date, this integration of moral and religious development, particularly in the context of service-learning has not been thoroughly researched.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Background of the Study

In spite of the importance of moral and religious understanding of the self as a part of identity, few studies are concerned about the religious aspect of identity, and still fewer explore identity within the socio-cultural context of service-learning. Service-learning has been viewed as a possible means for bridging the gulf between moral knowledge and moral action that leads to civic engagement (Youniss and Yates, 1997). For that reason, service-learning programs have not only received a great deal of government support in the public sector, but also play a significant role in Catholic schools.

Public school programs seek to use service-learning as a means for helping the community, building student self-esteem, and fostering civic engagement. Catholic schools on the other hand, also seek those ends, but their goals are tied to a specific religious understanding of the individual's relationship to God and community. Catholic service-learning is a socio-cultural context dedicated to fostering a uniquely Catholic moral identity, and is intended to influence the formation of a uniquely Catholic morality. This aspect of service-learning has not been the subject of qualitative research.

This review of the literature explored moral and religious identity development by using the lens of Lev Vygotsky's Theory of cognitive development and by framing identity development within the socio-cultural context of Catholic service-learning.

In addition, this study explicated the gaps in the literature and provided a rationale for the need for further research.

Academic Service-Learning

Academic service-learning is a specific pedagogy that combines structured course work in tandem with service experiences and consequently offers deeper and richer learning experiences. Learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection, and not simply through memorizing what has been learned through reading and lecture (Eyler and Giles, 1999, p. 7-8). The combination of academic instruction, reflection, and discussion with real world application within a service placement make academic service-learning most effective in bringing about academic development, civic-engagement, but also personal development (Furco, 2001; Melchior and Bailis, 2001; Eyler and Giles, 1999; Youniss and Yates, 1997). Although the intent of service-learning is to foster civic- engagement, or moral action, few studies examine the processes that foster such action. Other than the research of Youniss and Yates (1997) the literature offers few descriptions of service-learning and its role in forming moral and religious understanding. This study addressed this gap in the literature.

Catholic Service-Learning

Effective Catholic service-learning is structured similarly to public school service-learning, but differs in that it is intended to be a socio-cultural context that fosters moral action rooted in religious understanding. At this time, no comprehensive data exists regarding the kinds of service-learning programs operating in Catholic high schools. However, a document written by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops,

hereinafter called the USCCB, Committees on Domestic Policy, International Policy, and Education makes a strong recommendation for the integration of Catholic social teaching into all of the Church's educational programs (2000). Furthermore, this document offered a specific strategy for teaching Catholic social teaching and service called ART, Act, Reflect and Transform. This process offers a blueprint similar to academic service-learning. It differs from public school service-learning in that Catholic service has spiritual and theological dimensions. Not only are students called to address the immediate needs of those who are marginalized, but also they are called to address the systemic causes of injustice. This dual level of moral action is framed by the academic content that includes reflection, both individual and communal. Often this reflection is offered in liturgy, prayer, theological reflection and key Church documents (Youniss and Yates, 1997; USCCB, 1998).

Catholic service-learning is a specific socio-cultural context that is intentional in its efforts to frame moral action with religious understanding. Catholicism has a unique perspective on the role of the individual and his or her role in the world. Americans of almost all denominations, including American Catholics, tend to think of church as a "voluntary society in which like-minded individuals come together, sustain, nurture, and develop their spiritual lives" (Curran, 1999, p. 3). However, such thinking is contrary to the Catholic theological understanding of the role of individuals and community. The Catholic view is that the Church, the communal church is the vehicle through which God delivers salvation. We are saved because we are the people of God (Curran, 1999; USCCB, 1998; Groome, 2003). Therefore the Catholic Church and Catholic persons

cannot become isolated and disengaged from the needs of people throughout the world. Individuals are called to action in the world on behalf of those who are oppressed, and such service is an expression of God's love working through persons who are a part of the body of Christ, the Church community (Groome, 2003). Another distinctly Catholic understanding of the world is the union between the human and the divine. "As in Jesus the divine became incarnate in the human, so too in the church, the divine works in and through the human (Curran 1999, p. 10). Therefore, Catholic schools and Catholic service programs are designed to form persons who view themselves as not only sacred and holy, but also as God's eyes, heart and hands on earth (Schuttloffel, 1999) . We are God's mediational tools on earth (Curran, 1999). This understanding of the human person as sacred and responsible for others is the foundational belief upon which Catholic social teaching and Catholic service-learning are rooted. Consequently, my study's conceptual framework built upon these distinctive Catholic roots, and sought to understand their juxtaposition to competing societal interests and their impact on the moral identity development of Catholic service-learners.

Socio-Cultural Context and Moral Action

The mission of Catholic education, to form persons who commit to moral action based upon their understanding of the Catholic faith and Tradition, drives the design of Catholic service-learning. Therefore, Catholic service-learning is a particular socio-cultural context intended to foster a distinctly Catholic moral identity. In spite of its Catholic character and its highly moral purpose, the processes by which Catholic moral identity are formed have not been explored in the literature. However, the cognitive development

theory of Lev Vygotsky when entwined with the moral development theory of Augusto Blasi, offers a lens through which the experiences of learners, and in particular Catholic service learners were explicated.

Vygotsky posited that analysis of human action provides insight into the ways individuals have conceptualized the tools given to them within a particular socio-cultural context. Vygotsky theorized that “all human mental functioning is socio-cultural, historically and institutionally situated” (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995, p. 84). He believed that through the careful observation of human action within its socio-cultural context, individual thinking and its connection to social origins can be understood (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995, p. 84). Furthermore, he believed that persons learn by first receiving guidance and mentoring of an adult. Children follow the modeling of adults and peers within their world. This external direction and guidance is called the external plane of learning. As learners continue through guided practice they come to repeat the instructions and wisdom from those from whom they learn. When the knowledge is understood and processed into existing understandings, through the process of internal dialogue, the learner can grow and act independently. This is the internal plane. In the process of gaining understanding, learners adopt the language and symbols of their particular time and place. These tools, language and symbols, are the means by which persons carry out a particular action. Tools mediate action. For Vygotsky, mediational means are “psychological tools” that enable human beings to control their thinking (Holland, Lachicotte, & Jr., 2007, p. 109) . These tools are dialectical.

Although Vygotsky did not study identity formation, his work offers a unique framework for understanding the process of identity development as it forms within a socio-cultural context (Tappan, 1997; Peniel & Wersch, 1995, p. 84). Vygotsky's theory regarding the ways persons construct individual understanding of the world and the social identities that mediate their behavior provide a vehicle for understanding human action (Holland, Lachicotte, Jr. 2007, p. 109). Therefore, as persons explain and attach meaning to their moral actions, they reveal the socio-cultural context, from which their beliefs were fostered and developed.

Over the past four decades research about the process of moral development has centered around the question of nature versus nurture. How do persons become moral? Beginning with the theories of Kohlberg (Colby, Gibbs, Lieberman, & Kohlberg, 1983) which are rooted in Piagetian stage theory, followed by Carol Gilligan's (1982) criticism of Kohlberg's male dominated paradigm, theories of moral development have evolved and emerged. Augusto Blasi's theory of moral development offers a cogent holistic understanding of the ways in which persons are motivated to value and act upon moral understanding. Blasi holds that one of the keys to moral identity development is the socio-cultural context in which persons mature and grow. He posits that the ways in which persons frame their identity depend on their life experiences and exposure to the views, ideals, and culture of one's family, friends and school (Blasi, 1993, p. 117). He further claims that persons come to understand justice and fairness not by reading or hearing about them, but through concrete experience (Blasi, 2004, p. 333-334). His view is consistent with the underlying argument for service-learning participation. Students

who are mentored and asked to apply ideals and theories to “real-world” situations will grow and change their thinking (Eyler and Giles, 1999; Youniss and Yates, 1997; Furco, 2001) Blasi’s research and that of Colby and Damon (1992) support this view of service-learning. In separate studies, Blasi and Milton (1991) and Colby and Damon (1992) found that repeated exposure to moral persons and experiences seems to build in some people the desire to appropriate moral concerns and act upon them.

Although cognitive approaches have dominated theories of moral development, Blasi’s suggestion that multiple factors are at work is supported by research. Colby and Damon’s study noted the role of empathy. In fact, participants in their study were impatient with long periods of reflection and discussion. Their moral exemplars indicated an almost instinctive reaction to the needs of others (1992, p. 6). Their feelings propelled them to action. In fact, their feelings for others were so strong, that they viewed failure to act as self-betrayal. Such behavior is consistent with Augusto Blasi’s understanding of moral action.

However, many people, in spite of exposure to pro-social moral ideals and values, choose not to act upon the moral beliefs they openly profess. Blasi contends that persons make judgments about their level of responsibility with regard to moral action. For example, persons may see the need for an action, but because they deem someone else to be responsible, choose to do nothing. Others may place a high value on one concept, say anti-abortion, but find it acceptable to act violently against those who perform abortions. Blasi contends that human beings, define themselves based upon who they see themselves to be. Persons who place a high value on moral behavior would not behave in

a manner inconsistent with that belief. To do so would cause disequilibrium and constitute an act of self-betrayal (Blasi, 1994). Moral understanding is complex and rooted not only in the socio-cultural context but also in the ways persons appropriate moral ideals. Youniss and Yates (1997) longitudinal study of adolescent service-learners found that years after their service-learning experiences, participants expressed a heightened sense of responsibility for other people, for society and for political action.

Unlike previous studies, my study sought to understand the possible religious underpinnings or connections to moral action. Of particular interest are the experiences, persons and situations that may have fostered the moral growth and understanding of the Catholic service-learner exemplars. At this time service-learning literature as well as moral and religious development research, offer little insight into connections between religious belief and moral development. In addition, few studies have been concerned about the influence of a particular socio-cultural context. My study offered thick descriptions of the experiences and processes that were critical to the development of Catholic service-learning exemplars.

Tappan (1997) offers an interesting perspective that combines Blasi's theories of moral development with the work of Vygotsky and that of Vygotskian colleague and scholar Bhatkin.

Tappan (1997, p. 83) posits:

- 1) moral functioning (like all "higher psychological functioning") is necessarily mediated by words, language, and forms of discourse;
- 2) such mediation occurs primarily in private or inner speech, typically in the form of inner moral dialogue;

- 3) because language is the social medium par excellence, processes of social communication and social relations necessarily give rise to moral functioning;
- 4) because words, language, and forms of discourse are inherently sociocultural phenomena, moral development is always shaped by the particular social, cultural, and historical context in which it occurs.

Tappan's assumptions about moral development can also be said to apply to religious understanding. However, unlike Tappan, my study emphasized the relational aspects of service-learning, and is supported by the work of Colby and Damon (1992). They found that relationships between people, feelings of empathy and gut level impressions shaped the moral actions of the moral exemplars in their study. In addition, they found that the exemplars rarely reflected on their actions and demonstrated impatience with discussion and analysis. The exemplars in their study, acted in an instinctive way rather than cognitively (1992). However, Tappan's assumptions and the research of Colby and Damon have yet to be explored in a religious context. This study filled this gap in the literature.

Moral and Religious Development Research

Blasi's theories and some of Tappan's ideas are supported in studies of moral exemplars (Colby and Damon, 1992; Hart and Fegley, 1995). Participants in each of these studies described their own moral development in terms of contact and exposure to the values and beliefs of friends, family and colleagues. Guidance from key persons linked their experiences and had a profound impact on the exemplars moral commitment (Colby and Damon, 1992). Once these beliefs were learned and accepted they were integrated into the exemplars identity. Consequently, the exemplars explained that to behave inconsistently with their image of themselves would be self-betrayal. Such betrayal was expressed through inner dialogue. Self-speech encouraged or mitigated

action. This revelation is also consistent with the dialectical nature of learning as theorized by Vygotsky and explicated by Tappan's application of Vygotsky's theories to moral development.

One of the unintended outcomes of some moral development research is the discovery that moral exemplars explained their moral action in terms of religious beliefs (Colby and Damon, 1992; Hart and Fegley, 1995). Although Colby and Damon did not being. Some described a sense of interconnectedness between human beings while others spoke of a specific religious denomination or practice. However, all of the exemplars who expressed some form of religious belief and practice, described their beliefs in terms of their own identity.

At this time, few studies have explicated the link between moral and religious understanding and still fewer have explored such development within a service-learning context. Day and Naedts (1995) and Walker et al. (1995) have sought to explore connections between religious belief and moral development. However, these studies are not connected to a particular socio-cultural context. Day and Naedts did find a link between moral and religious development in their study of adolescent moral exemplar, but their research offers no insight into the thought processes or socio-cultural context in which the exemplars developed. My study sought to fill this gap in the existing body of literature.

seek information about the religious beliefs of the moral exemplars, they found that the exemplars explained their moral commitment in terms of their belief in a transcendent Walker et. al., (1995) studied the moral identity of adults by having them recall personal

and moral dilemmas. The vast majority of the adult participants revealed religious themes in their stories of moral judgment. Although some study participants found religion to be an acceptable framework from which to express their moral beliefs, many others revealed their faith as inseparable from their moral values and actions. Their beliefs motivated them to action. To use Vygotskian terms, religious understanding mediated moral action. While Walker's study offers a glimpse at the moral reasoning of adults, it offers little insight into the ways in which such reasoning develops. Currently, studies of moral and religious development are few, and no studies explore the development of persons who are situated within a particular socio-cultural context. Therefore, little data exists to support Tappan's Vygotskian framework for understanding moral development, and no studies support an understanding of moral development in tandem with a Catholic understanding of moral action. This study provided descriptions of the moral actions of persons who experienced the Catholic socio-cultural context of high school service-learning. I did so by focusing on the relational aspects of Tappan's Vygotskian explanation of moral development. This framework combines Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development with Blasi's theory of moral development as the basis for understanding the moral development of Catholic service-learner exemplars.

A later study by Reimer and Walker (2005) did explore spirituality and moral development within a particular socio-cultural context. Their study focused on the spiritual development of L'Arche assistants who live in community with the disabled. In these communities, the assistants work for a small stipend. Peace and non-violence are emphasized and through participation in community life everyone is encouraged to grow

deeper in relationship with God. Many of the communities are supported by priests, therapists, and spiritual directors. Reimer and Walker (2005) found that novice assistants were tentative in their discussions about God and about their personal responsibility within the community. The veteran assistants, on the other hand, could clearly articulate their spiritual goals and practices. Furthermore, veteran assistants expressed their ideas in terms of emotions and feelings. Over time, their feelings, spirituality and goals were modified and anger was often expressed in relation to God. Why this occurred is unclear, and Reimer and Walker speculate that this might be a result of clinical depression stemming from some of the traumatic experiences the assistants face while dealing with disabled adults (p. 236). Both researchers indicate that further study of the socio-cultural context and its impact on the moral and spiritual development of the participants is needed. My study filled this gap in the literature by exploring the experiences of persons who participated in the bounded system of Catholic service-learning.

Catholic Service-Learning Research

In addition to the lack of research into the processes that foster moral and religious development, still fewer studies of service-learning have offered insight into the identity development of persons who participate in service-learning pedagogy. As mentioned earlier, Youniss and Yates (1997) explored adolescent identity development within the context of service-learning. Their study was one of the few studies to be situated in a Catholic high school. However, Youniss and Yates chose not to focus upon “the inward search for authenticity and self-validation”, and instead emphasized “adolescents’ investments in social, political and moral ideologies” (Youniss and Yates, 1997, p. 3).

They determined that student experiences in an inner city soup kitchen and in the school's social justice course continued to affect the thinking of students well after they graduated high school. Students commented on their commitment to be socially and politically active well into their adulthood. Although Youniss and Yates remarked upon the importance of the Catholic ethos that permeated the service-learning program, the extent to which students defined their experiences from a religious perspective was unclear. Some students mentioned religious beliefs as their motivation for continued service after high school. Studies about service-learning and its role in religious identity development sparsely populate the literature. One study by Hart and Fegley (1995) focused upon the moral development of care exemplars that were recommended by their churches and by members of the community. The students in their study demonstrated commitment to volunteering, but Hart and Fegley did not identify the socio-cultural context, or the roots of such commitment. My study filled this void in the literature.

To date, the extent to which Catholic service-learning programs instill a uniquely Catholic understanding remains unclear. Most of the literature about Catholic service-learning focuses upon teacher perception data or best practices (National Catholic Education Association & Catholic Relief Services, 2005; Kreitemeyer, 2000) Few studies offer insight into the thinking of students and the resulting outcomes of their service participation. My study on the other hand, offered rich descriptions of student moral thinking.

Some larger studies of Catholic youth and religious belief do provide some relevant and concerning insights about possible connections between service-learning and

Catholic moral identity. These key studies about the faith life of adolescents and young adult Catholics are framed by an understanding of American culture as highly individualistic and secular. One study found that young people view their relationship with God as one-dimensional. In other words, God is pulling the strings, and all that God asks of us is that we be “nice” people. What nice means is unclear (McCorquodale, Shepp, & Sterten, 2004). In addition, the McCorquodale, Shepp and Sterten study revealed that adolescents don’t value experiencing God in community worship. This particular finding emphasizes the one dimensional aspect of the participant’s relationship with God. God’s presence in communal worship and in the deeds and words of others is not understood. When participants were asked about their responsibility to the poor, they expressed concern and many were involved in some form of direct service. However, they had great difficulty connecting their service to others with their faith.

An earlier study, by Hoge, Dinges, Johnson, and Gonzalez (2001) reported similar findings. Hoge et.al, found that young adults noted that a larger part of their religious formation consisted of service. However, these young adults also had difficulty connecting their service to their faith. In a later study by D’Antonio, Davidson, Hoge and Gautier (2007), young adults stated they were Catholic and believed in the Church, but could not explain Church Doctrine. However, they were committed to serving others. The earlier research by Hoge, Dinges, Johnson, and Gonzalez (2001) and the later research by D’Antonio, Davidson, Hoge, and Gautier (2007) revealed that young adults rate concern for the poor as a great priority for the Church. Yet a very small percentage were actively involved in such efforts. Each of these studies demonstrate a disconnect

between service and the Catholic theology that is the academic content and the impetus for moral action. These studies also lack data regarding the kinds of service experiences and academic content that were a part of the young adults' experience. What was the socio-cultural context? My study not only sought qualitative data about the Catholic moral understanding of service-learner exemplars, but also provided insight into the socio-cultural context that framed Catholic moral identity development. This review of the literature revealed that service-learning is a specific pedagogy that plays a significant role in fostering identity development in adolescents. However several gaps in the literature were explored in my study. (1) No data exists to describe the processes, i.e. experiences and relationships, within the socio-cultural context of Catholic service-learning, particularly from a variety of Catholic high schools, and their possible influences on the Catholic moral identity development of adolescents. (2) No descriptions within the literature offers an analysis of moral action, the tools, such as ideas, and language that mediate such action and the socio-cultural context that offered such tools. (3) No studies provide insight into the thinking processes of persons who participated in Catholic service-learning as they reflect on their moral actions and their connections to Catholic service-learning.

Therefore, this study provided descriptions of the religious and moral identity of participants in Catholic high school service-learning programs, who have remained committed to service after their high school service-learning experiences. Particular attention is given to not only the participants' descriptions of key experiences and relationships but also to their choice of language and vocabulary as they describe their

service to others. These descriptors are the means for understanding the possible influences the Catholic service-learning and socio-cultural context may have had on their moral development. Furthermore, descriptors of key experiences and relationships provide insight into the service-learning processes that fostered Catholic moral identity development

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

In the previous chapter I noted the distinct nature of Catholic service-learning, and highlighted the lack of research in the literature regarding the possible relationship between religious belief and moral identity. In particular, I noted that another significant gap in the literature is the lack of exploration of the socio-cultural context of service-learning programs and their possible role in the formation of morally active persons. As a Catholic educator, I am deeply committed to not only experiential learning but also to the formation of persons of faith who are compelled to act upon that faith in ways that serve others. Therefore, my role in this study was to bring to light the experiences of persons who have participated in Catholic service-learning and continue to serve in the community. In this Chapter, I outline the methodological approach. First, because the researcher is the primary instrument in a qualitative study I provide a brief epistemological account of my journey as a researcher. Then I delineate the researcher questions and provide a rationale for use of the multiple analytical case study to examine the experiences of Catholic service-learners. Finally, I conclude with an explanation of the data sources and methods of analysis.

The Researcher

My role as researcher is germane to this study in that I have chosen this particular topic to research. My life experiences, my values and my beliefs have led me to this area of study. In addition, the data I have collected has been mediated through me, the

“human instrument, the researcher, rather than through some inanimate inventory, questionnaire, or computer” (Merriam, 1998, p. 7). Because I interpreted the data, and I am responsible for presenting key ideas and concepts, my experiences and values are relevant to the study. Consequently, I offer my brief autobiography.

As the daughter of an enlisted man in the Air Force, my entire educational experience both in public schools and in Church communities occurred in a variety of places in the United States. As we moved from place to place, I attended both rural, suburban and inner city schools. In addition, I continually searched for a church home within a variety of denominations ranging from Jewish to mainline Protestant to Evangelical, to Catholic. In school and church I had outstanding teachers, horrible ones and everything in between. Teachers who cared about what we thought, challenged our thinking and let us do and experience life as opposed to listening to lectures had the most impact upon me. Eventually, I chose to become a Catholic, a teacher and then a Catholic school administrator.

My varied educational and faith experiences led me to believe, like Colby and Damon (1992) demonstrated in their study, that each person’s moral growth is life-long, unique and rooted in experiences of family, friends, culture, school, church and code of ethics. The stories of our moral growth, the words and tools that we use, not only reveal aspects of our identity but also the socio-cultural context in which they developed. Like cognitive development, moral identity is fostered and rooted in our history, our culture and society. Our use of language and the choice of tools to act upon our moral code reflect both our individual identity and our socio-cultural roots. Furthermore, such

learning is embedded in the identity of persons when it is practiced and shaped by caring adults and mentors who guide us along the way (Colby & Damon 1992). The story of our experiences, which include relationships with persons who challenge us to behave consistently with our moral beliefs reveals not only how we learn, but also how we become the persons we envision ourselves to be.

Because of my educational experiences and philosophy, the theories of Lev Vygotsky and the broadening of his theory of cognitive development to include the ways in which persons form moral identity resonated with me. Linking moral development with Vygotsky's framework for cognitive development is supported by the research of Mark Tappan (1997). He notes the importance of language and word choice as a means for revealing not only one's identity but also the socio-cultural roots of identity. I ground my study in the belief that moral development is a key part of identity. The formation of identity is influenced by the ideas, experiences and relationships learners have with teachers and caring adults. Furthermore, experience and practice within a real-world context provides students with a safe place to test beliefs and ideals and to challenge stereotypes and prior thinking. Finally, language and word choice reveal not only one's moral identity, but also one's adaptation of the moral ideals learned within a particular socio-cultural context. Consequently, Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development is the lens through which the experiences, relationships and insights of service-learner exemplars are viewed and coded.

According to Vygotsky cognitive development is grounded in our social milieu, or as he called it socio-cultural context. In addition, moral development researchers such as

Augusto Blasi (1993, 2004) and Mark Tappan (1997) posit that moral identity development is also rooted in socio-cultural context, and our choice of words and symbols reveals that context. Therefore, I used discourse analysis as a means for interpreting the experiences of the participants. The language and meanings that the participants revealed were analyzed and reflected a larger social-context. Of particular interest were the ways that these meanings and understandings changed over time. These changes were connected to the wider socio-cultural context that has been experienced by the participants.

Methodology

I chose a multiple-case study design because I describe Catholic moral identity formation and the processes that influence its development as it is framed by the socio-cultural context of Catholic service-learning. My study investigated the phenomenon of continued moral action by young adults after participation in Catholic high school service-learning. The boundaries between the phenomenon, Catholic moral action and context, and Catholic service-learning are not clearly evident (Yin, 2003; Cresswell, 1998). Because these boundaries were unclear, a multiple case-study provided more robust data. The context of Catholic service-learning is the setting from which the exemplars learned and developed. It is the bounded system that connects the cases. Intrinsically bounded within this system called Catholic service-learning is the phenomenon to be studied (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). That phenomenon, Catholic moral identity, was revealed as the exemplars' described and attached meaning to their individual experiences (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). For those who are unfamiliar with

Catholic worship, signs, symbols and beliefs, I provided explanations as I described the participants' experiences and analyzed their language choice.

These understandings were the basis for describing, building and expanding upon theories of moral and Catholic moral identity development. Consequently, the use of a multiple-case study best addressed the research questions (Merriam, 1998) and was selected because the conceptual framework of this study supported it. Also, the inclusion of multiple cases increased an understanding of the processes used to gather data and support the external and internal validity of the research (Yin 2003; Merriam, 1998).

Research Questions

My primary research questions were explored with more depth through the use of several subsidiary questions. These sub-questions were designed to delve more deeply into the complex and multi-layered processes that are a part of Catholic moral identity development. The questions are:

- 1) What key experiences and relationships provided participants with insights into their moral, religious identity as well as their movement toward action?

Experiences

- a) What experiences influenced the participant's initial thinking about service learning?
- b) What experiences influenced the participant's desire to continue service after high school?

Relationships

- a) What relationships influenced the participant's thinking about service-learning
- b) What relationships influenced the participant's desire to continue service after high school?

- 2) Do service-learner exemplars use the language that reflects Catholic moral identity when describing their understanding of service-learning?

Language

- a) What language, words, and ideas do participants use to describe their service-learning experiences?
- b) What language, words and ideas do participants use to describe their subsequent service experiences?

First, Vygotsky posits that all human development occurs on two planes (H. Daniels & M. Cole & J. V. Wertsch, 2007). Higher mental functioning, that which we are to learn, begins within the external plane as the interaction between people, the knower and the learner. The knower and learner vary depending on circumstances, such as between teacher and student, peer and peer, parent and child. Simultaneously, within the internal plane, learning, ideas and concepts are assimilated, and internalized by the learner. Once the learning is conceptualized within the learner, independent action can occur. This process culminates in the learner's ability to perform a skill or action independently. Therefore, my sub-questions sought to understand both the external and internal plane of development. Learning occurs in both planes and the extent to which such learning becomes internal and apart of the moral identity of the participants goes to the heart of my study.

In this section I will elaborate further on my sub-questions.

Experiences:

- a) What experiences influenced the participant's initial thinking about service-learning?*

This question is designed to understand the academic and course content as well as the school experiences that influenced the thinking of service-learners. Catholic service-learning pedagogy is uniquely structured and flows in a cycle of learning, serving,

reflecting and repeating the process. On the external plane, service-learning begins with academic content, where students are introduced to an intellectual understanding of the value and importance of service. In Catholic service-learning, this content is usually rooted in liturgical experiences (i.e.: Mass and prayer services), individual and guided prayer, the mission and philosophy of the program. The academic content is to be supported by a scriptural understanding that is articulated in the social teachings of the Catholic Church. These tools, or in Vygotskian terms, are mediators that are used to guide and facilitate the action which in this case is service to others.

b) What experiences influenced the participant's desire to continue serving after high school?

On the external plane, students are introduced to, grappling with and assimilating Church doctrine, methods of social analysis, and their own biases and history (Conrad and Hedin, 1989; Youniss and Yates, 1997; Eyler and Giles, 1999; Furco, 2001). Followed by exposure to the head knowledge, or academic content, the tools learned in the service-learning course are applied to the service-learning context. Students come into contact with persons and situations that are new to them. The work becomes the focus and all the other ideas and concepts about people and the academic context may not be connected but are registered in the internal plane. This question sought to understand what sustained the exemplars to continue serving throughout periods of disequilibrium, change and absence of the familiar high school program? Did they rely on the experiences and tools offered in the high school service-learning program?

Relationships:

a) What relationships influenced the participant's thinking about service-learning?

This question is designed to understand the role of persons who initiate students into the service-learning process. Guiding adults and peers often alleviate the disequilibrium created by new experiences, relationships and tasks. On the external plane and through active service, students are expected to put into practice the concepts they have learned. In this “real world” context, teachers mentors, peers and persons who are a part of the service placement often guide, challenge and offer insight to students. At what point, if ever, did the knowledge and understanding of key adults become internalized and a part of the learner's understanding. Were these persons offering a Catholic or other understanding of moral action? Furthermore, what are the emotional connections to those with whom they have formed relationships and how do those influence their development and thinking patterns regarding moral action?

b) What relationships influenced participant's desire to continue serving after high school?

My question regarding relationships that fostered continued service is designed to excavate either the relationships that either began in high school service-learning, or began after high school as a result of exposure to other opportunities for service. Did key persons in the life of the service-learner continue to educate, challenge inspire and lead to continued efforts to serve. The nature of these relationships is critical to understanding each participant's sustained moral development and perhaps movement towards or away from a distinctly Catholic morality. Furthermore, did these mentors, friends, and

colleagues assist participants with moving from the external plane, where they were guided to independent action that is rooted in Catholic moral identity.

Language:

a) What language, words, and ideas do participants use to describe their high schools service-learning experiences?

According to Vygotsky, language is a tool and learners adopt the language of their socio-cultural context. In the Catholic context, it would be expected that the language of Catholic Social Teaching would be a part of the student's learning experience. This question was designed to explore the language service-learners use and to uncover possible connections to the service-learning socio-cultural context. Furthermore, as these ideas become internalized the learner chooses language and actions according to the tools they were given in the learning process. However these tools are personalized and woven into the learners' understanding. Furthermore, adaptation of tools and language into the self is impacted by the learners' relationships to key persons. Consequently, the language also revealed empathy and the need for acceptance and worlds participants choose. However, in a Catholic context it was expected that the participant's language might indicate a connection to Catholic teachings. For example, the participants cited Catholic social teachings or referenced a lesson about loving one's neighbor. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the language of popular culture or subsequent experiences were revealed.

b) What language, words and ideas do participants use to describe their subsequent service-learning?

Since participants have continued to serve after high school, this question sought to understand if their continued service was described in terms of their Catholic moral understanding. Did Catholic ideas as reflected in the use of words and language still apply and influence the participant's understanding of their own moral actions on behalf of others? Have the participants internalized a Catholic understanding and does it mediate their continued service?

Context of the Study

Cases for my study were purposefully selected and based upon replication logic (Yin, 2004). Each exemplar was carefully selected from a specific Catholic service-learning program. The service-learning program, the bounded system in this study, consisted of the quality indicators emphasized by Youniss and Yates (1997) and Eyler and Giles (1999). Although the service-learning programs sought for this study were to include a program that combines course-content with quality service-placement, two of the exemplars in this study, Mia and Aaron, did not take the senior level service class. However, their nominators felt that they were students who took advantage of learning opportunities well beyond typical students. All of the exemplars seemed to have quality service placements, which Eyler and Giles define as a service context in which students can take initiative, demonstrate responsibility and work with peers, practitioners and community members. The real-world setting offered students the opportunity to actively engage in complex problem solving related to the course content, in all cases, theology course work, and service setting (Eyler and Giles; 1999, p. 169). The service-learning

course, or theology course should have included reflection, both individual and group. Each site said reflection was offered, however exemplars varied on the amount and quality. The Catholic service-learning programs were also required and did use course content that emphasized Catholic social justice, prayer, liturgy, and Catholic morality.

Although the programs were similar in structure and emphasis on Catholic identity, they differed in subtle ways. One exemplar graduated from all girls Mercy High School in the mid-South, and another student graduated from an all boys, Jesuit high school, in the West. Two exemplars were graduates of different co-educational, diocesan high schools, located in the Southern region of the United States. These locations offered unique perspectives and communities, and they enriched the descriptions and understandings provided by the exemplars.

The first school I used for this study is a ministry of The Religious Sisters of Mercy, a female religious order focused on teaching young women to be “mercy to others”. This means all persons are called to be of service to society, in particular, the Religious Sisters of Mercy community members emphasize serving those who are most vulnerable and less fortunate. Through their schools, hospitals and social action agencies, the sisters articulate a clear concern for social justice that is extended to the laity through training and welcoming their participation.

The Society of Jesus, known as the Jesuits, is an order of priests who emphasize forming young men to be “men for others”. This concern for service, which is rooted in

Gospel and prayer is Catholic but framed by a distinctly Jesuit understanding. Both the Mercy Sisters and the Jesuits are committed to the Catholic social justice tradition, but differ in their emphasis as a result of each communities' unique history and traditions. from the Northeast and the Midwest, the schools I contacted that met the service

The diocesan schools are co-educational. In this study, diocesan or archdiocesan high school refers to a school sponsored by a Diocese or Archdiocese and not by a religious order. One diocesan high school lacked the emphasis of a particular religious community, but taught the doctrine and beliefs of the Catholic Church. The other diocesan high school borrowed from the Jesuit tradition. These schools were selected based upon the structure of their service-learning program. In addition, they were co-educational which may offer different experiences than those of exemplars from single sex schools.

Participant Selection

Because my study was concerned with a particular behavior that is already exhibited by the participants, I used nominators to select the participants. The use of nominators in qualitative research is not uncommon and is used when it is vital that case participants exhibit the behavior to be studied (Yin, 2003, p. 41). In this case, Catholic service-learners were selected because they demonstrated consistent commitment to moral action through service to others. In addition, they were nominated using a process developed and designed by Anne Colby and William Damon (1992). Colby and Damon refined their nominating criteria prior to their ground-breaking study of twenty-three moral exemplars. Assisting with the development of the nominating criteria was a group

of twenty-two nominators who varied in areas of expertise. The nominators consisted of moral philosophers, theologians, ethicists, historians and social scientists (Colby & Damon, 1992, p. 313). Colby and Damon purposely included people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds and included both men and women. Their goal was to select moral exemplars from a wide range of ethnic, socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Colby and Damon hoped to find everyday people involved in extraordinary efforts.

Colby and Damon have consented to allow their protocols to be used in this study and the five criteria for nomination that were used in their study will be explicated in the section of this chapter on data collection. Colby and Damon offered the following definitions from within their nominating criteria that were used in this study. First, conviction to moral excellence “requires integrity” (Colby & Damon, 1992, p. 314). Colby and Damon define integrity as consistency between stated principles and behavior or conduct. Consistency between one’s ideals and actions translates into personal action that often occurs without concern for the cost to one’s personal life. Colby and Damon delineate this further by stating that moral exemplars would not resort to deceit in order to achieve a goal. Because honesty and integrity are stated values, behavior will remain consistent. This understanding is at the heart of Augusto Blasi’s (1993) theory of moral identity development and is supported by the literature in this study.

The process of nomination began with the local school administrators, who were the gate-keepers. They were first contacted by e-mail and then by phone. At each school, the administrator connected me with the service-learning coordinator. Once each

administrator and teacher consented to nominate an exemplar, consent letters and criteria were e-mailed to each nominator. A follow-up meeting with nominators also ensured each nominator understood the criteria. After the nomination of one Catholic service-learning exemplar from each school, the administrator and/or teacher sought permission from the exemplars for the researcher to contact them.

- Participants must have graduated from their Catholic high schools within the last four years.
- Nominees were active and exemplary participants in their respective service-learning programs.
- Nominees must be persons who have continued to actively participate in service since their graduation from high school.
- Participants must have graduated from a Catholic High School in the United States.

The first participant from the Jesuit High School, after being selected by the service-learning coordinator, deselected himself and did not return my efforts to contact him. At that point, the service-learning coordinator chose Aaron. Aaron's service-learning coordinator had only been at the school two years, which limited his pool of contacts. Aaron, was receptive and met the service-learning and moral criteria. Data

Collection Methods

Data was collected, and for purposes of triangulation, three sources were used from each school. Data included at least one nominator interview, artifacts and participant interviews. First, the nominators were interviewed, and documents, such as course

descriptions, curriculum materials, web pages, and mission statements were gathered. Then the exemplars were interviewed. In order to seek clarification, nominators and exemplars were either contacted by phone or by e-mail. Furthermore, the exemplars were given transcripts of their interviews and provided preliminary descriptions and were asked to verify the validity of the descriptions.

Interview Protocols with Nominators

Interviews were first conducted with the nominators at the school site. Because my study was concerned with a particular behavior that was already exhibited by the participants, I used nominators to select the participants. The nominators were school administrators and teachers who knew the students and were able to identify persons who are exemplary representatives of their respective Catholic service-learning programs.

One-on-one interviews with the nominators were audio-taped, semi-structured, and in depth. One semi-formal interview that lasted at least an hour was conducted. In addition, to the nominator's interview, the nominators provided a tour of their school buildings and artifacts regarding the school's service program. In two cases, Mercy Academy and Bishop Reilly, school was not in session during my visit. At St. Ignatius High School and at Jesuit High School, school was in session and the buildings were filled with faculty, staff and students. For purposes of clarification, follow up interviews were conducted by phone. My interview questions were developed by Colby and Damon(1992) who granted me permission to use their questions and protocol (See Appendix A). The questions were slightly modified in order to understand the particular socio-cultural context of each service-learning program. I selected the questions created

by Colby and Damon because of their previous and effective use in their study of moral exemplars. In addition, the conceptual framework of this study is based upon Vygotsky's theories of development and are therefore, ideally suited to this study of the experiences of Catholic moral identity. Language, context and experience are key components of his theory, and are revealed through dialogue (Wertsch, 1991).

My additional questions provided information regarding the socio-cultural context in which the participants were formed and offered insight into the language and philosophy that permeated the program. These responses were a part of the experiences participants revealed in their interviews. Data from the nominators was triangulated with participant interviews and collected artifacts.

The Colby and Damon (1992) questions provided the criteria for the selection of moral exemplars. They have been altered only slightly to address participants from service-learning programs. However, unlike Colby and Damon's questions, I intentionally sought data regarding the participants' faith life and religious experiences. Colby and Damon, although they weren't seeking information about religious beliefs, found a significant link between religious and moral identity. My questions were structured to clarify possible religious responses. In addition, I sought to explore the nominator's choice of language and vocabulary in order to understand the socio-cultural context of their school's service-learning program. Because I sought persons who serve and are morally committed to service, I asked about their habits and character. I also sought to understand if their service choices were rooted in their personal sense of moral identity. Furthermore, my study intentionally found participants who were concerned

about human beings. My goal, like Colby and Damon, was to eliminate participants who volunteered because it made them feel good, and certainly a great deal of service-learning is of the “serve and split” (Manley et al., 2006) and the “feel good variety” (Goodman, 2001). Although the participants reported such feelings of accomplishment, the fulfillment of these feelings was not their prime motivation. Furthermore, it was possible that some nominees could argue that they are morally committed, but are committed to achieving goals by any means possible. Moral development scholar Nucci (2004) cites the case of William Ayers and his wife Bernadine Dorn who committed violent acts as members of the Weathermen during the Vietnam war. While these two are committed morally, their moral beliefs are not only antithetical to theories of mature moral development (Bergman, 2004) but also to Catholic morality. Catholic morality is rooted in the recognition of the sacred nature of all human persons. Furthermore, the use of violent behavior is an immoral act used to achieve a moral end. Such thinking does not represent a consistent commitment to moral action. Therefore, it was critical that the participants demonstrated consistent moral behavior and concern for the good of others. All participants met the criteria.

My questions also sought to find participants who were willing to sacrifice their self-interest for the sake of their moral beliefs. While many young persons are focused on dating, perhaps partying, the participants I found are persons who made a commitment to serve others. Consequently, they chose to use their time and energy in ways that are counter-cultural and different from the majority of their peers. This does not mean the

participants are martyrs or saints, but instead are determined to act in a manner that is consistent with their moral identity.

Along with the participant's high level of commitment to service, this study explored the relationships they formed with others. Question nine uncovered the relationships that influenced that the participants and their identity formation. Colby and Damon noted in their study that morality is a "socially embedded phenomenon" (1992, p. 31). Because their moral action occurs within a community, I wanted to understand the impact their behavior had on the people around them. In almost all of the cases, the exemplar's behavior influenced the persons they served, their family, their friends or their peers. Their level of influence revealed the strength of their commitment and their ability to reflect their beliefs and values to others.

I also found participants who did not seem to be ego driven and who possessed a realistic perspective about their ability to serve and contribute. Because my study was interested in participants who are driven to serve others because of a genuine concern and empathy for their fellow man, I wanted to rule out persons who serve to make themselves look good, or add another column to a resume. Although the nominating protocol had already been developed the questions were not strictly followed. However, follow-up questions and probes for elaboration were necessary and provided clarification of ideas and themes (Colby & Damon, 1992; Seidman, 2006) . While the interview was recorded, I also took brief notes regarding key ideas and points that may need follow-up. Following each interview, recollections, insights, and behavioral observations were recorded. In my study, the names of the schools and nominators are pseudonyms.

Document Analysis

Documents from each school provided detailed data regarding the socio-cultural context of the program from which the Catholic moral exemplars graduated. Each school administrator not only granted me permission to review course descriptions, curriculum, mission statements, school handbooks, and web pages, but also they went out of their way to provide me with documents. These documents were selected based upon their connection to the Catholic service-learning context (Merriam, 1998). In addition, they enriched the descriptions of the particular socio-cultural context, which each Catholic service-learner experienced. Furthermore, they provided an understanding of the language and philosophy of each service-learning program

Exemplar Interviews

Participants were chosen based upon their participation in a Catholic service-learning program and based upon their continued service following their high school service-learning program. In addition they met the criteria in the nominator interview protocol. The phenomenon I studied is moral identity as it is expressed in continued service after high school. Therefore, it was critical that the participants demonstrated the behavior to be explored in my study.

I used interview questions created by Colby and Damon (1992) because of their proven reliability in their previous study of moral exemplars (See appendix B).

However, because my study was concerned about a particular socio-cultural context, a few questions were added. The additional questions helped me provide descriptions of

the exemplar's learning experiences within the socio-cultural context of the Catholic high school service-learning program.

My additional questions were designed to uncover the socio-cultural context, which initiated the participants into service-learning. These questions were also directly linked to the research questions regarding the experiences, relationships and language that were used within the service-learning program.

The questions that were created by Colby and Damon (1992) also helped to determine the level of commitment the participants had to moral beliefs and ideals and the ways in which they practice those beliefs. Furthermore, these questions were tied to the research questions in that they not only sought to facilitate an understanding of the participant's moral identity, but also helped to determine the possible influences Catholic service-learning had on their current service efforts. In addition, these questions offered a means to explore the language and ideas expressed by the participants as they shared their current moral actions. This provided insight into the extent to which the Catholic service-learning socio-cultural context influences current thinking, beliefs and language. Although, I thought it would be possible that the participant's experiences after high school or the dominant nature of the popular cultural would be reflected in the experiences, relationships and language of the participants, I found that their choice to remain in service revealed a distinctly Catholic identity.

Interviews, with the exemplars occurred at a variety of locations. One exemplar, Anna, from the Mercy Academy, was in El Salvador at the time of her interview, and we spoke to one another using Skype, an internet phone service. In addition, Aaron, was

away at college and we spoke via telephone. Mia and Rebecca were interviewed at their former high schools. Prior to my interviewing the exemplars, I visited each high school and met with the nominators one-on-one. Although the interview questions were already created, they were not rigidly followed. A semi-structured approach allowed the exemplars the opportunity to share their stories and for me to follow up and seek clarity when necessary. Although the participants did not create the conceptual framework of this study, they were given the opportunity to respond to my interpretations. All of the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed, and the exemplars were given copies of the transcripts. During each interview, I jotted brief observational notes. However, in order to build trust and increase the comfort level of the exemplars, my notes were minimal.

Finally each exemplar was assured that in order to protect their privacy, their names, as well as the names of their high school, university, teachers, peers, and service placement would be pseudonyms.

Data Storage and Retrieval Strategies

First, the raw data was stored in a binder based upon the bounded system within the case study. In addition, the data was stored in chronological order, and included memos and matrices. The binders made the data easily accessible.

Next, the data, document notes, memos, analysis notes, and summary documents were filed systematically by exemplar, and categorized chronologically. Within each exemplar's filing system I included data from the nominator's interviews. This included any initial coding, memos, charts and forms. Follow up interview data from the exemplars was filed along with a summary of the findings, raw data, any initial coding,

and matrices. Finally, documents from the service-learning socio-cultural context were included. They consisted of copies of school documents, document summaries, notes, memos and summaries of the methods of gathering the data.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously (Merriam, 1998, p. 162). This allowed me to continually refine interviews and to follow up on the nominator's and exemplar's insights and ideas. Finally, the collection of data in tandem with analysis enhanced my efforts to ensure validity and reliability throughout the process. Not only did I verify and analyze findings. I also asked nominators and exemplar's to review the data I collected and recorded.

Furthermore, comparisons between cases offered a means to construct themes and rich descriptions provided by the exemplars, the nominators and from the collected documents (Merriam, 1998). These comparisons provided an understanding of the exemplar's experiences and development within the particular socio-cultural context of Catholic service-learning. Memos were also helpful with this analysis. Memos, were written in a spiral notebook and dated. They were used to link the conceptual framework to the data gathered from the field (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003; Maxwell, 2005; Seidman, 2006). Furthermore, my memos helped me seek links between cases and experiences, and they assisted me in tracking data in a manner consistent with the research questions.

During the process of data collection and analysis, I recorded thoughts and ideas. The journal helped me record my reactions and insights as I collected and processed the descriptors and language revealed in the analysis of the interview data. This analysis and

reflection provided a means for me to review each exemplar's story and socio-cultural context.

In addition, my conceptual framework guided my coding of the raw data. The conceptual framework ensured that the research questions were answered and helped to ensure validity. Although the conceptual framework guided coding, my memos and journal, in tandem with the conceptual framework helped me find additional themes and ideas.

All of the data was systematically analyzed. Interview recordings and verbatim transcripts were repeatedly reviewed and notes generated and compared. This data was analyzed in conjunction with data regarding non-verbal observations, notes, and speech patterns and word choice. Furthermore, the interview data was reviewed and coded first sentence by sentence. Then paragraph by paragraph. This process of coding helped me grapple with the choice of language and words used by the nominators and exemplars. Since my study was concerned about the socio-cultural roots of the exemplar's choice of mediators, (language and tools to carry out moral action) careful analysis and coding of sentences and paragraphs was a critical aspect of the data analysis.

Finally, for purposes of clarity, I chose to eliminate grammatical errors in the quotes used in the Findings, Chapter 4. In addition, repeated use of the word "like" and "um" were removed from the write up to assist the reader with getting to the heart of the participants' meaning.

Validity

I used several tools offered by Cresswell, (1998), and Merriam, (1998), and Yin (2003) in order to create an effective qualitative research design that increased validity. My choice of an analytical multiple-case-study design as a structure assisted in assuring validity (Yin, 2003). This study uses Yin's case-study approach and the appropriate criteria to maximize validity. The chart below, illustrates Yin's design strategies, and illustrates how this study addressed them.

<u>Validity and Reliability Tests</u> Yin (2003)	<u>Case Study Tactics (Yin, 2003)</u>	<u>Strategies used in this Study</u>
<p>Construct Validity: "establish correct operational measures for the concepts being studied" p.34</p> <p>Internal Validity: " Establishing a causal relationship, whereby, certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships" p. 34</p>	<p>"use multiple sources of evidence" "establish a chain of evidence" "have key informants review draft of case study report" p.34</p> <p>"do pattern matching" do explanation building" do time-series analysis" p. 34</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conceptual framework (Maxwell, 2005, Yin, 2003, Merriam, 1998, Cresswell, 1998) 2. Triangulation (Maxwell, 2005, Yin 2003, Merriam, 1998, Cresswell, 1998) 3. Multiple sources and methods used.(Seidman, 2006) Maxwell, 2005, Yin, 2003, Merriam, 1998, Cresswell, 1998) 4. Verbatim Narrative (Seidman, 2006) 5. Time-series analysis (Yin 2003) 6. Nominators and case subjects will review key findings (Seidman, 2006, Yin 2003; Merriam, 1998) 7. Researcher memoing and journaling (Seidman, 2006, Maxwell, 2005, Yin, 2003)

<u>Validity and Reliability Tests</u> <u>Yin (2003)</u>	<u>Case Study Tactics (Yin, 2003)</u>	<u>Strategies used in this Study</u>
External Validity: “establishing the domain to which the case studies findings can be generalized”(Yin, p.34)	Use replication logic in multiple-case studies p. 34	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. use multiple-case design, (Yin, 2004, Cresswell, 1998) 2. Replication logic, (2004) 3. Analytic generalization (Maxwell, 2005, Yin, 2003)
Reliability: “findings are consistent with data collected” Merriam, 1998, p. 206	“use case-study protocol” “develop case-study data base” p. 34	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replication and use of Colby and Damon case-study protocols 2. Protocols for all interviews and documents (Yin, 2003; Seidman, 2006) 3. Case-study data-base (Yin, 2003) Audit Trail, (Cresswell, 1998; Maxwell, 2005)

Internal Validity

According to Merriam (1998) internal validity is the extent to which the findings reflect reality. Furthermore, she suggests that in order to assess internal validity the researcher must determine the answers to the following questions: “Do the findings capture what is really there? Are the investigators observing or measuring what they think they are measuring?”(Merriam, 1998, p. 201) . Using Yin’s (2003) design strategies I used seven strategies to ensure the findings met tests of validity. These strategies included the use of a conceptual framework, triangulation of data, multiple sources and methods, verbatim narratives, time-series analysis, member checks, and memo writing.

My use of a conceptual framework to guide data collection and analysis ensured that the study was grounded by the research questions. The lens through which descriptions and data were gathered and viewed were based upon a constructivist approach and the theories of Lev Vygotsky. These two theories worked in tandem and explored the importance of socio-cultural context, dialogue, individual experiences, and mediational tools. These sources of data also provided rich descriptions of the meanings the exemplars' reveal regarding the socio-cultural roots. Next, triangulation of data was vital to ensure research validity (Cresswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Yin 2003; Maxwell, 2004). In addition to the use of the use of verbatim interviews with both nominators and the participants, I used data collected from school documents. The nominators and school documents provided rich descriptions of the socio-cultural context of the exemplar's service-learning experiences. These three sources of data created a holistic picture of the meanings and descriptions provided by the exemplars.

In addition, I used time-series analysis. Yin (2003) suggests this method as a way of fleshing out the variables of importance to the phenomena being studied. In my study, the chronological depiction of key events in the lives of the Catholic service-learner exemplars will enhance understanding of the meanings the exemplar's attach of their experiences, language and behaviors. Vygotsky's understanding of human experience was the focus this study, while at the same time leaving it open to the discovery of emergent themes and ideas.

to the events that occurred within their service-learning course and after graduation.

Descriptions and findings were reviewed by the nominators and exemplars. Yin (2003), Seidman (2006), and Colby and Damon (1992) recommend this strategy. As the exemplars' reconstructed their experiences they were making meaning. To ensure the researcher's accurate depiction of these meanings, the exemplars were asked to validate the researchers accurate representation of their descriptions, thoughts and words. The nominators were also asked to review their own descriptions of the exemplars and of their school's service-learning program. Next the exemplars reviewed the chronology of the events in their lives as recorded by the researcher. This aided in ensuring the accuracy of the researcher's findings.

Finally, in order to facilitate an understanding of the researchers role in my study, I maintained memos and a journal (Cresswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Maxwell, 2004; Seidman, 2006). Through the use of memos and a journal, and review of them through out the process of gathering data, I came to understand my own biases, which are a part of my own socio-cultural context, experiences and values.

External Validity

External validity is "knowing whether a case-study's findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case-study" (Yin, 2003, p.37). Lincoln and Guba, (2000) frame external validity around the central question of rigor. "Are we interpretively rigorous? Can our co-created constructions be trusted to provide some purchase on some important human phenomena" (2000, p. 179) ? Merriam (1998) offers an alternative approach when she notes the importance of ensuring each case is richly descriptive and that the

method for case selection is clear. This approach allows the reader to draw conclusions about the study's external validity, and was a strategy used in this study.

My choice of a multiple case study is supported by the conceptual framework and is a means for increasing external validity (Yin, 2003; Merriam, 1998; and Maxwell, 2004). Yin (2003) calls this replication logic. Not to be confused with quantitative assumption that the sample represents the population, qualitative replication logic suggests that the cases were selected because of their initial similarities. In this study, multiple service-learner exemplars were selected as a result of their similar behaviors and participation within a particular socio-cultural context.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the methodological approach to my study. In addition, I have included my own grounding in the philosophy that led me to this research and choice of methodology. Finally, I outlined the ways in which data was collected, analyzed and coded.

Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction

My study analyzed the Catholic moral identity of service-learner exemplars' and their views regarding Catholic service-learning and the socio-cultural context that they experienced. It is grounded in an understanding of the meditational means and concepts that fostered each exemplar's moral development. The theoretical framework thorough which the revealed understandings of the moral exemplars is synthesized, is based upon analysis of the language and discourse used in artifacts, nominator interviews and interviews with the exemplars. The findings, which not only explore the experiences of Catholic service-learner exemplars, but also the processes, tools, language and symbols used in their descriptions, provide the basis for the portraits of each exemplar.

The descriptions contained in the portraits are filtered through the lens of my conceptual framework, which was developed from my review of the literature, and more specifically, the work of Lev Vygotsky and Augusto Blasi. The title of each portrait emerged from my interviews with the exemplars and were constructed to reveal the ideas and insights of each participant.

Vignette Overviews

The first portrait is entitled, Anna: El Camino a la Salvación or The Road to Salvation. At the time I interviewed Anna she was 21 and had started her junior year in college at a major Jesuit University on the East Coast. However, when we spoke, she was spending the fall semester of her junior year engaged in service in El Salvador and was

taking courses at the local Jesuit University in San Salvador. Anna is middle class, grew up in the Mid-South and attended Mercy Academy. Anna's service experiences were quite varied. In high school she worked with children and in college she has worked and immersed herself in the culture and lives of people in El Salvador.

The next portrait shares Mia's story of service and is entitled Mia: Christ in all the Hearts that Love Me. Mia was eighteen years-old at the time of our interview and she had not yet started college. She was preparing to go off to college at a Jesuit University in the Mid-West, and today she continues to attend college there. Mia is upper middle class and attended an upper middle class diocesan high school, in a large southern city. She was the youngest student I interviewed. Mia's service experiences consisted of school site projects and several immersion trips.

In portrait three, I recount the experiences of Rebecca and I have entitled her vignette, Rebecca: 'Love Ought to Manifest Itself More by Deed Than Words'. Rebecca was nineteen years-old at the time of our interview and was in the middle of her sophomore semester at a local college. She grew up in a small southern city and attended a Diocesan Unit school. This means she attended grade school and high school on the same campus property. The elementary and high school had limited interaction with one another, but was a close-knit community. Much of Rebecca's service experiences were with children with disabilities and included several immersion experiences.

The final portrait is of Aaron, the only male student in this study. His vignette is entitled, Aaron With Greater Love than Fear. Aaron attended an all boys Jesuit high school in the West. His school was largely upper middle class and in a wealthy suburban

area. At the time of our conversation, Aaron was a freshman at a Jesuit college in the Mid-West. His service experiences were largely connected to his family and to his school experiences and Jesuit High. He has had limited service experiences during his freshman year of college, but he hopes to seek immersion experiences and further service opportunities at his university.

Vignette One

“El Camino a la Salvación or The Road to Salvation”

Anna

Background

After I met Anna and heard her story, I immediately thought of the story of the Road to Emmaus from the Gospel of Luke (Luke 24: 13-35 New American Bible). The Road to Emmaus is a metaphor for Anna’s experiences, and therefore seemed particularly appropriate. The theme of this particular Gospel story is deeply embedded in both the charism of the Religious Sisters of Mercy and that of the Society of Jesus. Both orders played significant roles in the education of Anna and in many ways, the Road to Emmaus seems a cogent reflection of the spiritual path Anna has experienced. Like Anna’s personal journey, the Road to Emmaus offers a view of faith and spiritual growth that both comfort and challenge. Luke’s Gospel tells of two travelers who meet a stranger along the seven-mile trek from Jerusalem to Emmaus. As they walk they discuss the great events of the day, Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection. The two travelers, one we are told is named Cleopas, invite their new traveling companion to dine with them after they arrive in Emmaus late in the evening. When the stranger breaks the bread, their eyes were opened, and the stranger disappears. Cleopas and his unnamed friend see that all along the way to Emmaus Jesus was walking with them. The two travel companions then remark to one another, “Were our hearts not burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” The two travelers then go on to spread the

news about Christ's resurrection. This Gospel story provides a clear image of the mission of the Sisters of Mercy and the Society of Jesus. One of their spiritual gifts, or a part of their charism is to be fully present to all people as they work not for them, but beside them. Through work, whether it is learning, building, counseling, nursing, etc. people build solidarity and community. They become companions along the road, and moreover, they are Christ's earthly presence embodied in the persons gathered. Through that coming together, the companions enable one another to value the sacred nature of each human person, and that knowledge leads to commitment to one another. It has a ripple effect. Like Cleopas and his partner, we cannot keep our love and care for others to ourselves. The two travelers immediately go out and spread the news of Christ's resurrection. They are no longer merely witnesses but active participants in the changing of the world. It is at this stage of spiritual and moral development that we move ever closer to being a disciple. We become the person God desires for us to be.

Anna's walk began in the capital city of a state in the Mid-South. It is a middle size city with a small town atmosphere. Anna's father raised her, and he is a man she deeply respects. She credits him for his support of her efforts and for his encouragement throughout her life. Sometime, before high school, her mother died. When it was time for her to enter high school, her father chose to have Anna attend Mercy Academy, an all girls Catholic High School sponsored by the Religious Sisters of Mercy. For that, she seems grateful. Mercy Academy remains dear to Anna and she often returns to visit or speak to students about service. The school is located in the center part of the city, and it is an older established neighborhood. It sits a top a hill and is obscured from view by old

and thick trunked trees. The grounds, at least during the summer I visited, are peaceful and lend themselves to quiet contemplation. A Marian garden sits outside the school's front door, and is a visual reminder of the Academy's Catholic identity. The school is predominately white and middle class. Although the Academy strives to recruit a culturally and economically diverse population, it is not able to do so to the extent the school community would like. Funding scholarships continues to be a challenge, particularly in periods of economic downturn, as was the case when I visited.

Approximately five hundred students attend Mercy Academy, which serves grades nine through twelve. The school website indicates that typically, 98% to 100% of the students pursue a college education. In the class of 2010, one hundred and twenty-nine graduates received over eight million dollars in scholarship offers and logged over 6000 hours of service. It is in this socio-cultural context that Anna Kelly, Valedictorian of the class of 2008, and the exemplar recommended for my study by Mercy Academy learned and grew.

Today, Anna Kelly is a junior at a large prestigious Jesuit University in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Currently she serves on her home state's advisory committee for AmeriCorps. In addition, she received an ROTC scholarship and she looks forward to honoring her commitment to serve at least four years in the military. Anna is an International Studies major, and speaks fluent Spanish. In addition, Anna is the oldest of the four exemplars I interviewed. She was well established in her college career and was beginning her junior year while living in El Salvador. Unlike the other exemplars, she was a long way from home, and had been away much longer than Mia,

Rebecca and Aaron. In addition, Anna had already made some clear decisions about her own identity and her own way of being in the world, and who Anna has become is rooted in her service experiences.

Service Experiences

Anna's service experiences and personal growth mirror the discovery that is described in the Gospel story, The Road to Emmaus. As Anna told her story, it seemed that her family, mentors, teachers and friends walked with her and often challenged her. For Anna, the people who mentored her are her sources of strength. She said "I find a lot of strength and courage in the people who are supportive of me, and that is like God working through them". According to Anna, Sr. Deidra, her high school principal, is beloved and admired. "I don't think she knows but she is pretty inspiring to me. They just kind of love you along". Anna was also mentored by a student leader in El Salvador. This young woman, Megan, returned to El Salvador after graduating from college, and works with the program Anna is involved in. Now, through their work they are friends. Anna says, "She lives here, and I have been able to talk to her and things like that. So she's one of the many people who have been inspiring."

All along Anna's service path, she has encountered people who have impacted her and taught her. She describes her service in terms of her love for the people she has met, and for the learning and maturity she has gained through them. Her term for service is more of a description. She says she "companions with" the people she has met. For example, Anna recalls that she struggled to win the trust of a particular child in El

Salvador. She describes her developing relationship, and the trust she was able to build with him in this way,

I mean, like it's amazing, because there's this one little kid named Juan. He's two. And the first month and a half, he was just petrified of me. He wouldn't talk, and also with my practice partner, he wouldn't talk to us. He wouldn't hug us. He might give us a little kiss when we left because his mom made us. And today, we went up to see the coffee farm. We went all the way up to the furthest place on the volcano, and then we went further up into the coffee farm. Like, right now they are just starting to cut coffee. And so today, Juan was on my shoulders the entire time. It's just little simple things like that and growing in relationship with people is something we focus upon. Because these are some of the voices of the poor here, and we just grow in relationship, and that means a lot more than the English classes we teach.

Anna reiterates the importance of the people she works with and the focus upon them rather than upon the tasks she might need to complete. She grows as they grow.

When I spoke to Anna on November 10, 2010, she was in El Salvador. Because she was in Central America we spoke using Skype, an Internet video phone service. In El Salvador, she was living in a community with eighteen other students in the same program that I will call Casa del Compañeros. Casa del Compañeros means House of Companions and communicates the intent of the program's purpose. As part of the program, Casa students pledge to live in solidarity with the people of San Salvador. Because the majority of people in San Salvador, and throughout the country have no hot

water, television, or Internet, Anna's community house lacks those amenities as well. When Anna and I spoke she had to call me from an Internet café, where she and her friends may go one or two times a week. While I interviewed her, the hustle and bustle of her surroundings competed for our attention. Sometimes, in the background I could hear American voices, and Spanish speakers talking to one another amid the roar of buses, trucks and various other vehicles going by. Dogs would bark and at one point, a woman came by selling tamales.

Casa del Compañeros is dedicated to serving the poor in the campos, countryside, surrounding San Salvador. Three days a week, Anna attended class at the Jesuit University, and two days a week she did what she called work. Anna does not describe her work with Casa in terms of service or teaching. She says, "We give English classes, but more than that we just grow in relationship and come to understand their reality. What the reality of the poor is here in San Salvador, and that can be translated to what the reality is throughout the world." Anna is very humble about her time in Central America, but her decision to go there is deeply connected to where she came from and who she is.

In order to understand how Anna became the person she is today, it is important to follow the road she began at Mercy Academy. According to Anna, service was "a normal part of her academic experience, "our junior year." She describes the program in this way.

We had normal theology classes our freshman and sophomore year, so our junior year, we had service-learning instead of theology. During our class time we

would leave campus and go to all sorts of stuff at service sites. Then we would come back to school and go on with the rest of our day.

It is interesting to note the language Anna uses to describe her service experiences. She does not connect her junior service-learning class to what she would call “normal theology”. Although the school intends the service-learning course to be theology based, Anna’s choice of language does not reveal a connection. Anna seems to indicate that for her school, logistics and getting students out to the service sites and back to do course work was a challenge. She says.

We were sort of promised to these programs and to these people to be there at this time. And that was the only time that we had and so it was very much about taking advantage of the time. I know with [the alcohol prevention program for grade schools], we were in a classroom for six weeks before we started our service, because we were learning the program, all the different checks and the different thoughts behind the program

According to Anna, her school had little time to provide reflection. Typically, reflection is a pedagogical tool that helps students make sense of their service, and provides them with the means for relating their service to their school context. In Anna’s case, it would help her connect service to her faith. Reflection, according to the research of Youniss and Yates (1997) and Elyer and Giles (1999), is the bridge between service and learning. In fact Elyer and Giles call it the hyphen in service-learning. Reflection is process where students are challenged to look at their beliefs and perceptions. They are asked to hear multiple view points and think about them. Moreover, they are given the

opportunity to understand the people they serve, see the relationships forming between the service site and the student, between the teachers and students, and in a Catholic school between human beings and God.

Anna notes that during high school they did not formerly process or reflect upon their service experiences. She said, “I don’t know that we reflected. We reflected like at the end of the semester, but I don’t know that we ever had built in time to reflect, within the semester.” It is only now, as Anna has had several other service experiences in college that she considers the value of reflecting. She says, “I don’t know if that has changed since I have been a student. It might have, and it would probably be good if it did.” As we spoke, Anna seemed to be processing some of her high school experiences for the first time. She said You know it’s interesting that you ask me these questions about my high school service, because I feel like now, I can almost answer them better in the sense of service. I don’t know that I like to call it service, what I am doing now. [Her work in El Salvador]

Anna is quick to point out the ways that her early service experiences helped her, and her conversation reveals her focus on the people she grew to appreciate.

When I asked her about opportunities to reflect in class on their service experiences in high school, Anna responded that she never felt abandoned or without resources. She says, “ But I mean. Aren’t you curious if they were always available to talk to us if someone were available to talk to us?” When I nodded she continued, “We never had group reflections on how things were going on at our site, which would have been helpful”.

Although the work itself was important, Anna and her peers found people to talk to when they had questions or concerns. She noted that someone was always available should a need arise. In addition, she grew close to the young women with whom she served. Anna's teachers intentionally created teams of girls to go out to the service sites, and the students were not paired with their best buddies. They were placed in groups and this created a new community. According to Anna, it is with these people that she shared her ideas and thoughts about service. She said, "We went as a group and we would drive as a group and drive back. So I think a lot of that processing was in your group processing. And we would talk about the day and what happens when". This helped the girls form bonds with one another and to cope with some of the experiences they had at the service site. Of the girls Anna rode to service with she says, "I think having a mix of people I didn't always work with on a day to day basis, that I wasn't already really good friends with, was also helpful, because it, like interacting with different people, you get to know a different side of them." Anna still feels close to the girls she rode with, and she seems to feel they shared a significant experience with one another. In addition to her service team, Anna seemed to be inspired by the people at her service site. She says that "Becky was the director of [the youth alcohol prevention program], I'm not sure if she is still around, but she was around, and she would talk to us about things or if we need advice, or ask how to teach this or that." Of Becky, Anna says, "She was someone who I really learned to appreciate and appreciate her perspective on things". Anna also contends that she never felt like she was encountering people who were much different than her. She

worked with children in an elementary school setting and that was familiar territory for her. She said, “

In terms of or my preconceptions of whom I would be working with, I think because of the programs I was involved in; there wasn't much of that. I think if I were working in a soup kitchen or anything like that I would have had more of that. But I was working in an elementary school, much like what I was familiar. I didn't grow up there, but I think that, I knew I was going to be working with students and I knew what kind of students I was working with.

Consequently, there weren't many stereotypes for her to overcome. She notes that most of her work was in school environments, and she viewed the children she worked with as “innocent people”. When she moved to a high school for students with various forms of mental illness, most of her concerns were about whether or not the students would listen to her, and she found they did. She said,

Those kids, I think, like sometimes I didn't really know who had problems and who didn't. So I mean, I think I was a little nervous before I went, about working with kids with physical or mental handicaps, about how that would be and how that would feel. But that ended up being the greatest. I love those little kids. Yeah, I wanted to go back with them and work them again, but I didn't really get the opportunity to.

For Anna, the children were the first of many experiences that drew her to service. She said she was drawn to service

. . .by a mix of things. I'm sure it was my initial experience with service-learning, and that I'm also involved at home.

But she has come to view service in a deeper more profound way. Anna describes service this way, "It's more accompanying other people in learning about that and helping them as they help you learn. And that is what I am beginning to call that".

Anna's understanding of service and her work is much more developed than the other exemplars' experiences. She has come to see herself in relationship with the people that she "companions with". Because Anna describes her service work as a mutually beneficial activity that helps her and helps those she walks with. The focus of her work, as I mentioned earlier, is on the forming of relationships that include a sense of responsibility towards one another. She receives from those she serves as well.

Pivotal Relationships Through Service

Anna's service experiences in high school reveal the importance of the relationships she formed at her service sites. When I later asked her why she continues to serve, she referenced the alcohol prevention program and the children she worked with. She said, " I think that those kids were some of the first people who like really responded to and like, [pauses] began that process and interest". Through the relationship Anna developed with her students, she grew and they grew too. Each benefitted from the relationship. When Anna reviewed her high school experiences with me, through the lens of her service experience in El Salvador, she comes to some insights about what she learned. She says,

In terms of my high school experience, I think that it gave me a general sense of what it means not even just to give back, but also just to give. Because I do feel blessed in a lot of other ways. I don't know, even now, after like, being here in El Salvador, the word service has changed meaning to me. I don't even know that I like to use the word service anymore, because I don't know how much I am doing for other people, its what they're actually doing to me, and they are changing me and a forming me into who I am.

For Anna, the experience of being with and working beside others forms her into who she is meant to become. Through her connection with other people she learns and grows, and for her this has been a liberating experience. She wrote in her blog, after a month in El Salvador another comment about how the people she has come to know have changed her. She says

In a sense I learn far more than I could ever hope to teach. Yes I don't have a lot of things like TV, Internet, and hot showers in my house. Yet, I have an incredible opportunity to build relationships with people who inspire me to live intentionally and to be the most me. The most fulfilled and liberated me. It's scary and beautiful. This journey here is such a multifaceted one for me, and it's unfair to present in any other way. Saying El Salvador is great just doesn't cut it. It is more than I could have expected in ways that I never anticipated, and it's a little uncomfortable sometimes. But it is real.

Anna elaborates on this idea of the country and the people moving her closer to who she is and how she chooses to view the world even further, in an earlier blog.

The beauty here is overwhelming, if you care enough to find it. It is truly a matter of looking up. I've met so many beautiful people here thus far, who have shared their stories with other students and to me-strangers more or less.

Furthermore, the extent to which people are striving to organize and improve the lives of others is inspiring. I think Valeria at [name omitted] is a perfect example. She is full of strength and love and a deep desire for justice. Here in San Salvador, the becarias [scholarship holders] living with and around us are, to me, not only great friends, but they also represent hope in this chicito [or chiquito, means little boy] country. Coming from the campo to the city has to be a tremendous challenge, and as a result, I'm so impressed by their ability to thrive and their willingness to share their lives with us as students. Even more young men like Guillermo, Eduardo, and Mario, the teenage sons of Marie in San Miguel, continually compensate for the cat-calls men make in the streets. These young men practically redeem all Salvadorian men in my mind: they help their mother with the dishes, they wash their own laundry and they are very concerned with their studies. It may seem small, but it's different. These people and experiences help me to realize that poco a poco [little by little], I will be able to learn and understand more. Beauty and suffering coexist, and it is up to us to find the beauty and acknowledge the suffering. And to live amongst it all.

Anna chooses the way she will view the world. She chooses to see its beauty and embrace the ugly parts too. She comes to understand that not only does she have to try to understand the life experiences that others have had but also she has a choice regarding

how those life experiences will form her. She chooses to walk with people and “to make the world a more loving place.”

However, Anna’s realization about this type of growth did not necessarily come in high school. As she says, it is through looking back on her experiences after serving in El Salvador that she has come to the realization about her role in the world. In addition to her classmates and the students she worked with in high school, some very significant people mentored her in her life. In high school, she recalls Becky who ran the alcohol prevention program with respect and admiration. She says Becky provided a different perspective. The program required Anna to spend a lot of time preparing to present the program before implementing it in the schools. In that process, Becky modeled how to handle the questions and difficulties young children often share in the classroom setting. Anna says,

That program isn’t just about preventing drinking it also teaches children what they should do if they are with their parents who are drunk and they want to drive, and they don’t particularly want to go with them, and those kinds of things. Or like if they had to get in the car where they should sit. I really learned to appreciate her.

Becky modeled not only the program components for Anna, but also provided her with tools she would need to handle complex issues facing the children. Anna spent weeks in the classroom learning how to teach the program, and Becky guided her, and slowly moved her into the classroom. She mentored her throughout the process, until Anna was ready to individually and independently move into the classroom. This process

is in keeping Vygotskian theories of learning. The knower, Becky, creates a learning experience for Anna, who watches, listens and imitates, until she is able to make the program her own. However, what Vygotsky doesn't mention in his theory is what makes this significant. It is the relationship of admiration and respect that moves Anna to emulate Becky and the other mentors she encountered. Colby and Damon (1992) also found this to be true in their study of moral exemplars. Each exemplar could point to key relationships in their lives that inspired them to serve, to care for others, to act on moral principle. Like Christ and the travelers to Emmaus our mentors walk the path with us and gradually open our eyes and hearts.

In describing Becky, Anna is passionate in her description of the alcohol abuse prevention program, and she clearly sees it as a way to save the lives of children. She says, "It isn't just a program to prevent drinking." Becky inspired Anna, and gave Anna a sense of purpose and led her to feeling capable.

Several school staff members also touched Anna's life. She unabashedly says, "I love the Sisters of Mercy. I just want to throw that out there. I think in my high school they taught us to be strong young women, but also to be like to embrace faith". Perhaps, the person Anna credits with having a significant influence on her at the Academy was Sr. Deidra. She says, "Sr. Deidra is really an inspiring figure. I don't know how much you have spoken to her. I don't know if you have really talked to her, but I love her a lot. I don't think she knows that she's pretty inspiring to me. There were a lot of people along the way. They kind of love you along." Sr. Deidra remains an inspiring presence in Anna's life and they continue to talk to one another during Anna's school breaks. They

share a mutual affection for one another. Of Sr. Deidra, Anna says, “Sr. Deidra is so awesome. I remember receiving birthday cards, and I am pretty sure everyone got those. Like there’s just that support and care. Umm, and without, hopefully, I’m Catholic and it just reinforces that, and things that I think should be taken as very important. I don’t know”. Sr. Deidra modeled for Anna what it means to live out her faith. In many ways, it wasn’t about just going to school; it is about how people walk with one another, and form relationships. Sr. Deidra’s heart felt example of sending birthday cards to everyone, and caring about each student is what made an impression on Anna. She saw that all of the students in her school received care, and Anna watched Sr. Deidra model how to express recognition of the sacred nature of each person in the school. Sr. Deidra, Becky, and the school chaplain guided Anna and gradually moved her into practicing her faith in a way that allowed her to be present to others in the world.

Mercy Academy provided what Vygotsky would call the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky theorizes that the knower is the instrument that introduces the learning or a particular concept to the learner. In so doing, the knower is also passing along a socio-cultural context, and gradually giving the learner the tools to apply concepts individually and independently. This means the mentor, or teacher models and creates the learning environment and moves the learner to acquiring the necessary tools needed to move towards greater independence. The place between the introduction of the concept and the independent use or application of it is called the zone of proximal development. In this stage of learning, the learner moves ever closer to making the concept his or her own. Mercy Academy created a place where Anna could see each

person she encountered modeling service. All the teachers helped the freshman and sophomores serve. Then Anna was gradually moved into a role of greater responsibility. She was prepared by the school environment to serve, and then she had to strike out on her own. Each step along the way led her to create a new way of serving and integrating her faith.

Identity: Finding God; Finding Me

One of the first steps Anna made was her choice to go to college. She received several scholarship offers to a variety of universities but she says she did not choose her Jesuit college because it was Catholic. She said,

I think my college likes to pretend that its not Catholic, and that's ok, but like that's [College name omitted]. So umm like in terms of its policies and it can be very Catholic, whatever that means, and it's a Jesuit identity, and I think it doesn't really put that in the forefront, but if you look for it, its definitely present. Um, but I don't think that I chose my college because it is Catholic, but I do really enjoy the presence of the Jesuits, and sometimes I do wish it was a little more present, but at the same time I really do enjoy the diversity of thought and experience on campus.

That diversity is important to Anna, and as she looks back at her high school experiences she says,

I think in some senses, growing up, I was raised in small bubble of experiences about faith and life and really everything. I think going to college and meeting different people, and then also now being here [in El Salvador] gives

me the opportunity, not that I wasn't close to people in high school, but to really love people for whom they are. I remember in high school, one of my friends would sit around and poke fun at me. I had such high expectations for people and she would say stuff like, "you know so and so drinks on the weekend and stuff" and I would be like noooo, No they don't. I don't really know how to explain it but I think now, I'm just really learning to love people for who they are and for whatever decisions they make. And if that is a life giving decision for them and that helps them become more themselves and be really true to who they are, then I really need to embrace that. So I think in a lot of ways life is make life more loving instead of less loving. Because I have learned that life can be really hard too, and I see that everyday here.

For Anna, El Salvador was a mixture of beauty and suffering. Juxtaposed with the misogyny she witnessed on the streets were people, and in particular, young men who affirmed and welcomed her. She shared in her blog the following story.

While many men may see a young woman coming to the cancha [court] to play fútbol as a search for a boyfriend, there are also signs of hope. The woman with whom I stayed has three teenage sons. If only all Salvadoran men were like these young men. They help their mother and respect her, and when they aren't studying they are helping their father with his work. They even told me the other day not to take to heart the things men here to say to me, and to not let it affect the way I view myself, not to let it affect my autoestima [self-esteem]. We played volleyball and soccer much of the weekend, and they never treated me any

differently because I am a woman. I was simply a player to them and they respected me as a good player at that. Placement based on capacity not gender, I would have to say is progress. Young men like these give me hope, even in a country plagued by machismo.

For Anna, each series of choices, choices that were both challenged and affirmed by others, have led her to a deeper understanding of the world she walks, and also about herself. She comes to see that she has to live in a world that offers both pain and joy.

Anna's growth and formation led her to make decisions about the kind of service she would perform, and throughout her college experience, she has been involved in Campus Ministry or volunteering in some way. However, it was during Anna's sophomore year in college and over her spring break, that she participated in a delegation to San Salvador, and that delegation had a tremendous impact upon her. The purpose of the delegation was to "immerse ourselves in matters of justice". With her delegation, she learned about issues facing the people of San Salvador and the entire country, issues such as "mining, human rights, and youth concerns". They visited the sites where Archbishop Oscar Romero and many others had been martyred during the civil war. She learned much about the role of the United States in this small country. It was during her visit that she became acquainted with the Casa del Compañeros, and decided she would like to spend her study abroad semester in the Casa. However, she was already scheduled to spend her junior study abroad semester in Ecuador. She says the decision came from a need to do something more, and came from deep within her. Anna says she felt "called" to El Salvador. By calling she is referencing the Catholic tradition of seeking a vocation.

The word vocation comes from the Latin verb *vocare*, which means to call. This idea is central to the belief that God has endowed every human being with special gifts and with talents oriented toward a specific purpose and way of life. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines it this way. “Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being” (CCC2392). The act of calling or receiving a call or *vocare* is to think about what God means for us by placing us where we are, by surrounding us with particular people and by endowing us with unique gifts. The Jesuits often use the word call interchangeably with the idea of feeling or seeking through reflection the ways in which God might be pulling us in a certain direction. In this way, Catholics are taught to listen to God, and that is often described as listening to our inner voice. It is that small voice that speaks to us and resonates with our innermost being. Anna describes it this way.

I’ve always had a desire to help others, in whatever sense that was. So when I came here on delegation, I just kind of knew that I needed to come back. Because when I got here on delegation I got exposure to the Casa, and I know I’m supposed to be going to Ecuador, but I don’t really think I am going to Ecuador. I didn’t feel like I was going to go to Ecuador, and I don’t know what that means.

After listening to her inner voice, Anna applied to Casa and came back to San Salvador. Her choice was not without some resistance from key people in her life. The pull for Anna to go to San Salvador was quite strong. According to Anna, her Dad and Granny were deeply concerned about her desire to go to San Salvador. El Salvador has one of the highest murder rates in the world, and often times, it is women who are the victims. Gang activity is rampant. However, Anna was pulled there, and this is where

she chose to serve. Anna description of her choice to go to return to El Salvador and about the person she desires to become is consistent with the Mercy Academy core values and mission.

She described going home after her delegation trip and telling a family friend, she calls Granny that she was going back El Salvador.

When I came home from the delegation, I said, Granny, I am going back there, and she said ‘No you’re not. No you’re not. You aren’t safe there. You aren’t going back’. I was like Granny, I am going back. She was like ‘There are poor people in the United States. You can help poor people in the Unites States’. I was like, that’s a fair point, but really I feel called to El Salvador right now.

Again, Anna uses the word “call” frequently to describe her decision to go to San Salvador. She describes an inner sense that is pulling her toward El Salvador, In the Catholic tradition, the call is God stirring us in ways we don’t’ often have words adequate to describe, but it is a sense of being moved toward or a way from something.

In her blog, Anna shares a way in which she reflected upon this call. After her initial visit with the delegation to San Salvador she went home, and she writes about going shopping with her Granny. She says, after a day of shoe shopping she went to Granny’s house.

After going to dinner, I drove my Granny back to her house and ran upstairs for a moment. About that time, I heard her shout out to her husband, ‘Don’t go in there barefooted’ referring to the bathroom of a not too shabby home. In this moment came a stream of images, to the many of the children who didn’t ware

shoes or wore flip flops everywhere in the campo, or the men who played soccer barefoot because their shoes were work shoes. Yet we are concerned about walking into a bathroom barefooted. Sure, I guess we should wear shoes in the bathroom, but at that moment, I felt like I was living a life full of contradictions. Too many shoes when others have none, overpriced dinners, rampant consumerism without regard or even recognition, and here I am in the middle of it.

Anna's blog reveals a sort of cognitive dissonance. Her language reveals her compassion for the children of San Salvador and a sense of living inconsistently with the solidarity she feels with them. For Anna, spending the day shopping and worrying about material things does not line up with the world she left in El Salvador, and it affirms her initial decision to apply to go. At this point in her life, she had already submitted her application to go.

The dissonance and the call or pulling Anna feels from the world of San Salvador was also described in Colby and Damon's (1992) study of moral exemplars. Many of the exemplars Colby and Damon studied revealed that failing to respond to that pull, and the recognition of the needs of others, led to a feeling of self-betrayal. This is also consistent with Blasi's (1991, 1993, and 2004) theory of moral development. Anna's last sentence in the quote above reveals her feeling of living inconsistently, and at this point in her life, she had already made the decision to return to El Salvador.

In addition, Anna made the choice to go back to El Salvador almost instinctively, and that instinctive decision was rooted in her self-understanding. She, like the exemplars in the Colby and Damon study, discussed acting on instincts or acting in a way

that is consistent with her religious beliefs, but her choice didn't occur after a long period of introspection or discernment. Anna said

But I don't know how much I have had to discern, really, because a lot of things were just moments. Like, no, this isn't what I am called to do or like because everyone thinks this isn't right for me, you know what, may it is. Or this is kind of crazy, but I am going to do it anyway. I just have this feeling of being called to do something a lot of times.

In the Catholic tradition, discernment is the act of considering a choice or action after a long period of prayerful reflection and meditation. It is a way of trying to detach from our own desires, and seek what God would want for us. The Jesuits even have a somewhat lengthy process for discernment. Here Anna indicates that her knowledge of what to do comes in brief moments. She has a sense of what needs to be done.

However, Anna does ponder some of her choices over a period of time, and sometimes she seems to go with her initial instinct. When I asked her about a time in her life where she wasn't clear about what action to take, and how she came to know what to do, she responded

I think I have a lot of those moments. Like whether it be where I am going to college or whether or not I will accept that scholarship or whether I should come to Compañeros. In a lot of senses I think that maybe I would be thinking in one direction and I would be thinking I got into my college, and I would wait for my other colleges and see what happens with my other

scholarships, even though I knew I December that I had gotten in. I was going to wait until May.

She does say that she wrestles with some of her decisions. For example her decision to accept a Navy ROTC scholarship is important to her, but it also dictates the path her life will take the following four years after college.

When I graduated, I decided to accept a Navy ROTC scholarship, mostly out of a sense of service in that I feel called to serve my country, which isn't something I have discussed much here [El Salvador], but when I graduate I will serve as an officer in the Navy for a minimum of four years. I think that kind of plays into how I viewed service in high school. I was involved in government work as well. Like in terms of being involved in different political campaigns and different platforms that would really help people in my state. And so the people that I admired followed this path and it's something I felt called to do as well. It's something I still do want to do. But it's also still something I struggle with; because there are other things I would like to do when I graduate.

Although Anna says her sense of being called isn't flowing from long periods of deep meditation and reflection, they do flow from a sense of knowing and recognizing her inner voice, a voice that she trusts and is not afraid to engage. She seems to engage that voice often and over a period of time, even after making a decision.

When I asked her where that came from, she said You know, I'm not really sure, I am not really sure that I can name it. Maybe it comes from my faith and not just like not, but I am feeling guided. In that faith sense. Like God. It's a feeling

that there is something more I should be doing with my life. I don't think I am here at Casa by accident. It's been an opportunity for personal growth for me that I could never have anticipated. I don't think it would have happened with out _____(her Jesuit University). It's just been an acceptance of who I am and growing more comfortable with that. Yeah, a lot of it, in that sense is faith. Hopefully, He is watching over me a little bit.

Both, Anna's interview response and her blog, reflect what Vygotsky (1978) would call inner dialogue. Vygotsky theorized that from infancy we develop self-talk. Piaget called it babble, but Vygotsky theorized that young children were talking themselves through learning. They were acquiring language and concepts from the knowers, parents, teachers, adults, and peers. As human beings mature, this self-talk becomes internal rather than external. Anna's self talk is external in her blog. She is wrestling with her principles that seem incongruent with the world in which she lives at home. This struggle and respect for the people she encountered in Central America, leads her back to them. Her choice was an independent choice and her blog reveals the mediators, the language and principles she has learned from her time at Mercy Academy and at her university. She uses the words "consumerism and materialism" in ways that reflect the social mediators she has acquired.

In this way, Anna has moved from the path she knows well, to a path that speaks to something inside her. She is finding her way to service or work, and making it her own.

So my dad was like worried about me coming here and worries about me every day. Most of my friends thought it was really cool. . . . But in terms of Dad

and Granny, I was just like no; I know this is something I really need to do. And I think my Dad knows that I am stubborn enough, and in that sense, I was going to do it.

Anna was moved to come to El Salvador and she had this inner sense of knowing was right for her in spite of the misgivings of family and friends. When Sr. Deidra and I spoke in December of 2010, she shared a conversation she had with Anna's Dad.

You know, her dad, he's so funny. . . . but you know, it's almost like, he comes and he'll go, it's almost like, okay, okay, I know it's a Mercy school, but, you know, does she have to go do this, does she have to go to El Salvador. You know.

Anna's Dad relates her going to San Salvador to the Mercy values, and he like Anna and Sr. Deidra connects Anna's work with who Anna has become.

Anna's choices to be involved in her college campus ministry, the delegation to San Salvador and her ultimate choice to return and join Casa del Compañeros is rooted in her strong sense of identity and self, which were supported by her father and by the teachers and experiences at Mercy Academy and at her University.

She also developed a commitment to continuing to be in solidarity with the people of El Salvador well after she leaves. She says the experiences and relationships she formed in there will be a part of her for the rest of her life, and she fully intends to be active, either working with an NGO or the government in some capacity, after completing her military service. She says,

The life choices I am making, I hope that I have moral courage . And in terms of working for a politician, who is working on behalf and trying to make decisions that benefit the people in my state. Or I am here in El Salvador learning the reality of people, because then I can go back home and be like, look, our decision to buy coffee from, whatever, you realize that you are supporting someone getting \$4.00 a day for cutting coffee. Or like [government] commissions that aren't just. And where as like certification processes like Fair Trade and Direct Trade aren't perfect, but doing like things like that and being involved in those movements is substantial, Because I have learned that like being a gringo, or being an American here, we don't think of ourselves as having power in the states but like my presence in these communities, they feel like, oh, someone cares for us. And you have a voice in your government. So I think that standing up for people, in that sense, is knowing that being here and being present, when I go home that I have a responsibility not to forget that reality.

What Anna articulates here echoes Catholic teaching regarding the difference between charity and justice, and it is one of the significant goals of Catholic service-learning. She describes not only being fully present to the people she walks up the volcano to teach, and that presence is important, but she knows that her presence in El Salvador does not address the systemic causes of their poverty. What does address the root causes is the work of justice, and in order to do that work, she will have to follow through with her responsibility to act upon the knowledge she has gained in El Salvador.

This understanding was framed in Anna's high school service course, but it seems she really internalized it and made it her own during her immersion experience in El Salvador.

Anna's definition of moral courage coincides with her belief in the necessity for addressing the systemic causes of the poverty she saw in El Salvador. For her, moral courage seems to be a choice to act upon the reality she learned in El Salvador. To not act upon her understanding is a failure to act upon her responsibility. She seems to indicate that moral courage is doing what is hard in spite of the difficulty it may cause her personally, and that failure to act is a betrayal of the people she has come to love and care about in El Salvador.

Her focus on being a *compañero*, rather than lady bountiful, is also consistent with who she has become. She says,

I don't want what I am doing to be in any way out of guilt for what I have or for what I have been blessed with. That's just a fact. I think we are called to live more simply, but at the same time I am not here to solve the problems of everyone else. I am here to just understand. These comments are a healthy recognition, that she is not in El Salvador to be a messiah. She is merely working to be a presence of compassion. The understanding and companioning Anna describes, echoes the Mercy Academy core values of "compassion, mercy and justice", and Anna's recognition of the "intrinsic worth and dignity of each person". It is also consistent with the values espoused by the Casa del Compañeros program.

Casa del Campaneros offers you an opportunity to immerse yourself in "la realidad" of ____ Central America. The program is rooted in four components, or

pillars: accompaniment, academics, community, and spirituality. Beginning with sustained accompaniment of the poor, Casa del Compañeros integrates praxis experience into rigorous academic reflection, and then supports this reflection through a carefully structured web of spiritual and communal support. These four aspects facilitate the transformation needed to develop a “well-educated solidarity”.

A significant aspect of your Casa experience will include field placement or what we refer to as praxis site. In the praxis site, you will be placed within a small community where you will accompany and develop unique relationships with the local people. Learning amidst the gritty reality of these poor communities will be one of the most important aspects of your immersion experience.

Anna echoes Casa’s description of the relationships and personal growth she has experienced in her blog.

Intellectual analysis has been my predominant way of learning for years, but expressing how these experiences really affect me . . . THAT is what this semester has been. Yes, I work, teaching English classes in communities on the volcano. Yet the things I know are most challenged there. In a sense, I learn far more than I could ever hope to teach. Yes I don’t have a lot of things like TV, Internet and hot showers at my house. Yet I have the incredible opportunity to build relationships with people who inspire me to live intentionally and to be the most me . . . the most fulfilled and liberated be. It’s scary and beautiful.

Anna’s blog reveals her presence in El Salvador is not about the work. It is about living fully and growing in love and acceptance of people who on the outside are

different from her, but at the same time are linked by their sacred nature and their humanity. She talks about how she is used to using her head, “intellectual analysis” to think through her experiences. However in El Salvador, she talks about what touches her heart. It is the “relationships” she has formed with people and they have “inspired” her strive to live in a way that is consistent with the kind of person she wishes to become.

Anna’s choice to go to El Salvador does not seem overly brave to her. Her decision to go was rooted in the kind of person she desires to become. It is a road she knew she had to travel, and if she went to Ecuador, she knew she would not feel she had done what she was meant to do. In their study of moral exemplars, Colby and Damon (1992, p.13-14) define moral courage in rather concise terms. They put it this way,

The lives of Sakharov and Gandhi also demonstrate a great certainty about moral principles-combined as noted above with an open mindedness about new facts and their implications. Like all exemplars in this book, both Sakharov and Gandhi subjected themselves to great risks. It is noteworthy that in his memoirs, Sakharov seldom (if ever) remarks on his own moral courage. It is as if he assumes that he has no choice in matters of principle. Courage seems moot, even unnecessary in such a light. This is the pattern we noticed in all twenty-three of our exemplars.

There is humility in Sakharov and Gandhi’s definition of moral courage. They are guided by their principles and not so much by a sense of acting bravely or doing something extraordinary. Interestingly, Anna’s also separates courage and moral principles. She says.

Moral Courage. You see, I don't know if I even have a great definition for moral, and I tend to think of those things separately. I think that might be why I struggled with the question of if my work is moral. I've been exploring the difference between moral and ethical and it is a thing that I think is important for me.

In light of her choice to go to El Salvador, she is able to define moral courage. Although she might disagree, her choice to go to El Salvador embodies the kind of moral courage she herself defined and her words echo the Colby and Damon description.

I think moral courage for me is doing what I know I need to be doing, even if I might be full of fear. Fear of the outcome or the consequences or the actual process, but I do it anyway, because I know it was what I should be doing, what I need to be doing. So in that sense, moral courage is about having the courage to do what is right, and I hesitate to use that word, only because a lot of times things are more than black and white. They are very, very grey.

Like the Colby and Damon example of moral courage, Anna is quick to recognize that she must look at new information, and then act. Courage in her description is also somewhat irrelevant, and following her principles takes precedence.

Anna's decision to go to San Salvador was also attached to a sense of what needed to be done. Although she does not see herself as someone of great moral courage, she does express the hope that she might have moral courage.

You know I hope that I do in little ways, everyday, but I never, I don't think I'll ever be able to, like, because when I think of true moral courage, I think of people, like prominent figures.

Anna's humility is also much like the exemplars in the Colby and Damon study and fits Augusto Blasi's theory of moral development. According to Blasi's theory and Colby and Damon's study, moral people act in ways that consistent with whom they believe themselves to be, and they act because they view themselves as responsible. The moral exemplars in the Colby and Damon study did not consider themselves as extraordinary in any way. They were merely doing "what they thought they should be doing" and failing to do so created a sense of unease and cognitive dissonance, and that dissonance is clearly articulated in Anna's blog about shoe shopping.

For Anna, success is not material. In fact she pointed out that many people would think her greatest success is becoming Mercy Academy's class Valedictorian, and or the fact that she got into a prestigious University. However, she defines her success in a much different way. She put it this way,

But I think I feel most successful in my decision to come here [El Salvador]. Because in that decision, I've learned an incredible amount about myself, and I think I am changing, which I was petrified of. And I think because of all this I am becoming more me.

When Anna returned home in December and visited with Sr. Deidra at Mercy Academy, Sr. Deidra noticed the changes she saw in Anna.

Well, she was always, you know, kind, gentle, but she was also a pretty driven child. Like she was like, you know, number one at this and number one at that. I mean, in terms of academics, she was just all over it. And I just sense that the whole thing has kind of softened her. I mean, she's in the ROTC, you know,

she's at ____ University. You'd almost think those two worlds could not exist together that she's tried to bridge, but she, what she, and I'm not going to say it as well as she could, but I got a sense from her just recently that she really sees that there are ways to talk about violence and peace within that context in a way that's really important, you know. It's really important for who she is for her to be faithful to that. So I just feel a lot of integrity in her.

The integrity Sr. Deidra describes is also repeated in Anna's blog and interview with me. Anna expresses continued commitment to the people of the campos she met in Central America. In her blog she talks about the sound of rain in a rather poetic way, and then moves into the danger rain causes to the people on the volcano.

I think a government has a responsibility to protect people from harm, before anything else. The rain doesn't listen to our calls for help, but our government should. I have some hope that they will help from the action I saw yesterday, but perhaps I am naïve. I will be keeping the communities of Las ____, La ____ and Las ____, and other zones affected in my thoughts, hasta la ultima gota [till the last drop] and beyond . . . I hope you can do the same.

In a Vygotskian sense, Anna has formed and molded her experiences into her own understanding of service and moreover, her place in the world. However, that service has touched her heart, and she is motivated to act because she loves the people she has encountered. To not act on their behalf would be a betrayal of the love she feels for them.

When I asked Anna about this aspect of her work she told me about a quote on the wall of the Casa community house in San Salvador. The quote, she wasn't sure where it came from, but I have since learned, is from Lilla Watson, an Aboriginal activist. Here is how Anna translated it for me from the Spanish version she knows. "If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your salvation is bound up in mine, then let us work together". After talking to Anna, I quickly recorded this thought in my notes. The idea that our salvation is bound up in one another speaks to the heart of Catholic Social teaching. It's grounded in the idea that we are here to be God's voice and hands here on earth. This idea is both at the heart of the Mercy values expressed by the school website, the service-learning program and Sr. Deidra. Anna's words reflect a sense of sharing not only her work with the people of El Salvador, but also the essence of who she is, and who she is a fellow human being, who wishes to walk with them. Their souls, their salvation, are bound together. In order to reach one another, they must walk together and be fully present and unified in Christ's Gospel call to love one another. The metaphor for Anna's story, like the Road to Emmaus is that no one walks alone, and that service means companioning and sharing a relationship grounded in mutual responsibility in trust. In this way, Anna recognizes her own privilege but is able to see the humanity and gifts that others offer. The people Anna met in El Salvador walk side by side with her, not behind or in front. They are companions.

Vignette Two

“Christ in the hearts of all that love me.”

From the Prayer of Saint Patrick

Mia

Background:

Before I met Mia, I saw her walking across the parking lot of her former high school. She appeared sunny and bright and bursting with enthusiasm and energy. Her openness and warm smile were welcoming. After reflecting upon my conversation with Mia, I was reminded of the traditional prayer of St. Patrick, and that seemed a fitting metaphor for her views about service, faith and the atmosphere in which she learned and grew.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ to comfort and to restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in the hearts of all that love me,

Christ in the mouth of friend and stranger.

This prayer has several names. It is most commonly referred to as St. Patrick's Breastplate or sometimes, The Deer's Cry or The Lorica. The breastplate was a hard metal armor Roman soldiers wore to protect their heart from wounding in battle. When

the heart stops, life ends, and because it was believed that the soul resides in the heart, the soul would then leave the body. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians 6:14 (New American Bible) He says "So stand with your loins girded in truth, clothed in righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for peace. In all circumstances hold faith as a shield . . ." It is interesting that Paul uses war gear to suggest peace. He turns the idea upside down. St. Patrick takes this idea a bit further. His breastplate is a prayer to Christ, and states clearly Christ resides in his heart, but it isn't just in St. Patrick's heart that we find Christ. The Prayer of St. Patrick is a beautiful prayer, and it reminds us that at all times, we are surrounded by Christ, and that we should seek Christ in the world and people we encounter. This idea is a theme I will explore in greater detail as I share Mia's story.

Mia graduated from Bishop Reilly the summer of 2010 just prior to when I met her. She was the first student I interviewed, although her school was my second to visit. Mia is the youngest student I interviewed, and has had most of her service experiences through high school and through her work with her Dad. At the time I met Mia, she was preparing to go off to college, and she accepted a scholarship to a well-known Jesuit College in the Mid-West. She was an outstanding student at her high school and very active in almost all aspects of service offered at Bishop Reilly. She was raised by her mother and father and has triplet sisters who are ten years younger. When we met in July 2010, Mia was eighteen years old. Her school, and more specifically, the principal and Mr. Mullen, the Dean of Campus Ministry, selected her to be a part of this study. Mr.

Mullen indicated that he selected Mia based on the level of maturity he sees in her. He said,

I think this young lady makes very mature decisions. . . .While other students were going to the beach, she pretty much spearheaded our alternative spring break her sophomore year. If it weren't for her, I don't know if our alternative spring break would have had the success we have had over the last two years, because her sophomore year, we had very few students sign up. She was one of them and she rallied a group of her friends to go.

Mr. Mullen notes that Mia inspired friends and got them involved in service as well. In addition, Mr. Mullen sees Mia as a faithful young woman. He remarked,

I think there are two things that motivate her. One is her faith. That is what we are called to do. Take care of the poor. Take care of the needy. And I think she also feels an obligation, you know, being a human being, to give back.

Mr. Mullen also selected Mia, because he sees her as someone who makes decisions that reflect a strong inner drive and desire to achieve and set goals. According to him, Mia "does all the things eighteen year olds do" but he does not worry about her making poor choices. He said Mia "has a pretty strong will", and it is Mia's desire to achieve her goals that motivates her to serve. He stated,

There is nothing that she is going to do that is ever going to put her life or her goals in jeopardy. And whether that is dating the wrong guy, or going out with a group of people who are going to put her in a bad position, I don't worry about her in that regards.

Although Mr. Mullen sees that Mia does the same things other eighteen-year-old girls do, he sees in her a commitment to serve and he sees that she is driven by her faith which might not be typical of her age group.

Like the majority of the students at her high school, Mia is white and middle class. 98% to 100% of Bishop Reilly students go on to attend college. Her alma mater is working to build a scholarship fund in order to attract a more diverse population, and has a long history of serving minority students in a part of the world that was reluctant to do so. Funding for scholarships is a challenge as the school would like to be able to offer everyone who desires a Catholic education the opportunity.

Bishop Reilly and Mia's home are located in this large southern city with a rich history of growth and wealth. While many who live there have achieved affluence and fame, Mia's hometown also has a lot of people who are poor and in need, and Mia was introduced to that world through her work with her Dad, a physician, in the hospital emergency room located downtown.

Service Experiences:

Mia seems to be a very driven young woman and she has many goals and ambitions, most of which are focused upon helping people. Although Mia plans to major in art, she then wants to go on to medical school. After completing her Bachelors degree and before going to medical school, she hopes to take a year away from school to serve in some capacity. When we talked about her goals, she said

I want to climb the highest mountain in Europe. I like that one [goal] a lot. And one of them is to spend a year of service to others. That's just something

I really want to do. I want to do it when I'm young because I want to be fit and able, because I'm a little nervous I guess, if I don't defer medical school for a year, that everything will pick up and I will be doing my residency, and then before you know it I will be starting a family, and then it will be retirement when I have time to do stuff like that, so I'm really making that something that is my game plan that's going to happen.

Mia reveals a concern about her own life getting a way from her, and she shares her inner drive to keep her life a long a path she has chosen. She worries about getting settled after medical school, with marriage and raising a family, and does not want to miss out on helping others in some way. She also talks about the possibility of, after medical school, working in some form of mission work. Doctors without Borders is attractive to her, and she is intentionally choosing to become a general practitioner. Like her Dad she wants to be a primary care physician, and like her Dad, she considers emergency room work to be a part of primary care.

Mia's high school service experiences were not tied to a particular service-learning course. Bishop Reilly offers a senior service-learning course, but Mia's academic schedule precluded her ability to enroll. However, Bishop Reilly wraps service and faith throughout the high school culture, and Mia chose to tap into those experiences. She noted,

I think everyone obviously has to get involved to some extent. They don't really have a choice. It is a requirement. But I think some people do obviously get more out of it than others, but that is usually by their own choice. I think it's

because a lot of times they're way too involved with everything else. They don't really have time. I'm athletically declined. Sports were never really an obstacle for me. But for those kids who play like three sports a year, and you know trying to keep their grades up, and all this other stuff, doing stuff outside the requirement, isn't really an option. You know there were people on the soccer team this year, the boy's soccer team that wanted to go on the alternative spring break. Well, there were a couple, but they couldn't because they had practice. And stuff like that can be a conflict, but I think most people who have time and really take it to heart get involved.

According to Mia, school involvement is important. The above language reveals a school community that is active and involved in some form or another, and she does not seem to judge others for their lack of involvement in service. The focus of her comments are on the desire to serve, and she sees many of her peers want to serve, but struggle juggle schedules and obligations, all of which are part of the high school experience.

However, Mia's close circle of friends were involved with service, and she is proud of that.

I have several friends, a couple of my guy friends, who work with Special Olympics. I am so proud of them. They do it all the time. The other night I asked Joe, do you want to hang out? He said, 'I can't. I have to go to a Special Olympics Baseball game or something. I think the way Bishop Reilly stresses how important service is leads to it being important to the students as well for sure, and those relationships I have with my friends, encourages me to continue.

For Mia, service is woven into many aspects of her life including the lives of her friends. It seems that Mia sees service as being a part of the school's culture of service and that is reflected in the choices that students make, such as choosing to honor the commitment to Special Olympics rather than hanging out with friends. In addition, Mia notes that her friends' efforts with service, to use her words, "encouraged" her to continue her service work.

Mia has been involved in service throughout her years at Bishop Reilly. As a member of student council, Mia was pleased that student council required service. She outlines her service below.

But with student council we had service hour requirements, which I had participated in both my freshman and junior years, which I thought, was really cool that was important. And then junior year was probably the biggest year for me.

Mia makes a careful distinction between justice and service. She then defines that difference using the language of Catholic social teaching. She says,

We have our social justice projects and it focuses on justice versus charity, which I thought was really interesting because when all of us thought of service projects we thought of the very immediate stuff and not going to the root causes.

Mia's distinction is vital and is a primary goal of Catholic social teaching. The goal is to teach students to not only perform acts of charity, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, but also addressing the systemic

causes for injustice. Catholic Social Teaching seeks to change the root causes and make the world a better place.

According to Mia, her school required juniors to go beyond meeting immediate needs and explore what Catholic social teaching terms the “root cause”. Getting to what Mia called the “root causes” involves looking at the systems and structures, the systemic causes that are the reason for a particular need. For example, in looking at homelessness, students might look at the cost of housing and the availability of affordable housing in their city. Or even deeper, they may engage in or look at the political debates about developer incentives and building ordinances in their own city. Mia then shares that the focus of her own Catholic Social Teaching project was a pro-life topic. She says

And so I was actually, I did a pro-life social justice project. I worked at a local anti-abortion clinic basically that gives women information about the pro-life cause, which is really cool.

Mia’s language reveals her enthusiasm and excitement. For her the experiences were “cool” and she was interested in going beyond *charity* and exploring what she termed the “root causes” for the need her service fulfills. The idea of exploring the systemic causes of injustice, the *why* part of charity work, lies at the heart of Catholic social teaching, and for schools this is often the most difficult aspect of Catholic social teaching to help students explore. The work of changing social structures requires advocacy, and that can become political. However, Bishop Reilly makes an effort to emphasize this aspect of Catholic Social Teaching. Although Mia did not mention doing advocacy work in the community, she did have to advocate to her fellow students. To do

that work of advocacy, she first had to explore why women seek abortion and she had to understand the Catholic Church's teaching.

Mia's experience with the study of abortion reveals a more academic approach. This project required Mia to do a great deal of research and investigation into the issue and systemic causes that lead to a woman's choice to have an abortion. Along with the research and the project presentation she had made to her classmates, Mia worked at a pro-life women's center. Although she did not have direct contact with the clients at the center, she was involved in the effort to provide for the needs of women who were struggling to keep their children. Although, this academic pro-life project differed from Mia's other service experiences, it was still transformative for her, and I will explain later in this chapter just how that came about.

Mia's sophomore alternative spring break, was where she began to describe the people she came to know through service, and it is through her encounters with the people she worked with and service that not only led her on the path to continued service, but also to the choice to select a Catholic college where she could continue to find ways to serve. Her first trip followed Hurricane Katrina, and she and her peers went to Louisiana to help rebuild homes. She says,

We basically worked on homes that had damage from the hurricanes. That was really great. That was the first year Bishop Reilly did an alternative spring break, and Mr. Mullen and Mr. Nix were the two moderators, and we were down there for a week and it was fantastic. And actually that trip sophomore year is what started to influence me towards looking at Catholic colleges. Because

originally I wanted to go as far away as I could from home, and I wanted it to be a really big school, because I had been in Catholic school since I was, you know, actually pre-school. And I wanted to try something different and so sophomore year, I started to see that the service aspect was increasingly important to me, and that was something that comes a long with Catholic institutions especially.

For Mia, this first alternative Spring Break opened her to new ideas. She realized that she wanted to go to a college away from the world in which she was familiar. However, she found that the Catholic colleges she explored had the kind of service program that she wanted.

She continued to open her heart to further experiences of service and growth. She then described her work with Habitat for Humanity in Louisiana.

We worked with Habitat for Humanity, and that was really incredible because I feel we got more accomplished than we did sophomore year, because Habitat was so much more organized. And so we built homes for a week. We were digging foundations and hanging dry wall. And it was funny because there were more girls that participate on trips than guys, and it so funny to see girls doing these things really, you know physical labor. And that was really great. I loved junior year and that was kind of the final push toward going to a Catholic college.

Mia's trip to South Carolina and the work she in Louisiana seemed to affirm her interest in service and in choosing a Catholic College.

She also came into contact with people who inspired her. She describes the people she met as a result of the work she did following Katrina as follows;

And actually that trip sophomore year is what started to influence me towards looking at Catholic colleges. Because originally I wanted to go as far away as I could from home, and I wanted it to be a really big school, because I had been in Catholic school since I was, you know, actually pre-school. And I wanted to try something different and so sophomore year, I started to see that the service aspect was increasingly important to me, and that was something that comes a long with Catholic institutions especially.

For Mia, this first alternative Spring Break seemed to open her to new ways of thinking. She realized that she wanted to go to a college away from the world in which she was familiar. However, she found that the Catholic colleges she explored had the kind of service program that she wanted.

We worked with a guy, when Habitat For Humanity builds a house, they require you [the homeowner] to work on your house as well. You know, you don't just get it [the house]. And so we got to work with a guy named Earl. I can't remember his last name. And he was phenomenal. Super friendly guy, and so it was cool to work alongside someone who was someday going to have this home. And then same thing when we worked in Abbeville, Louisiana, we got to work with some of the homeowners, and they were just so kind, and so grateful. I think a lot of times it is easier to give than it is to receive.

These experiences seemed to help Mia understand the need of other people, and their humility and hard work inspired her. She also gained an insight about the people

she encountered. She saw their gratitude, but also sensed their discomfort at receiving so much help.

In between Spring Break trips, Mia continued to be involved in service at her school. As President of Bishop Reilly Service Corps, she helped organize a day care for Latino families attending what she described as “a sort of Latino version of Dave Ramsey.” It was called Libertad Financiera or Financial Freedom. This program provided, in Spanish, immigrant families with information about financial planning, interest and loans, retirement planning, tax information etc. She also helped organize Relay for Life, a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society at her school, and she continues to be involved with that organization at her university. Even her artwork at her high school benefitted charity. During her senior year she won third place in a National Catholic Charities Multi-Media contest. Her pencil sketch, entitled “Trapped by Poverty”, won \$250.00 for her school’s relief fund and another \$250.00 for the Catholic Charity effort of her choice.

However, during Mia’s junior and senior years, she sees that she grew even more. She had several experiences throughout the school year that led her deeper into service work. One requirement at Bishop Reilly High School for juniors is that they complete a social justice project. This is the project Mia described earlier, in which Mia researched abortion, worked at a pro-life clinic, wrote a paper and made a presentation to her classmates. During this project, Mia underwent a change of heart.

Actually, this is probably a little bit surprising. For a while, I was really pro choice. I thought it was really the woman’s decision whether or not she

wanted to have this baby. I was thinking along the lines maybe she got raped, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. But after I started doing the project, I realized how off I felt that my logic had been. I really had a change of heart on that issue for sure. I think it was less than one percent of women who have abortions are women who get raped.

Mia goes on to explain that her research combined with the work in a pro-life clinic moved her to rethink her views. She notes that what she learned about the long-term impact of abortion on women changed her point of view. In addition, she said,

I had to go pro-life when I picked the project because that is the Catholic ideation, [Catholic teaching regarding abortion] but I am so glad I did, because it really did change my view on that and then how important that is.

Although, Mia did not work with women seeking an abortion, the experience was still impactful. For Mia, that act of choosing to look at the other side of her own view opened her up to a new way of thinking. Mia says this particular service project cause her to see “how off I felt my logic had been.” In addition, she was moved when she researched the lasting impact such a choice has on women, She said, “You hear a lot of long-term consequences emotionally for people that have them, and so given the opportunity to look at that, and really that’s why I chose it.” Prior to the social justice project Mia did not accept Catholic Church teaching on abortion. She was pro-choice.

However, she chose to explore her thinking by taking on a project that required she defend the Catholic Church’s teaching on the sanctity of life. Through her self-questioning, her service and her research, Mia came to accept the pro-life teaching of the

Church. In this way, her teachers and the Church created a zone of proximal development, a space where Mia was given the socio-cultural context, or as Mia describes it, “the Catholic ideation”, and the opportunity to explore it. In addition she served at a pro-life service site, and helped to meet their immediate needs. She said,

Bishop Reilly really encourages students to look beyond [charity] to see that there is so much more than taking care of the immediate [needs] and to understanding, and you know exploring their [the student’s] views, and really thinking about the way they feel about topics, even if they don’t agree with the Catholic ideation. I think that challenge to think about your world in a long term way is something Bishop Reilly really works on.

The long-term thinking and exploration of social justice is one of the intended outcomes Mr. Mullen articulated. He said “And so what service does, and in particular service to these communities, it allows kids to interact with people who are in need. And so they start to realize that maybe their perceptions of what is going on aren’t accurate”. When Mia’s school culture, her research and her experience with the pro-life organization, came together, she internalized it a way that was consistent with her socio-cultural context and with her sense of self understanding

Also during Mia’s junior year, Mia was involved in many other activities at school. One activity Mia chose to attend is called *Search*. Search, is also known as Chi Rho’s in other dioceses. In this program, young women and men, in separate groups go on a weekend retreat. Faculty, and senior students lead the juniors through faith sharing experiences. In these retreats, adults and students share their faith stories, their personal

struggles and through this process they build a community of trust and respect. Through *Search* and as a result of her service Mia says some of the key ideas that Bishop Reilly promulgated have remained with her. When I asked her to tell me which ideas stuck with her the most, she said

Faith, knowledge, service is obviously the big Bishop Reilly motto. You know it is the basis for everything we do here. And then, one [motto] that isn't exactly service, but one of the things they say is you will be known; you will be loved. And I think that is absolutely true. Really different from all my friends at other schools [who] have probably had great experiences, there is only one Bishop Reilly, and so I think that concept of us being loved by the faculty and by each other, and you know, we're loved by God. I think that spreads to the way we treat other people, and to our service involvement.

Although Mia recognizes that other schools offer what she called "great experiences" to their students, Mia connects her service work to the love of God and to the people in her school and at her service sites. In her view, her school is different from other schools, because she felt loved by members of the faculty, and the love she received, she was expected to share with others not only through service, but to all the people she encounters.

Mia's project, *Search*, and her other service experiences had an impact on Mia's thinking regarding the people she encountered in the Emergency Room where she worked with her Dad. She said,

I scribe for him [Her Dad]. He'll have ten or more patients at a time, and I basically keep track of the paperwork. The ER he works in though, [name of hospital omitted] is downtown and sees a lot of homeless people. And one of the problems he encounters a lot, and that was my initial, really my initial big encounter with the homeless population, is most of the time they come in and they are intoxicated. They're not really sick; they're just looking for a bed. And so it's very, I saw how frustrating it is for my Dad, who is thinking, you know I want to take care of people who are actually sick. Because one of the big problems is that people who are homeless, if they are found intoxicated, the police give them the option of, you can go to the hospital or you can go to jail. And they're obviously going to pick the hospital. And so I think, I don't want to really say I resented them, but there was a side of me that didn't really see that not all of, not all people who are homeless abuse the hospital system, and not all of them are alcoholics. I think that was greatly my impression because that was what I had been exposed to.

Initially, Mia seemed to resent what she perceived as a misuse of the emergency room. People with alcohol problems were taking bed space from people who were sick.

However Mia experienced a change of heart and she describes it as a result of her reflection on the stories her friends shared about the soup kitchen where they worked.

And then actually one of the, maybe bigger times that I saw the difference [between her perception and the reality she encountered] obviously, through service projects that my friends had been on, and the soup kitchen junior year, I began to see a little more of the humanity side to it. If your only option is, you

can go to the hospital or you can go to jail. Obviously going to pick the hospital.

And so I think, I don't want to really say I resented them, but there was a side of me that didn't really see that not all of, not all people who are homeless abuse the hospital system, and not all of them are alcoholics. I think that was greatly my impression because that was what I had been exposed to.

Mia's shift in understanding came when she began to connect her school experiences with her work with her Dad. Again, the socio-cultural context at Bishop Reilly helped Mia create a framework in which she integrated her school experiences with her experiences outside of school, and developed a way of understanding the people and the world she encountered. According to Mia, her insights about the homeless came about as a result of another school experience.

And then actually, we had a speaker come in when we got inducted into the St. Vincent DePaul Service Society, and she works with the homeless. She is, I think one of the editors of the homeless newspaper. And she talked to us about her work with it. And so it was really special because it was because of my involvement with Bishop Reilly. It was because I am here [Bishop Reilly] that I got to see the other side. Not all of them are bums. They are people. I think because of that I saw both sides of the story.

Mia applied what she learned from the speaker who came to her school, and from her friends to what she was seeing at the hospital. Through that self-exploration and personal reflection, Mia was moved to see the people who came to the ER as human beings. The combination of her school's effort and her work with her Dad was

transformative for her. She heard the stories of the homeless, from the speakers at her school, and connected them to the living breathing people she and her Dad met in the Emergency Room. This insight helped move Mia to rethink her view of the homeless. She experienced a change of heart and was moved to feel compassion and see the “humanity of the patients she saw at the hospital.

Pivotal Relationships Through Service

Mia also continued to experience more changes of heart during her senior year. And the new learning occurred largely as a result of several key experiences and the mentoring she received. During Mia’s senior year, she went on spring break to an Abbey in the Southeastern part of the United States. Because the monks at the abbey were aging and involved in work to keep the abbey running, the students came to do work on the dorms. Mia shared that while the students were there, they had some erroneous perceptions about monks. They thought that the monks took a vow of silence. Mia commented that usually when they worked with Habitat they had music playing and the people working talked a lot to one another. But while at the abbey, initially, the students were hesitant in their interactions with the monks. Mia and her peers soon learned that the monks could talk, but their vow was to abstain from idle chatter. Once the lines of communication opened, the students learned about the monk’s practice of viewing work as something that is to be done in tandem with prayer. While working on the dorms, Mia explored this practice. She recalled,

It was kind of cool to experience that because it was so serious, and while we were doing the fix ups on the building. We also had a lot of time to just think

about where we were and how beautiful it was. And it was really incredible. I loved it.

For Mia, this reflection and prayer time was moving to her. Also, the abbot of the abbey gave a brief talk to the students, which Mia believes will stay with her the rest of her life.

It was funny because when he started out and he was talking about, he said, you know, most of you have probably heard that you have to love yourself before you can love others, and I don't think that is true. I think that you have to love others before you can love yourself. And we we're all just sitting there and we're like no that's wrong. You're not right.

For Mia and her classmates this was counter to the message they had heard before, "in order to love others, we must first love ourselves". However, the Abbot's choice to start with this opposite message startled the students and grabbed their attention.

And then he went on to talk about how to really be able to appreciate ourselves, we first have to appreciate and take care of other people. And how important that is.

This idea of service being an expression of love is one of the central purposes of Catholic service. Christ's message is that self-less action is based upon love and not fame or glory or accolades. Through giving to others, persons came to live in a way that is consistent with the goodness that abides in all people. Self-less action in the Catholic tradition of service is seeing God within the other, and within the self. Mia extends this idea as she processes the kind of love the Abbot discusses. She said,

I think one of the things he pointed out that was crazy for me as far as my relationships go, is he said, you know, we always expect other people to love us perfect, but we can't expect that because asking them to love us perfectly is asking them to be God. And so, first of all, that was really cool because I was thinking, yeah, that's right, your not only faith-wise, God does love me perfectly, and that's incredible. You're never going to find a better friend. Which I think as a young adult is pretty cool to, I don't want to say figure it out because it's not really something you ever figure out, but I think it was cool for me to have those experiences in my faith so early.

The feeling of being loved is "incredible" to Mia, and she comes to recognize that the most perfect love she will have comes from God and that her understanding of that idea will be something she will continue to work on throughout her life. She recognizes that she doesn't have it all "figured out", but the experience in South Carolina, opened her to the recognition that she is loved. She goes on to say,

And so I think that lecture is still very special to me in that, he [the abbot] was talking about trust and love, and how relationships cannot be complete without God, and you can't really trust anyone until you fully trust in God. So then I got to go back out and we were working, when we were doing the prayer work thing, I got to think about that all day.

The language Mia uses describes the desire to build a loving relationship with other people and with God. Through her contact with the people she encountered during her service, and the environment in her school and home, Mia makes the connection

between the love for her fellow human beings and God. Earlier in our conversation Mia explained to me that one of the key phrases used at Bishop Reilly, is “you will be known; you will be loved”. Through her service experiences, through Search, she describes the way students will be known and loved at Bishop Reilly, and it is the kind of love described by the abbot. It is God’s love and friendship and it is the care and concern Mia has witnessed her teachers and peers pour out to one another. It is the love described in the St. Patrick Prayer. Through our gift of love, we come close to understanding the kind of love God has for us and expects for us to share. Mia describes how this kind of love was modeled to her by faculty and peers.

Mr. Mullen and another theology teacher led the alternative spring breaks, and they both provided the students with opportunities for not only work but also prayer and reflection. Mia describes their method of reflection this way.

You know, teachers obviously talk with their class about what they are learning. And then on alternative spring break, Mullen actually would make little folders and you would have papers for every day with readings, and every morning, most mornings, unless you were really in a rush for time, we would take about ten minutes and look through it. Sometimes you had a partner and sometimes you did it on your own. Before the day started, and then at the end of the day, we always had prayer. And my favorite was we did highs, lows and Christ sightings. And you would say your high of the day, and then your low of the day, and then your Christ sightings, where you saw Christ.

This idea of sighting Christ was Mia's favorite reflection, and she repeated this idea several times as we talked. For her, Christ was very tangible in the monks she encountered and she feels the talk the abbot gave about Christian love was not only about finding Christ in others, but also about seeing Christ in herself. For her Christ is present in the love we share when we give of ourselves to others. Although she doesn't quite articulate Christ's presence within her, she does see that "He is a real presence in her life." That real presence has deepened through her encounters during service, but it also has come through the relationships she has developed. Mia also sees Christ in her mentor, Mr. Mullen. She says,

Getting to know Mullen, he's one of those people who I think serves not only when he is doing service projects, but he just serves no matter what he is doing. He's one of the few people I've met who when he asks you how your day is going, he actually wants to know if you are having a terrible day. And he was really a mentor to me throughout high school. You know there have been a couple of times he has seen me and I have been visibly upset, and I have gone in his office and cried. You know he's talked to me, and so even from just that aspect, Mr. Mullen is really Christ to everyone who meets him.

Through her mentor, Mia sees a model for the care and concern she is expected to demonstrate to everyone she encounters. She says, Mr. Mullen and another theology teacher, have become more friends, and they "treated us more as equals, and so I think their examples of service have really influenced me." Mia's respect for her teachers flows from witnessing the way they treat the students and the people they have encountered

during service. They provide a living embodiment of how Mia and her peers are supposed to treat one another. In this way, Mia receives the kind of treatment expected at Bishop Reilly and is expected to extend it to the world in much the same way her mentors do.

Mia relates another example of Mr. Mullen's modeling service and Christ's presence. When she was working in the childcare program for Libertad Financiera, a project that Mr. Mullen encouraged her to organize on behalf of the Bishop Reilly Service Corps, Mia witnessed Mr. Mullen's interaction with the children they cared for during the financial advising sessions.

When we worked with [Libertad Financiera], those little kids were so cute. And I had a really good time. There was a little girl who I remember was Perla. And she was probably about thirteen, but she is mentally handicapped. I was watching him [Mr. Mullen] and she was actually kind of beating up on him a little bit. She was playing rough. And seeing him being very patient, and just kind of laughing it off, you know I always very impressed with Mr. Mullen, but I think that was also just so inspiring to me. Regardless, just kind of rolling with it, and really being there for everybody else.

Mr. Mullen not only demonstrated how to interact with the young people they served, but he also modeled that care and concern for all of his students and the children they served. As a result of Mr. Mullen's example, she is able to extend that care to others. She said it was "inspiring". Mia watched Mr. Mullen exhibit a relaxed and easy manner. In talking with Mia, I learned that she is a person who sets goals for herself and then

pushes to achieve them. In fact she will talk about that more in the next section.

Although, she has her career and college goals lined out, she seems to aspire to achieve Mr. Mullen's unruffled way of "just rolling with it". Mia's language expresses appreciation for Mr. Mullen's "patience with" Perla, and Mia witnesses Mr. Mullen's acceptance of Perla for who she is and where she is in life.

Identity: Finding God; Finding Me

Mia also had first hand experience of Mr. Mullen's care and concern for her. At the end of her junior year, she was running for Student Council President for her upcoming senior year. Mia has aspired to become President of the Student Council since she was in ninth grade. She said,

Since my freshman year it had been my game plan, just like my goal, I'm a little bit of an over achiever. It was the game plan that I was going to be student body president. That was something I was going to do. It was going to happen.

While at Bishop Reilly she was involved in a great many activities, but Student Council was near and dear to heart. This ambition was something she shared with Mr. Mullen. Mr. Mullen also ran for Student Body President at Bishop Reilly. He lost. In talking about this ambition both, Mr. Mullen and Mia's mother tried to prepare Mia for the possibility of losing or for doing something else. However, Mia would hear none of that and was committed to achieving her goal. Although Mia did not say why student body president was so important to her, she did say that it was her plan since her freshman year to achieve this goal. In addition, she was involved in student council during each year of high school. If she did not make president, she would have no office,

and would no longer be a part of the organization. She describes her run for President this way.

I ran for student council, and I got my ticket together. I was with three guys, and I was the president of the ticket, and we lost, I think by less than ten votes out of six hundred or something in a run off election. And I was devastated. And then it was Mr. Mullen and I created a joke because he ran for student body and lost as well, so we were going to form a band called the Dead Presidents, but yeah, and so then I was still just, you know this was my goal. I was going to do something and so then I was like, you know what I am running for senior class president if I can't have student body.

Mia's Mom tried to suggest she focus on helping Reilly Service Corps, the school's organizing body for service activities.

And so it was my mom [that] said Mia, you should do Reilly Service Corps. You know, maybe that's not where God is calling you. And I'm like I don't care what God says, this is what I want to do, and so um. But it was in talking to Mr. Mullen a little bit about trying to do both, which in hindsight would have been completely impossible. And so I ended up losing that election, again in a run off, by less than ten votes, and so at this point, I was like okay, I'll listen. And so that afternoon, actually, I briefly mentioned to Mr. Mullen. I was holding it together, you know I think my pride was damaged more than anything because I was embarrassed I went for it a second time and lost.

As Mia struggled with her embarrassment, she came to hear what her mother had to say, and she realized, “you know, a thing I will try to learn from this experience is listening”. But it seems her later conversation with Mr. Mullen helped Mia accept her mother’s insight.

I was going back to the art room to pick up a piece, and I had passed his [Mr. Mullen] to get there. And saw him and immediately thought Dead Presidents and burst into tears. And in typical Mullen fashion, and I don’t really cry that frequently in public. He goes Mia, do you have second, do you want to step in my office? He sat there and we talked about it, and so I think it was actually that day, I decided I was going to run Bishop Reilly Service Corps. That [class president] that’s not where I was supposed to be, and so in hindsight, I wish I had just, you know let go and seen that there was something more important than maybe my ego was concerned. But you know it was kind of a blessing hidden by a curse at the time. So for sure, something I didn’t see as the right thing, definitely was.

Mia’s experience with losing the election, with service and Search began to help her make connections between the work she does and with her faith. She says,

And I think my relationship with God has definitely changed drastically from when I was a freshman because to be honest, it was kind of non-existent. It was a very surface faith. I didn’t really feel anything there, but because the Search program and through my service work, it did become to where I really felt like God was a very real presence in my life, and I think when I’m having a bad day I

can be mad at God, and I can tell Him, you know, I am ticked at You because this isn't going the way I want it to. But I think that having such a constant has been really important to me as well.

Mia sees the experiences she has had with service and with the people at her school and with God as a part of forming who she is and who she hopes to become. Her language indicates that she recognized that at first her faith lacked depth. She said it was a "very surface faith." In addition, when she said, "God was a very real presence in my life", it seems that she comes to the realization that forming a relationship with God is not only a recognition of His presence, but also an understanding of His role in her life.

Mia's peers, for the most part, are involved in service. She sees them as people who also model care and concern for others. She says,

One of my friends, who is actually the principal's youngest son, was on that trip. He was the only boy, and Sean, was always really fun because he was always teasing everybody, and you know, kind of being a guy, and just making everyone laugh. So I think keeping that attitude of joy, which is one of my favorite topics, because joy is happiness with God. I think we really saw that joy when we were working with each other, even when it did get tough.

Mia also made these connections with the girls who went on the trips, and Mia was responsible for making these trips happen. She encouraged classmates to go, and each year, the trips grew in popularity.

In addition, Mia had to make some difficult decisions about the relationships she had with peers. She shared with me an experience with a young man she dated. She said

You know there is a kind of a turning point. For me this year, you know, with the service, my faith has become increasingly important to me. I wouldn't say I am obsessed with it, but it's something I think about. I was dating a boy this winter, and he was not Catholic, which wouldn't really make a huge difference to me anyway. He was Christian, but he just was not, didn't really care, and he wasn't involved at all. And I realized how much that, not really, well yeah, bothered me. There was such a disconnect between my priorities and his, and so I think even as far as choosing a spouse some day, I think it has become important to me if he's not Catholic for at least for him to be Christian, and so I think my life is going to be greatly influenced by the non-occupational choices I make. Just everything I do, I think is going to be influenced by that.

Mr. Mullen also recognized that Mia is not a person to compromise who she is. He sees her faith and her service.

However, Mia told me that she knows she still has some growing to do, and that she does not have all the answers. When I asked her about any decisions she might have really had to wrestle with, she laughed and said, "Everything, I'm a teenager." She then explained the struggle she faced in choosing which college to attend. She did make a choice that would help her family financially, and would offer her the kind of service experiences she would like to try. She described her college search in this way.

I visited I think about twelve. Jesuits, obviously, were high on my list, but I was also looking at a couple of more schools. I ultimately did not choose Auburn and one of the big reasons is because it was not Catholic, and I really

wanted that. I did get a scholarship to [her current college]. It was a three-fourths situation, so not as much, but close, and then another Jesuit college was offering me a full scholarship. So I, I ended up ruling Auburn completely out just because it wasn't, you know, it wasn't where I saw my life going. . . .but I saw my values and my goals more in a Jesuit institution. And the part of the reason I liked [her current college] better than [the one that offered the full scholarship] was because I feel that their service program seemed more impressive to me.

Mia's college decision was based not strictly upon financial considerations, but also upon who she wants to become. She desired the Jesuit charism and she was attracted to the service program at her college.

Through her experiences and the relationships she has formed at Bishop Reilly Mia's faith deepened and she has connected it to how she wants to live her life. Mr. Mullen, Search, service, family, and peers have been woven together, and are a socio-cultural context that provided Mia with opportunities to be guided by caring adults, and practice what she has learned in her own life. She is then able to make her learning a part of her own identity, her own way of being in the world.

During her time at Bishop Reilly, Mia moved from participant to leader. While in her senior year, Mia went on to form a new service organization at her school that honors service.

We were thinking [she and Mr. Mullen], why don't we do we not have an honor society for service? So we started one this year. I think, I don't remember

how many people were in the first charter group, but we got inducted and we got cords at graduation, and so I think that was really special.

In working with Mr. Mullen, Mia was given opportunities to learn and grow. She took on new tasks, was supported and mentored by Mr. Mullen and then allowed to run with her ideas. During her time at Bishop Reilly, Reilly Service Corps grew, and the school changed and improved its service program. Mr. Mullen said

If it weren't for her, I don't know if our alternative spring break would have been the success we've had over the last two years, because her sophomore year, we had very few students sign up. She rallied a group of her friends to go. And then we've carried that to the group the previous two years, and then added others. The last two years, we've had a wait list. So we brought them back into the community, talked about what a great experience, how much fun it was, and so we had a number of students sign up.

Mia humbly counts alternative spring break as one of her favorite service successes. She says,

I think alternative spring break has been really successful. I don't want to sound arrogant, but I feel that I was kind of a founding member maybe, and making that work because you know, like you mentioned, it was floundering. I think if it hadn't really kept going after that first year, because after the first year there was interest. If it hadn't gotten off the ground junior and senior year, that would have been a big problem, because I think it's one of those things where if doesn't go every year, it might not go the next two.

In spite of all her accomplishments, Mia recognizes that she still has a lot to learn.

She says,

I think because I am so young that there's so much that I'm still figuring out who I am, but I do know that there are a lot of things I am passionate about. And I think service is obviously a big one. And I think the things that I am passionate about will continue to define who I am. You know that I am passionate about helping other people so I want to be a doctor. And I really want, I'm thinking about missionary work because of the service work I did in high school, and so that is what I will continue to look towards as a goal.

Mia realizes that life is changeable and that her life may go many directions, but she remains committed to living in a way that is consistent with who she hopes to become. However, her goal to marry and have a family may conflict with her long-term goals. She says she will just have to remain "flexible and roll with life". She recalls an insight Mr. Mullen shared early on during her freshman year.

. . . because even Mr. Mullen on our first reflection paper, he freaked us all out a little bit, and I don't think he remembers this. He said, service can ruin your life. And we were all going: what? And he said, because you know, everything you had planned, service can change that. You know, it can really ruin the life that you had planned, and so that with my service work, there's been something that just, you know the mission, another one of Mullen's phrases is the mission is what's in front of you. It's not always what you want, you know this is what I have to do. You know it is what needs to be done. I think it's going to influence

the way I just roll with whatever comes my way. And being flexible, not with plans, because you know we plan and God laughs.

Mr. Mullen's words resonated with Mia, and again, she mentions wanting to be flexible. She describes her goals, but recognizes that life is mutable and that perhaps life will lead her in another direction. She experienced the transient nature of plans when she lost the two elections, goals she had long hoped to achieve. Instead, she found herself leading the Bishop Reilly Service Corps and choosing a college that also would afford her opportunities to be of service.

In reflecting with me on her high school experiences, Mia shared that she understood how service and the people who mentored helped her grow and change. She said

I think, you know, I probably used to be a lot more judgmental than I am now. I think I took a lot of things at face value. I think I was frequently, you know, before my relationship with God changed, and before I think I became, you know, grew a little bit more into my self, which is probably common with teenagers. I was not comfortable being me. You know, I look at that and there were so many people who, you know, I kind of followed, you know, what was cool, and their lead, and I think I don't do that as much anymore. I think it's still something that everybody still has some issue with, but I think I'm pretty much more comfortable with who I am, and what I'm good at, and what I'm not. You know things I like and things I don't.

The opportunity to learn and apply her experiences both within her leadership role at Bishop Reilly and through her service outside the school helped Mia to appreciate her gifts and the people she cares about. She says, “My service work has shown me how important it is to be doing what you love, and that is one thing you are always told as a little kid.” She accepts that idea for herself, because she had the opportunity to test out what she loves in a real world context. The socio-cultural context of her high school and of her family provided her with places to discover she loves in a real world context. In addition, her school and family gave her a safe place to grow and experience life beyond the home and school boundaries. Even in her failures, the loss of the two elections, she rebounded and found a way to make a difference at Bishop Reilly. Reviving the alternative Spring Break, running the Bishop Reilly Service Corps, leading Search her senior year, and founding the St. Vincent DePaul Honor Society for service are big accomplishments. On top of all that she worked at the hospital and graduated with top honors.

Bishop Reilly, Mr. Mullen, and Mia’s family, supported her with a process in which she could grow in commitment to service and make the connection between her work and her faith. The atmosphere at her school, where service is expected, and her parents’ guidance, and inclusion in her Dad’s work at the hospital surrounded Mia with a culture that focuses on others and connects that passion for helping others to her faith. In this way, Mia has opened her heart and has decided to seek for Christ in the many places she travels.

Mia is much younger than the first exemplar, Anna, and they have had quite different experiences. When I interviewed Mia she had not yet had the experience of serving in college or beyond the borders of our country. Her faith development has continued to mature, and each step she has chosen along the way has helped her gain more insight into who she desires to be. Furthermore, she seems to have come to an acceptance of who she is and that includes her desire to be a part of her Church and to serve in some capacity in the world. Her decision to go to a college that as she said “mirrors her values and goals” will help Mia, as she continues to choose to serve and deepen her commitment to others and to her spiritual growth. At this time Mia has served her university, and most recently ran in the University Relay for Life. In the near future, she hopes to accompany her Dad on a medical mission to Haiti. Mia remains dedicated to making the world a better place and to seeking Christ’s presence in those she encounters.

Vignette Three

Rebecca

“Love ought to manifest itself more by deed than by words”

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Background

A beautiful Southern town that sits high above the Mississippi River is the home of Saint Ignatius Catholic High school. It is also the home of Rebecca Fortino, the second student I interviewed, and her school was the third that I visited. Rebecca's hometown is beautiful and rich with civil war history and monuments. Lovingly restored antebellum homes gracefully line many of the streets, but a lot of them are next door to dilapidated homes with boarded up windows and broken down cars. They also appear to be inhabited.

Rebecca's high school, St. Ignatius, is a unit school. That means it is connected both by its managerial structure and by a hallway to the grade school next door, St. Alphonsis. St. Alphonsis serves students in grades pre-kindergarten through sixth, and the high school serves students in seventh grade through twelfth. Three local parishes feed into the schools, and they share a Canonical administrator, or priest designated by the Bishop to be responsible for the school. Both schools have their own principal and as I observed them, they worked well together and seemed to have an easy, comfortable relationship. When Rebecca attended St. Ignatius, the student population consisted of 55% non-Catholic students. The teachers were 50% Catholic and 50% of another faith

tradition. The minority population of the school is small and does not represent the local demographics. 10% of the students at St. Ignatius are African American, and the population of the town consists of a majority of African Americans.

At one time St. Ignatius High School was a Sisters of Mercy school, but today it is a diocesan school, and there is no longer a Mercy presence. In fact, St. Ignatius has adopted a part of the Jesuit charism, or spiritual gifts, into their service program and into the way they foster leadership in the high school. Undergirding their service program is a book called *Heroic Leadership* (2003) written by Chris Lowney. Mr. Lowney is a former Jesuit who left the order of priests to work for J.P. Morgan. His premise is that all people are leaders and the Jesuit charism can make a difference not only in the corporate world, but also in any institution or work place. Many of Rebecca's experiences and ideas about service are linked to the work her school did with Mr. Lowney's book.

When I contacted the principal, Theresa McCall, she immediately jumped into action and she along with the theology teacher, Connie Thomason, nominated Rebecca Fortino for this study. Mrs. McCall thought of Rebecca because

To me, you always have graduates that stay in your heart, and probably will stay in your heart forever. They all always stay in our heart, but there's always one or two that just shine, and I think Rebecca Fortino was more, I wouldn't tell her this, she was more of a mentor to me. I learned more from her than I would have from other children, I guess is how I would put it. Always bubbly, always willing to help, always shining, always positive.

In addition to Rebecca's positive attitude, Mrs. McCall came to appreciate Rebecca's dedication. She said

Service was more than just a part of her life; I mean she was driven to serve others. Driven to serve others not just in places that you would think you are supposed to be serving, but also in places that she would create to serve. If there was a need she was going to be spearheading it.

In addition, Mrs. McCall, saw Rebecca as a person of integrity and concern.

She was always one that somebody could go and talk to and confide in. She was mature. She was always extremely mature, but at the same time was young and enthusiastic with lots of spirit. But she saw things others didn't see, and didn't complain about things that she saw. She tried to fix things that she saw in a positive light.

Furthermore, Mrs. McCall recounted calling Rebecca to tell her about this interview as an example of Rebecca's desire to further serve her school community.

As a matter of fact, when I called her, and I said are you going to come up to the school on Friday and meet with this lady about service and the service program, and what St Ignatius did for you for the service program, and what you did for us? I said, and I got to choose the graduate that I thought exemplified our service program the most, and I couldn't think of anybody else but you. Oh, Mrs. McCall I thank you. So you know, she's just; I'll do whatever you need to do to get there.

Indeed, when I met Rebecca, she was vivacious and full of enthusiasm. She warmly hugged Mrs. McCall and the affection between them was easy to see.

At the time of our interview, Rebecca was nineteen years old, making her the second oldest in the group of exemplars in this study. Rebecca was finishing up the first semester of her second year of college. While attending the local community college, she was living at home with her parents. Next year, she plans to attend the State University. Rebecca is white, middle class and comes from a devout Catholic family. She has two older sisters and one younger sister who is now a student at St. Ignatius. Like Rebecca, both of her parents attended St. Alphonsis Catholic Elementary School, and the attached high school, St. Ignatius. According to Mrs. McCall and Mrs. Thomason, the Fortinos are a “phenomenal, faith filled family”.

After meeting Rebecca, visiting St. Ignatius and reading *Heroic Leadership*, the following meditation from Saint Ignatius’ thirty-day prayer, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, seemed to an appropriate metaphor for Rebecca’s experiences both with her service and with her faith. In addition, from this prayer, St. Ignatius High School has adopted a key phrase they use to express not only the purpose of service, but also for helping students understand Christ’s message regarding the purpose of our lives. Moreover, this prayer and the motto are a part of the socio-cultural context in which Rebecca spent her high school years. The prayer follows:

First love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words. Second love consists of mutual communication between two persons. That is, the one who

loves gives and communicates to the beloved what he or she has. I will consider how God dwells in all creatures; in the elements giving them existence; in the plants giving them life; in the animals giving them sensation; in the human beings, giving them intelligence; and finally, how in this way he dwells in myself, giving me existence, life, sensation and intelligence . . . I will consider how God labors and works for me in all creatures on the face of the earth; that is, he acts in the manner of one who is laboring. For example, he is working in the heavens, elements, plants, fruits, cattle, and all the rest giving them their existence, conserving them, concurring with their vegetative and sensitive activities, and so forth. Then I will reflect on myself.

The kind of love expressed by St. Ignatius of Loyola in his *Spiritual Exercises* is the love God has for us and for our world. It is divine love, manifested in all that has life, and all life is a gift. Because of God's love for us and because we love God, we are driven to act on behalf of others.

St. Ignatius Catholic High School has adopted author Chris Lowny's analysis of the first line in this reflection as a mission statement for their service program. He summarizes the phrase "Love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than words" into the phrase, "Love drives action". This is a phrase that Rebecca struggled to recall from her high school service experiences, but no less was able to express in a variety of ways as she described her service experiences. As she described her service work, she clearly focused on the love she has for God and for the many people in her life with whom she has formed relationships.

Service Experiences

For Rebecca, service began very early in her life and they began at the grade school attached to her high school, Saint Ignatius. At St. Alphonsis Elementary School, Rebecca recalls,

When we were little, we would always bring canned goods.

I mean that's service. That counts as service. We would always bring canned goods to food drives and [at] Thanksgiving. We would donate money to buy turkeys for the needy or whatever. Sister Margaret, I don't think she works for the school anymore, but she was the principal at St. Al's when I was there and she was in charge of doing the turkey drives, and she always made it fun.

As Rebecca and her classmates grew up more service would be asked of them. Students in the seventh grade moved from St. Alphonsis to St. Ignatius and that meant seventh graders were required to begin service outside of school. Each year, the number of hours spent in service, outside of the school day increased. Rebecca remembers the change in this way.

In elementary school, we just did it. We just would do fun service projects. But when you get to high school, it's a part of your theology grade, and you have to do it, and they give you a service sheet, and you have to write down what you do, and what organization it's with, and the date you did it, and how many hours, and then you have to get someone to sign it from the organization, or someone who was there.

At St. Ignatius, the service requirements were categorized and students had to perform service not only in the community but also in their school and church. Rebecca enjoyed serving her parish and was an altar server at Mass. She describes the beginning of her high school service this way,

Well, I was always an altar server at church so you can count that.

Because they had it set up into three categories. They had church, school and community. So I would do that for church, then let me think. There's a special needs summer camp that the junior auxiliary puts on for special needs kids. . . .

I've done that ever since I was in, during the summer of my ninth grade year.

And I still do it now, you know, and they still let me come back even though I'm going to college, which is fun. So I did that, and I went on a mission trip for the diocese.

For Rebecca's senior service project, she worked at Hands of Jesus Community Center. This kind of work marked a new trend in the senior service program at St. Ignatius. In the distant past, students used to drive their own cars and work at a variety of local service sites. However, the diocese curtailed that activity out of concern for student safety. St. Ignatius then had seniors walk next door to the adjoining grade school, St. Alphonsis, to work with the younger children. Rebecca recalls the seniors coming down to her first grade class to help.

And usually what they [the seniors] did was go down to St. Alphonsis.

That is what all the seniors did before me, because I remember being in first grade

and having senior helpers. It was the coolest thing ever because they would come and read to us, and you know, we would be in class and they would be off to the side grading papers for our teacher and stuff.

This type of service, changed when Rebecca became a senior. Mrs. McCall, the principal and Mrs. Thomason, the theology teacher, wanted to strengthen the service-learning program and move students to be involved in the community. According to Mrs. Thomason

The Diocese, at one point, our kids, it used to be, before my children were seniors obviously, kids could go out. They would divide them up and they would drive themselves in pairs in different places. And the community was at a loss when the Diocese said you could no longer do that. And so we thought and thought. And I argued with them, please, please. [The diocese said] No, no, no. If they're that desperate, you're in a sad situation, and so we finally came up with well, can I take them to different locations on a bus? Okay, yeah, we can do that.

However, logistically that was a challenge, and it wasn't until Rebecca's senior year, that a plan evolved, and the seniors would be allowed to go into the community again.

The school decided to work with Hands of Jesus Community Center, which is a member of the local United Way. It is described as a "holistic center for families". Adults may take GED [Graduate Equivalency Diploma] courses and the test; receive counseling and other family services. Children six weeks to four years attend the day care, where the

St. Ignatius students worked. For Rebecca, the Hands of Jesus work once a week was a good experience for her. She describes Hands of Jesus this way.

I'd never really ever heard of Hands of Jesus. I didn't really know what it was. I knew that it was kind of for, I guess, I don't know, I mean they're lower class I would say. It's predominately black children. It's not really called a school, but it is you know. But we would go and play with them. That was fun you know. It was a fun way to do service because you forgot, oh, well I'm doing this for a grade or whatever. So it was fun, to see the impact that we had on them [the kids]. Like every time I would go into my classroom, they would be Miss Rebecca, Miss Rebecca. I mean, it makes me feel good to help them you know, because they aren't as fortunate as I am, you know, to go to a school like St. Alphonsis and St. Ignatius, and so for me to be able to go and help, you know, to be able to go and help them, it was, I'm glad.

Rebecca enjoyed the young children at the Center, and she seemed to enjoy their excited response to her arrival. Although Rebecca did not share this with me, Mrs. McCall her principal informed me that Rebecca volunteered with the children at the Center well beyond the school requirements. In fact, it was quite by accident that Mrs. McCall found out Rebecca was volunteering there.

To find out she was going on her own time and serving Helping Hands, that was just an "oops" situation. That wasn't a, sometimes kids do things, and they want everyone to know that they're doing it. She was not even sharing that

with anybody. She was slipping by and going to Helping Hands and being with the babies because she loved being with the babies.

Mrs. McCall's comments echo Rebecca's own feelings about the children. She came to love them and wanted to be with them. Consequently, Rebecca's service was focused on the other people she encountered and not on the need for affirmation and approval. "She was slipping by and going to Helping Hands . . .". She was quietly giving and making her own choices about service and she was acting out of love. As Mrs. McCall said "she loved being with the babies". However, Rebecca is quite humble and she did not reveal this extra service to me. She goes on to reflect on her service experiences in this way.

In the end, I was you know, in the beginning we were upset because we didn't get to help them [the kids at St. Alphonsis Catholic School], but I know most of the kids, you know, we knew most of the kids at St. Al's, so it was fun because we actually go out into the community, and you know touch other peoples' lives, you know who aren't, you know, as fortunate, you know what I mean? So in the end I liked it. I think I enjoyed it better than I would have enjoyed going and helping I mean, I would have liked helping them, [St. Alphonsis] but it was just fun to see, and then interesting just to see that. And it was like, it kind of opened my eyes to like, well, everybody's not as fortunate as I am to go somewhere like this [St. Ignatius].

Rebecca's experience at Helping Hands was much different than the experience she would have had at St. Alphonsis. At Helping Hands, Rebecca met new and different

people, and she felt she had an opportunity to “touch other peoples’ lives” and the people she encountered she perceived to have a greater need than the children at St. Alphonsis. She also came to appreciate the staff at Helping Hands, but Rebecca seemed to struggle with expressing the difference between her grade school and Helping Hands.

And it [Hands of Jesus] was a great school. You know, the teachers were great, but it’s just, I mean you could just tell that it was, and some of the kids who, like I don’t know, would come to school and they would have, they would always have like a runny nose and you could just kind of tell. And they would just be sad all the time. So just being able to make their day a little brighter you know, fun and made me appreciate everything really, because I don’t know, I think that’s what service is about. To not only help other people, but also to be thankful for everything you have.

Rebecca describes the contrast between her school experiences and that of the children she encountered at Helping Hands, and seeing the contrast not only helped her to understand the need for service, but also gave her sense of gratitude for the life she had been given. She mentioned that the work at Helping Hands “opened her eyes”. As I watched Rebecca relate her experiences to me, it seemed that she was reflecting on these experiences and verbalizing the meaning she ascribes to them for the first time. She paused frequently and she had difficulty putting into the words the depth of the poverty she encountered. Rebecca seems to be focused on the children and people she encountered, but she struggles with the words to describe her work. However, her words reveal a desire to have some impact on the people she encountered. Although she

recognizes their poverty and what she called their “sadness”, she said she tries to “make their day a little brighter”. In addition, Rebecca’s words seem to offer an understanding that she cannot single handedly stop the sadness and poverty, or even take away her own privilege, but she can be there and offer her love to the children at the center.

Rebecca then told me that some of the students in her group did not seem to value the service experiences as much as she did, and she would have liked to have the opportunity to discuss service more often in class. It is through her frustration, she expresses how much the experience of serving at Helping Hands of Jesus meant to her.

I mean, I know other people took it seriously, but I felt like not everybody took it as seriously as I did. And I wish they could have just, like, I don’t know shared my experiences, and you know, told other people. So, I mean, maybe, just because my class, we were just kind of, we had a bunch of boys, and they were all, like crazy and whatever, and so you know how boys are. And like nobody, I don’t know, I felt like nobody really took it seriously and it kind of upset me for Mrs. McCall, it upset me for our teacher, but, so I do wish we could have talked about it, because, I mean hopefully I would have made a point to them, it is important, and you need to do it. Even, you know, beyond our careers now, continue to do service for anybody.

Rebecca’s words, “it kind of upset me for Mrs. McCall, it upset me for my teacher”, seem to reveal her feelings of empathy for her principal and for her teacher, both of whom she respects and cares for. In addition, Rebecca sees service as something to do beyond school and learning about work. She said, “it is important, and you need to

do it. Even, . . .beyond our careers. . .” Rebecca seems to see service as a way of life, and in many ways, she reveals that her service is about giving to other people because that is what we are called to do. Rebecca demonstrates her commitment to service, her sense of being called by participating in service well beyond the requirements of the school. This makes her unique among her classmates, and it is perhaps her decision to serve outside of school that fuels her disappointment in her classmates. She has a different perspective and has come to form relationships with people at the places she serves. Like Anna and Mia, Rebecca is motivated by the connections she has with people, not only at the service sites, but also with the adults she knows. Perhaps those are connections Rebecca’s classmates have not yet experienced.

One way that Rebecca served beyond the school’s requirements occurred, prior to her senior year, during her sophomore and junior year. Rebecca, along with two other classmates, a girl she knew named Hailey and another girl she didn’t know in the beginning, named Megan, decided to go on the Diocesan mission trip to Atenas, Mexico. Rebecca planned to go her senior year as well, but the Diocese curtailed the trips because of the danger posed by the drug wars in Mexico. Rebecca says

And going to Atenas, not only serving people, but going into the barrios, which are the neighborhoods surrounding the mission where we stayed. And the ranchos, which were like two and three hours out on dirt roads. It’s a bad trip.

But we would go out there and we would hand them food. There are so many ranchos, and only like two or three priests. They only get mass like every three weeks. I feel like even though I was supposed to be serving them, and you

know, like giving good things out, in food and clothes, and like the kids playing with us. We would paint the girls, the little girls' fingernails. Give the boys toys and whatever. I feel like I really got more out of it in the end just because I realized it's important to serve other people and to put other people first, because they have nothing. They live in, like some of their houses are like this size [indicating the modest office we were sitting in]. And it's dirt floors and they have nothing, and to see that was amazing.

Going to Atenas also opened a new world to Rebecca. She saw that people lived without the things she took for granted. For example, at home Rebecca could attend Mass every Sunday and receive communion, but at the ranchos, the small number of priests limited access to the Church. Rebecca also saw that people lived in small places without tile floors or carpeting. She saw poverty.

Rebecca also began another form of service work during the summer before her freshman year of high school, and this is a form of service Rebecca continues to be involved with to this day. The Junior Auxiliary in her hometown runs a three-day camp in the summer for special needs students. Rebecca is pleased that even though she has graduated from high school and is now a college student, that she is able to continue to be a part of the summer camp. She said, "And I still do it now, and they still let me come back even though I'm going to college, which is fun." In addition, the Camp has been a meaningful path for Rebecca to find her vocation. She intends to become a special needs teacher.

Pivotal Relationships Through Service

Through the Camp, Rebecca formed a lasting relationship with one of the campers she was asked to work with. This relationship also came to affirm her choice to become a special education teacher.

There's this one little boy, his name is Noah, and he's at the Special Needs camp. He's my favorite. I know that you're not supposed to have favorites, but I can't help it. He's I guess it was his first year when I started, we were both; it was our first year at the same time. His disability is physical. His skull didn't form all the way together before he was born, and so it has caused all these deformities. Like his eyes, and he has real bad scoliosis. His mind is so sharp. I mean he is holy. I mean he is the funniest kid I've ever met in my life. So his [disability] is all physical.

Rebecca could see past Noah's deformities and was able to forge a relationship based on her respect for his mind, for what she calls his innate "holiness" and for his humor. Beyond the physical disabilities, Rebecca has a bond with a person she has come to love.

But me and him, our relationship is, I don't know how to explain it. I mean, its weird to say, but when we're there at camp, even though it's only three days out of the year, we can do that you know three days from eight to four. You know, play, because they put each camper with an adult, because it's all, there's all these women who are Junior Auxiliary, and then kids from the community can sign up for it, and fill out an application. And so they put the different kids with

different adults. Well everybody's always like, Rebecca and Noah are going to be together. And we can, it's I don't know. It's crazy to me because we just pick up right where we left off. I don't know, he, I just wish, I could take him home with me because I love him so much. I really do. He's probably one of the main, like, impacts that I've had that really has pushed me to want to be a special ed. teacher.

Rebecca's love for Noah helps her help him, and it has become one of the factors that has affirmed for her the choice to become a special education teacher. In fact her relationship with Noah has helped her reach out to other people with disabilities. She said,

One of the campers that comes, he is my neighbor. So we'll go down to his house, and we'll you know, play basketball with him, or you know, just go talk to him. I went down there the other day. He was like, I turned twenty-one. And I was like, you did? And he said, yeah, the other day. And I was like, that's awesome. So I mean just little things like that.

Rebecca reveals an openness and desire to reach out to people and she is receptive to people who are different than she is. She was excited to play basketball with her neighbor and share his joy at turning twenty-one.

Also, Rebecca has continued to seek opportunities to work with special needs children as a part of her college service program.

There's an elementary school right across the street from our campus, and so I decided I would go over there because it was close. I wouldn't have to drive anywhere. And you do it once a week for an hour, and I got to work with, I didn't

get to go into the special education class because you have to have state approval, and all this stuff. But I got to go, I guess it was called a resource class, and I worked with special needs kids, so that [had], a different, a different feel because most of the kids, the special kids needs children that I've been around, they're all, it's the same group of kids at Camp.

Over time, Rebecca's love for special needs children, beginning with her experiences at the Camp and with Noah, have led her to continue seeking opportunities to work with children. In fact her language reveals a sense of privilege about her opportunity to serve. She said, "But I got to go, . . .and I worked with special needs kids". She is happy about her work in the resource room and she is happy to encounter some different children. She said this work has " a different feel" than the work she did at the Camp, and she seems to appreciate the chance to work with kids with different needs.

After telling me about her college experience, she again connects to her relationship with Noah.

I smile when I talk about it because it's I just can't explain it. I mean, we just have our friendship. And it's weird because he was nine whenever I was in ninth grade. So it's weird to say I'm friends with a little kid, like it's kind of creepy. But I mean, he's twelve or thirteen now, and I'm nineteen but I guess it's weird, but it is when we're there, he's like my best friend. And I know he considers me one of his best friends. He brings a digital, not digital, but little disposable cameras, and he'll take pictures. And his mom tells me he has pictures of you in his room, and he talks about you all the time. He sticks out the most with the relationships I've formed from doing stuff.

Rebecca goes on to describe her relationship and the depth of her care for him when she says, “I love him so much. I really do. He’s probably the main reason I want to be a special education teacher”. Consequently, Rebecca has sought further opportunities to be present to Noah and to other children. It is her love for the person of Noah that drives her to serve and work with other children.

Rebecca’s desire to serve was also inspired by people at St. Ignatius High School. Two of her religion teachers and her principal continue to be an important part of her life. These are the people she turns to whenever she is facing difficulty, in particular with service.

My tenth grade year, we had a teacher, Mr. Reynolds. He came; [then] he went to Loyola. He came here for a year, which was so sad. We loved him. He definitely helped me a lot, I mean he opened my eyes to a lot of stuff, and really, if anything, he was one of the main people who pushed me to get so involved. And he was the person, he was the one who told me about Atenas, so if it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t have been able to go. So when he was here, I talked to him a lot about stuff you know, about service and everything. I looked up to him definitely. But Ms. McCall and Ms. Thomason both, I felt like they were always there for me. Not even with the service part but anything, if I ever needed to talk to one of them.

For Rebecca, the relationships she formed with her teachers is a source of encouragement for her. Her teachers saw something in her, and inspired her to step beyond her boundaries. Mr. Reynolds, “was one of the main people who pushed me to get involved”, and he helped Rebecca to try going to Atenas. Mr. Reynolds insight

proved to be of value, and consequently, Rebecca sees her Atenas experience as an important part of her life. She said of going to Atenas, “That’s probably my biggest service project that I have done. And the main one that I’ve gotten the most stuff from.” Rebecca grew through her relationship with Mr. Reynolds and his gentle push moved her beyond her home and comfort zone.

In addition, Rebecca views Mrs. McCall and Ms. Thomason as key people in her life. These two women have also supported and mentored her. Each of these people in Rebecca’s school life have provided a space for Rebecca to acquire the tools necessary for service, and then have given her space to try these tools in the real world. In this way, Rebecca has slowly moved from dependence on her school for service to branching out to independence, and this method of learning, that is supported by St. Ignatius is consistent with Vygotskian learning theory. Through the modeling of caring adults, the gift of service tools, and the space to practice the use of those tools, Rebecca has become a person willing to serve on her own. She has moved to greater independence.

Another person Rebecca counts on is her parish priest. She said the fact that she altar served helped her to have a close relationship Father Harrold. She said,

He is an amazing person, and I look up to him a lot. And he, I mean, I know that if I every need anything I could go to talk to him and talk to him if I don’t have anyone else, because he’ll listen to me. Everything, really, it is all eye opening in a different ways. It all opens my eyes in different ways every time I do something.

During the last year, Rebecca has gone through a difficult time. The exact nature of her struggle she did not reveal to me, but she said the things that keep her going are “family, prayer, church and my priest”. Rebecca remarks that all of her experiences open her to new ways of seeing and this is a part of her growth. As she matures, she has a foundation that has been given to her by her parents, school and church. To put this in Vygotskian terms, Rebecca’s home, school and Church are consistent socio-cultural contexts, and the adults in her life are the “knowers” and tools she turns to as she struggles to integrate new experiences into her learning. Rebecca shares how the people who have mentored her through childhood continue to guide her.

I mean right now, I’m going through some stuff that I could not be getting through any of it without my parents, obviously. And prayer, I mean, I feel like, as humans we try to be satisfied from human relationships, with like a friend or boyfriend, or whatever. Do you see what I am saying? And I feel like the only way that I’m going to be completely satisfied with my life and okay with the path I am taking is if I draw from God. You see what I am saying? And so I definitely, I always go back to Him.

Rebecca’s words seem to reveal an understanding that she has to find comfort in God’s love and that His love for her is a source of strength. Her words also reveal a new understanding that she cannot find her happiness through others. “We try to be satisfied from human relationships”. For her, wholeness or a sense of being “satisfied with my life” will have to come through “drawing from God”, and that drawing from God, helps her find her “path”.

In addition to the difficulty she was facing when we met, Rebecca has faced adversity before. In particular, going to Camp and to Atenas for the first time was a bit frightening to Rebecca, and her fear conflicted with her desire to go. She shared with me her first encounter with the Camp, and about when she was told about the student she would be working with, Noah.

I remember the day, the morning before the kids got there, it was my first year that I did it, and we were actually taking a bus to the Camp. I remember the occupational therapist, her name is Miss Gwenn, and she was telling me, because it was the first time I had really, ever been around, well except for my two cousins, the first time I had ever really been around special needs kids like that. So I was nervous definitely nervous, and I didn't know what to expect. She [Miss Gwenn] told me, well Noah Graham, he's this little boy. When you see him, his appearance is probably going to scare you a little bit because his I eyes, I mean, she just told me how he looked, you know, looked funny, and he didn't look normal. And so I was nervous about that, but like I told you earlier we hit it off. So even though I do kind of have preconceived ideas and, and you know things I get nervous about, in the end it works itself out and we overcome all that. It's worth it. Because I do get over it, you know, five minutes into it, I'm like, whatever, this is easy. I can do it.

Although, Rebecca was fearful, she was able to over come it, and she grew to love Noah, and that connection she formed with him went beyond his appearance. In addition, Miss Gwenn mentored Rebecca. Miss Gwenn, helped to prepare Rebecca for Noah, and

Miss Gwen's description helped Rebecca get beyond Noah's appearance. Because of their mutual love for children with disabilities, Rebecca would often talk to Miss Gwenn about her choice to become a special education teacher. Rebecca said of Miss Gwenn,

She's an occupational therapist, and so I got to talk to her since, I've always know that I wanted to take the special ed[ucation] route. So that's good because I got to talk to her, and I kind of considered occupational therapy, and I talked to her.

Rebecca's conversations with Miss Gwenn, helped Rebecca clarify her choices regarding a career path. This helped Rebecca think about her options, such as "consider occupational therapy" like Miss Gwenn, or think about the role she would like to play in helping special needs students. In this way, Rebecca found her own way of serving children.

However, Rebecca reveals a significant discovery about her work with Noah and about herself. She indicates a spiritual relationship with Noah. She said "he is holy". Through her relationships with mentors and with Noah, Rebecca has developed some insight into her own identity.

Identity: Finding God; Finding Me

Rebecca came to view Noah as "holy" and as "funny" and as a "friend". This is the kind of communication St. Ignatius encourages in his mediation related at the beginning of this vignette. "Second. Love consists of the mutual communication between two persons. That is, the one who loves gives and communicates to the beloved what he or she has . . ." Rebecca experienced not only this kind of giving, but also this kind of

receiving. The people she served helped her overcome her fears, and to form a bond with them.

You know, the people that I'm serving, they reach out to me too. You know whenever you do something; they reach out, so they put me at ease and make feel comfortable when I do it.

Although Rebecca does not articulate her service as accompanying or companioning others, this is in essence what she is describing. It is the giving and receiving that comes from each person reaching out to one another. Once the initial communication is made, Rebecca immerses herself in being with the people she is serving, and they are with her too. Together they become as Anna described "companions".

In addition to her work at the Camp, Rebecca described the spiritual awakening she had while in Atenas, Mexico. Growing up, Rebecca went to Mass with her family every week, and then once a week at school. Consequently, it was a surprise to her that people in the ranchos had limited opportunities to go to Mass. In addition, when she did attend Mass at the ranchos, she observed people with a deep faith. She describes it further here.

It [Atenas] changed my outlook on everything. And I think that was probably one of the, I don't know, probably a big, like milestone, important part of my life, was going there. The first trip was a lot better than the second one. Just because, I don't know, it was the first time, and so the second time, I kind of new what was going to happen. It was still a great experience, but the first time

was when we had, it's weird to say, but I didn't know what adoration was before we went there, and we had adoration one night after we had gotten done with our service [service-work]. And we had supper and cleaned up and everything, [then] we had adoration. I don't know what it was, but I just started, I don't know, I mean my eyes were opened, and I was like, oh my gosh. My life is amazing, and I get so many opportunities and I am so blessed. And so probably, Atenas opened my eyes. I mean with my faith, but also seeing other cultures definitely going out to the ranchos and seeing the way they live, and how simple their life is. And it made me think that maybe if we live like that, our lives would be easier instead of focusing on material objects like we all do. Because I mean I do. I know I do.

The Catholic tradition of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was new to Rebecca and her experience of it provide her with a sense of gratitude and appreciation for her life and for her faith. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a prayerful reflection on the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Catholics believe that after a priest consecrates the bread, which is in wafer form and represents the unleavened bread Christ broke at the last supper during pass over, that bread, literally, becomes the body of Christ. Catholics also call the body of Christ the Eucharist. Eucharist means thanksgiving. And our thanks are an expression of gratitude for Christ's sacrifice for us, and for His presence with us. When then eat the bread, we receive Christ, and He is within us, desiring for us to be his physical presence in world. We become the head, heart and hands of Christ. During Adoration, the Eucharist, which is always present in the Church tabernacle, except on Good Friday, is brought out and placed in a beautiful case that stands upright, called a

monstrance. For a period of time, people pray before Christ and sit with Him. This act of sitting with Christ recalls the night before Christ was crucified. On that night, He sat in the Garden at Gethsemane and asked the disciples to stay awake with him and pray. He asks us to accompany Him.

The tradition of adoration temporarily went out of fashion following Vatican II. In the shift from a Latin Mass to the vernacular, to women no longer covering their heads, and to a focus on Christ's presence in everyone, the practice of Adoration went from occurring every first Friday of the month to only occurring on Holy Thursday. However, the monthly tradition remained in Mexico and Central America and has recently regained popularity in the United States. Today, it is often offered well beyond Holy Thursday, and, again, offered every first Friday of the month. In fact, some parishes have perpetual adoration, which means the Eucharist, is exposed in the monstrance around the clock, and there is always someone present to pray.

Rebecca's first experience of adoration as she said "opened her eyes" and brought her sense of gratitude. She sees with new eyes, how beautiful the life she has been given is. She says, "Oh my gosh, my life is so amazing. I get so many opportunities and I am so blessed". In the first quote she mentions going to church with her family, and of growing up religious, but the awakening she had during her first Adoration in Atenas helped her "appreciate" her faith more and to connect her faith to a sense of gratitude for her life and the gifts she has been given. She realized that to the people on the ranchos, Mass and adoration are a gift, and that she is "blessed" to not only have the gift of her

faith, but also for the gift of the people in her life, and the opportunities that have been afforded to her.

In spite of the secular nature of the camp and of her work at Helping Hands, Rebecca connected the work and the people she has grown to love to the message she received at school regarding Christ's command to love and serve one another.

You know to be close to God, we need to do these things to help other people. Even if they're not, even if they're not, like they [the school] would tell us, service is anything. It [service] doesn't have to be going to Atenas, or going to you know whatever. It doesn't have to be stuff like that. Just helping a classmate, with something they need. Anything like that. They [her teachers at St. Ignatius] told us pretty much anything is service. I don't know, my theology teachers and Mrs. McCall definitely showed me that you can really turn anything into helping others and being of service. I'm helping you right now with your dissertation, you know. I'm helping you; you know what I mean?

Rebecca then connected her definition of service, which is helping others, to her faith.

I mean our whole faith and everything our church is built on, you know is serving other people. I mean, God, Jesus, you know, He gave up his life for us. That's the ultimate act of service in my opinion. He didn't have to do it. I know we don't come out, we don't' really come and say . . .[she trails off]. I'm trying to think how to put this. Even though they [her teachers] don't make all of, they don't make all of our service opportunities about religion. Like, we weren't

constantly talking to the kids at Helping Hands about religion or anything, but, I mean, the whole reason we were there was a religious reason.

What Rebecca describes here is not proselytizing but being present to others and acting on their behalf in whatever way is needed. She connected giving to others to her religious beliefs, and she seems to view her giving as occurring not just through her service placement, but also in all her daily actions, such as helping a classmate. Through offering her help, and her very presence to others, she is acting on the Gospel message to “love one another”. Her actions are her means for giving God’s love to others. Although, she did not overtly say what she felt or why she was serving to the people she served, Rebecca’s intention was to live out her faith by sharing her gifts to the people she encountered. In this way, the school motto for service, “love drives action” is much like the kind of love in the Ignatian prayer I included at the beginning. The love described in that prayer, is an all-encompassing love that includes an appreciation for God’s work in everything and every person we encounter. Everyone is sacred and holy, and the world we have been given is an expression of God at work within us and around us. Because we love, we act on behalf of one another. For Rebecca, “love drives action”. By the end of our interview and with some clues from Mrs. McCall who came in to say good bye, Rebecca recalled that key phrase from her high school years. Although she did not remember the words, she remembered to act upon the love within her.

Vignette Four

“With Greater Love than Fear”

St. Ignatius of Loyola

Aaron

Background

The hometown of Jesuit High School, and Aaron Edwards, the final student I interviewed, is located in a major western city. Jesuit High School was founded in 1877 by Italian Jesuits who came to the American West to educate young men for the Church and for society. The school began as a college, which is still in existence but over the years expanded to educate not only young men but also women. Today, Jesuit High School has moved from its original north location, which was next to the college, and is in an upper middle class area of the suburbs in the southwest part of the city. In addition, Jesuit High School has two fairly new magnificent campuses next door to one another. Sitting north of the Boys Jesuit High School is the Girls Division. For all intents and purposes, the campuses are separate entities, but both the boys and girls divisions also work together in coordinating projects and extra-curricular activities.

Jesuit High School's student population consists of mostly middle and upper middle class white students. According to the principal, Tom Walters, “three out of four students come from some means”. This statistic indicates that Jesuit High School, serves more wealthy students than the three other schools I visited. 75% of the students are white, however the school makes an effort to attract a diverse population of students, and in particular returns

to its old neighborhood to recruit students. The kind of diversity they would like to have encompasses ethnicity and socio-economic status. One in four students receives some financial aide from the school. 70% of the students are Catholic and Mr. Walters says “We’re happy with the Catholicity of this school being around seventy percent or so”. Jesuit High School like most Catholic schools gives priority to Catholic students, as the goal of Catholic elementary and secondary education is to support Catholic parents in their efforts to raise active and knowledgeable Catholic young people.

When I visited The Boys Division in November of 2010, fresh snow was on the ground. I arrived right before lunch, and everything in the building was paused. Over the loud speaker a young woman, presumably a student from the girls division, led the *Examen*. The *Examen* is a prayer that Saint Ignatius of Loyola gave to the Jesuits, and he required all members of the Society of Jesus to pray. In addition, many lay people also use this prayer. It is typically prayed before bed, or at mid-day or as frequently as needed.

The prayer ends, with asking God for the grace to help us through the next day. The purpose of the *Examen* is to help us recognize the good that we have and do, and to seek continual growth and improvement. At Jesuit High School, the *Examen* is prayed everyday and is a part of the rich Jesuit culture that the Jesuit community shares with the students in their schools and with the many lay people whose lives they touch. I focus on this prayer because the prayer is intended to help persons develop self-awareness and to become open to growth. These are not only core values of Jesuit high schools, but also they are reoccurring themes Aaron Edwards shared with me.

Aaron Edwards graduated from Jesuit High School in May of 2010. Currently, he is freshman at a Jesuit College in the Mid-West. I spoke to Aaron by phone sometime after my November visit to his former high school. He told me that he was raised in a Catholic family with both parents and he has two older brothers. In addition, he attended Catholic grade school and then he followed his brothers to Jesuit High School.

Service Experiences

Aaron's earliest experiences with service began at home. Like Mia, Aaron's desire to serve others is rooted in the example provided by his Dad. However, unlike Mia's Dad, Aaron's Dad modeled service beyond his work. Aaron recalled that in second grade,

I think as a family we made a ton of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. We had an assembly line of my three brothers and my parents, and we would go drop those sandwiches off at a homeless shelter. And usually simple things, like if we were walking downtown, my dad, if he saw someone who came up and asked him for money, he would, and he did this numerous times that I can remember, and it was very impactful for me, he would go, and he would walk with them, take them to Subway and sit down and eat a Subway sandwich with him for a little bit.

For Aaron, service was a part of his family life, and his brothers were also engaged in service. Because his brothers attended Jesuit and the same college he now attends, Aaron watched them serve. Working with people who are in need has been something Aaron has witnessed his entire life.

While at Jesuit, service was required of all students and in addition to juggling a varsity wrestling schedule, a highly academic track, and life with family and friends, Aaron actively engaged in the school's service requirements. He recalled,

Okay, so, at Jesuit, I guess you start off pretty easy. You start off doing, freshman year, you start off doing ten hours of serving like the local community and then you work up from there. Until it's like twenty hours sophomore year, and then junior and senior year you do service sites with twenty-five hours of direct service to the poor and marginalized.

In this way, Jesuit offers a program that provides a scaffold to support students. Although all of the schools had somewhat of a gradual approach to integrating service into the life of students, Jesuit's approach in comparison to the other schools I visited is somewhat unique and of course it is a distinctly Jesuit model. During Aaron's freshman year, he and his Dad spent the night and served dinner at a homeless shelter. The freshman service experiences links parents and students to the service site. According to Mr. Walters, because students cannot drive and are still quite dependent on parents, students are provided with parental support. In addition, the structure garners parent buy-in to the program and establishes service as part of the school's culture.

During Aaron's sophomore year he served at the Regional food bank and packaged food. This was a service he was able to perform without parents and with friends. Jesuit's idea behind allowing friends to work together and not having parents participate is that at the sophomore level, students are more involved with peers and more mobile. In this way, the school moves students to greater levels of independence, while

at the same time providing support through the presence of peers. Students also process their service experiences through reflection papers and assigned teacher mentors.

Aaron's junior and senior year service projects were the most impactful to him, and it is during these years that students were randomly grouped with other students. For junior service Aaron went to a local Head Start program, and it is a program he was able to choose. He described the people he encountered there as "amazing".

I went to the Head Start program, where I worked at a pre-school, an underprivileged pre-school, with some amazing people. The teachers there are incredible. And many of the families, that, actually pretty much all of the families that have their children in the program are definitely struggling financially, and a lot of times, the program does whatever it can to support the children and families with food, and for, just the price of an education. And so I did that my junior year.

Aaron shared with me that he "loves working with kids" and that his school offered a lot of options for students to serve children in need. However, when Aaron became a senior, Jesuit High School asked the students to stretch themselves beyond their comfort zone, and again he went to the service site with a randomly selected group of students. Aaron describes it this way.

Now my senior year, I love working with kids first of all and so I really, there are really a ton of options for service sites that you can serve from, and I really wanted to, I was going to, I knew that I loved working with kids, but one of the best things at Jesuit, they do encourage you to challenge yourself with doing service, like getting out your comfort zone, and go do something that is beneficial,

and is serving humanity, but something that maybe you're not, like, super comfortable with the idea at first. So I've always struggled with wanting to serve the elderly. Specifically people with Alzheimer's, because my grandfather has Alzheimer's, so it was kind of like a rough issue for me. And so my senior year, I decided after talking to some classmates, just some of my fellow students about my options, I decided I would volunteer at a an Alzheimer's center, and in the end that turned out to be, I thought, a fantastic idea. At first I struggled with it quite a bit, and it turned out, like I turned out loving it. I was able to learn quite a bit, and I think, that was an extremely important aspect of it.

For Aaron, one of the difficulties he faced at the center was seeing people who were once highly educated and productive lose their identity. He describes his struggle to grapple with that loss and how to interact with people who wouldn't remember him. It was a form of service that also hit close to home as his own family was watching the gradual decline of his grandfather.

At this service site, Aaron was placed in an environment that challenged him and it was his choice to go to a service site where he would go to face some of his fears. In addition, he was able to make that choice after talking with classmates and teachers. Encouraging students to be "open to growth" is a guiding philosophy at Jesuit High School and it is based upon the premise that as we experience a variety of challenges, we grow and mature. Aaron's honesty about his fears was admirable, and it was impressive that the school already had a support structure in place that allowed him to go to a service site that would help him to work with people and situations that would change his ideas

and thinking. Aaron's description of his service at the Alzheimer unit reveals the wisdom of the school's challenge to him.

At first I thought it was a very depressing atmosphere, that there were people, many, one of them specifically, his name was [Joe], he was a genius before he had Alzheimer's. He was a rocket scientist that worked for NASA. And, um, like they have their biographies up on the wall, and he had a very severe stage of Alzheimer's, and he couldn't remember anything. He didn't remember his wife, who came in and visited him. And it was very; it was really hard to see these people who had such incredible lives, and such incredible people who meant so much. And then they wake up in the mornings and they either won't recognize their family that comes in, or they won't even talk, they won't recognize me, even though I've been coming there for two weeks. But, so it was hard for me at first to overcome that, because I felt that it was a depressing atmosphere.

Aaron's comments about Joe reveal empathy and compassion. He grieves the loss of Joe and the life that Joe had before Alzheimer's. Several sources of guidance and support helped Aaron work through the sadness and grief he experienced at the Center. Jesuit has a multi-faceted support system in place for students who are engaged in service, and it is perhaps the strongest support system I encountered during this study. First, Aaron was also assisted by the reflection process his high school had in place. All students were provided with a journal with guided questions. Although Mr. Mullen at Bishop Reilly offered the same practice to students who elected to go on the alternative Spring Break, Jesuit, differed in that it required all students to use the journals to think

about the people and circumstances they were encountering at their service site. The journal packet's introduction reminds students that they are called to live as "Men and Women with and for others who are leaders through service in imitation of Christ Jesus". As I mentioned earlier, this quote is the essence of Jesuit charism. Jesuits are taught that living for others, like Jesus Christ did, is their mission. In addition, the journal reminds students that they must be "open to growth", and that openness to growth includes "having experiences outside their worldview". The journal then offers a reflection opportunity prior to service and then students are asked to answer the guided questions throughout each day of their service.

In addition to the journal, each student was assigned a faculty supervisor, and the journal reflections helped to drive the supervisor's visits with students. This piece of the service program is unique to Jesuit, and Aaron noted that this was quite meaningful to him.

They give you this journal with pre-set questions in it for each service site, and they, have a kind of faculty supervisor you meet with quite a few times throughout the process. I think I met with mine three or four times my senior year. And then they come and meet with you. Mine took us, mine took me and the boy I was with at my senior site out to lunch, and we went through basically, and she asked us, first of all how the process was going, and this was just a teacher at Jesuit who came, randomly assigned to the service sites, and she talked to us about what was going through our heads. What's been hard? What's been rewarding? And, obviously, what have we learned? I remember talking with her

about how it was challenging, and she being able to just kind of offer her advice.

I don't know, having someone there to talk to who was at Jesuit was an awesome thing. And then just being able to reflect in the journal, that was great too.

Although Aaron was asked to go out of his comfort zone, his school did not abandon him. He was provided with the means to think about his experiences, and then a familiar face would sit down with him and help him through the thoughts and feelings he was struggling with at the service site. In this way, Jesuit continues to guide students and gradually leads them to greater independence. Asking students who are in twelfth grade to choose a service site that will be challenging to them inspires personal responsibility and moral courage. Aaron was asked to face a significant fear and come to terms with the pain he encountered. Yet, at the same time Jesuit offered Aaron an opportunity for personal growth and supported him, as well as his classmates, with a guided journal reflection and a means to process and analyze their own feelings, ideas and more importantly, evaluate the ways they might have grown and changed.

Jesuit High School set up a system to help students manage and come to not only understand the value of service but also to come to self-understanding about who they are as human beings. Starting with Aaron's freshman year, his Dad went with him to the service site, and then each year Aaron was given greater challenges, while all the while, he was guided by caring adults. This is a Vygotskian model for learning. Again, the knower guides the learner, and as the learner continues to acquire the tools he is asked to move into individual and independent accomplishment of the task. However, at Jesuit, students are asked to think about their own privilege and bias and to confront them by

choosing to see a world beyond their everyday experience. At the same time the students are given multiple tools to reflect and to make meaning of their experiences. They are given a zone of proximal development in which to try out those tools and seek the guidance of caring others. Through the process of reflection and conversation with an adult mentor, Aaron put into practice the faith he was taught to live.

In addition, Aaron went to his service site with a group. Six students went with him to work at the Head Start. He went to the Alzheimer's site with some other senior students from the school. However he ended up having a good friend go to the Alzheimer's site as well.

I actually ended up randomly going with one of my good friends, and I know this happened at other service sites as well, but we actually spent quite a bit of time talking about it. And it was kind of cool because we, I remember we were both feeling, at least kind of similar to the same way. That is, it's difficult, but by the end of it we loved the experiences and we both were feeling very positively about how we can treat the residents there, how the staff was treating residents, instead of feeling these people are lost and confused, and what a sad depressing place. So we kind of both came to that conclusion at the end of it. I think us talking to each other, helped us. I don't know, me helping to try to get him through it, and him trying to help me get through it, we were both, that was really good for me. It was good to have people to talk to, and someone who felt the same way through the process.

Aaron's friend and he not only had the resources of the school and the service site to help them, but they were able to help one another focus on the positive aspects of the Alzheimer's center. They were able to talk about what they noticed the staff doing with the residents and talk through it. Like the exemplars in the previous vignettes Aaron and his friend helped one another.

Aaron also remarked that it wasn't just his classmates and the teacher assigned to his service group that talked about service. He talked about the culture of the school and how service permeated the environment, and what he learned in the environment impacted him at the service site. Like all of the schools in this study, service is an expectation at each site, but Aaron's school really built upon the Jesuit charism of being a person for others. He says,

You know, I think the, like one of the biggest things were, like the Jesuit model, like I said. Like 'men and women working with and for others', which is like priests over and over again, which is fantastic. Like how Pedro Arrupe talks about how men and women shouldn't want to live simply for themselves, but like for God and Christ. And also, obviously, acting out, living the Beatitudes, like living them more. And it's just the way many of the faculty at Jesuit and teachers take time out of their class, no matter what the subject, because I remember my sophomore year I had a math teacher, when we were about to leave for our service site, just that one day of service the sophomores do, she says to our class, pretty much the entire class, she just talked about social justice and service, which is something that struck me at Jesuit, how involved the

teachers did seem to get, and how supportive they were of the entire service aspect of Jesuit, which is huge. So I feel as if, like theology was big deal for helping me to understand why I was doing service, but the Jesuit ideals and the Jesuit models are preached and taught over and over again to students at Jesuit to kind of encourage that way of thinking.

What Aaron notices here seems to be a consistent and clear message, and that message, to be men and women with and for others is heard not just in theology class or at the service site, but also in his math classroom. In addition, his teachers' desire to talk about service and justice in his math class communicated the value and importance of the expectation that students live their lives in a particular way, or as Aaron says, "encourage that kind of thinking". In this way, the service performed by students is valued and affirmed by all faculty members who are expected to mentor students and to connect service to who students are as people. Aaron notes that his math teacher's discussion was very "impactful" to him. These discussions helped Aaron and his peers see that service is linked to the kind of person the school is tries to form, "a man for others", and it does so by scaffolding service. These service support structure allows students time for self-reflection and for forging meaningful relationships starting within the family, between students, between students and faculty and with one's own identity.

Pivotal Relationships Through Service

Aaron was first encouraged to serve by his family. He recalled that his parents and brothers have always been involved with service and specifically he talks about how his Dad modeled service for them.

I remember watching him in line [at Subway]. He would talk to them, talk to the homeless man in the Subway line, get him a Subway, and then shake his hand, and then come back with us, you know. Seeing my father who I obviously look up to, especially looked up to quite a bit when I was younger, just, you know at the very, like treating homeless people like humans was very impactful for me. They're not less. It wouldn't bother him to be like seen talking to them and shaking his hand, and not just walking by was something that I remember always just stuck with me. And also my family has always encouraged service work and something that we all, me and my brothers feel is extremely important. Something we strive to do.

Aaron's father modeled for the family treating all human beings with respect and with dignity. Aaron says, "treating homeless people like humans was very impactful for me. They're not less." The message Aaron received is that homeless people are human beings and "they're not less" than me or anyone else. In addition to watching his family treat the people they met with respect, he also recalls the ways in which his family connected their service to their faith.

Aaron's family is very important to him, and from them he learned to practice and value his Catholic faith. He says his faith began and was nurtured in his home.

I think first and foremost is my family life. Just going to church on Sunday, and then taking the time to talk about what Mass is about as a family was big deal. And then my going to a Catholic grade school as well, so learning about my faith from a very young age has been important, but then realizing it's not just about the facts we learn, and the names of the saints or whatever, or even like specific facts about the Catholic faith. Those are important, yes, but being able to act on what you believe is extremely important. That's something that my parents were always kind of preaching since I was young. And then going to Jesuit was an incredible decision by my oldest brother, who chose there, and then my older brother and I both followed him, because I feel like it was an atmosphere that not only encouraged social work, but also to have the atmosphere.

Aaron's description of his family support sets him apart from the other exemplars. Although the other exemplars mention the importance of their family, Aaron provides a portrait of his family that reveals clear modeling and commitment to service. Specifically, he mentions how his "parents were always kind of preaching" the importance of acting "on what you believe". Aaron's older brothers were also models for him, and he followed their path because it was a part of his family's value system to be in "an atmosphere that not only encouraged social work, but also to have the atmosphere." It seems that like his brothers, Aaron sought a school that is consistent with faith life he experienced at home.

Aaron mentioned that he followed his two older brothers to high school and on to the same college. In describing his choice to follow their path, he reveals a deep respect for his two brothers and an appreciation for the kind of people they have become.

My older brother is four years older than me, and oldest brother is five, and so every time I am entering a place, they were always leaving, and it was just hard. I'm really close with my brothers. They're my best friends, and um they both went to [his University]. They both graduated, and actually they are both still here. One is in med school. The other is in dental school.

Both Aaron's brothers are also committed to service, and Aaron's comments communicate his desire to be with his brothers. He found it "hard" to watch them leave as he "arrived". He is "really close" to his brothers and he is glad to be where they are. He also shared that his middle brother is in dental school because he wants to become a maxio-facial surgeon. His goal is to work with Smile Train and repair cleft-palate and facial injuries in children. This is a service path Aaron clearly, admires.

Aaron also formed some good relationships through his service experiences. While at the Alzheimer's clinic, he came to respect and appreciate one of the staff members, Meredith. Meredith helped him as he struggled to overcome the sadness he felt at seeing such gifted people lose sight of their own identity as the effects of Alzheimer's overcame them.

Meredith had such an incredible sense of positivity, and she talked to us a lot. In fact, I actually talked to her about how it's hard sometimes with the, I felt that it was hard to get over the fact that these people were losing so much of

themselves to this disease. And she was talking about, like how I can look for, like the little positive things that do happen throughout the day. You don't, I don't know, like seeing these people who are so lost and struggle so much, at least quite a few of them, and then trying to bring them, trying to make them as comfortable as possible, trying to make them happy, like seeing them smile. And she was talking about just being able to be there for people who feel lost.

Meredith showed Aaron how to look for "little positive things" each day, such as a smile. In addition, she taught Aaron to "just be there" for the people he served. Aaron did not receive much reinforcement from the Alzheimers' patients. Often they did not remember him when he arrived and did not react at times to his efforts. This was hard and Aaron goes on to describe how Meredith helped him cope.

They [the patients] feel like somewhat less than. They don't understand where they are. And she does so much, and she smiles all the time. She's giving hugs all the time. And I just don't know how she was always so positive, and so, like seeing positivity, and seeing how positively she affects the lives of the people who are residents there, and made it much more impactful, and I felt, a much more rewarding experience, as I started to see.

Meredith also showed Aaron that her smile and her touch were important to the people at the Alzheimer's center, and so instead of feeling a sense of hopelessness and despair, Meredith modeled a way for Aaron to focus on the other person, and helped him see that his presence and care were important, and that the patients received it and would perhaps sometimes reward him with a response. He explains this further,

I started to see, yes, what is happening to these people is terrible, a terrible disease, but the service work being done for the people, the people serving them.

Like a man came in and read stories to them every week. That was incredible because they are letting these people know that they are not lost, and that there are people who care for them. They were doing an incredible job of just letting people who feel lost and uncared for realize that they are, they are cared for.

Aaron came to accept that disease he saw was awful and irreversible, but he also opened his eyes to the people who were providing whatever comfort they could to the patients at the center. In this way, Aaron learned that what was valued was his presence and his companionship, and so the service was less about what he got from the patients, and more about how he could offer himself to them. This understanding helped Aaron to grow. Although he wasn't rewarded with a smile or a thank you, he learned more about who he was and he learned that his very presence is what mattered. Aaron came to accept that he could not change the disease. He said "I started to see that, yes, what is happening to these people is a terrible, terrible disease", and he came to accept that what he could offer was "letting these people know that they are not lost and that they are cared for." Aaron's analysis reveals a pattern of growth that begins with facing his own fears, and coming to terms with his limitations with regard to what he could control, and moving to simply, being present with the patients.

Another important relationship Aaron developed while serving in high school was with the service director, Rick Frederick. Aaron has great respect for Mr. Frederick who is also a graduate of Jesuit High School and of the university Aaron now attends.

Aaron describes Mr. Fredericks in the following way.

He's an incredible guy. Oh, my gosh. He's done a lot. He's someone who I make an effort to call, and talk to about my service work quite a bit. He, uh, did Encuentro, so we've got a Dominican Republic study abroad program where you go and basically immerse yourself in the Dominican Republic for a semester while at the same time you go to school down there. But then you do a lot of service work for the semester. And he's the first one that pointed it out. I'm very much hoping to do that my, my time here at [college]. That's one of my biggest plans, and he's always been there to answer my questions, or to help me work through the whole examine the service and academic possibilities that the university would have to offer.

Mr. Frederick encouraged Aaron to seek service opportunities in college. Aaron also respects the work that Mr. Frederick has accomplished in his own life. He specifically tells me that Mr. Frederick "served two years in an underprivileged school" and he admires his return to Jesuit, and considers that a possible avenue for his own career after graduating. Aaron says, "He's the service director at Jesuit now, and I think that would be something incredible to do as well." The relationships and the work Aaron did at Jesuit continue to impact him and he is thinking about his future plans based upon what he has learned about himself through service.

Identity: Finding God; Finding Me

While serving at Jesuit, Aaron learned quite a bit about himself, and during his junior year of service at Head Start, he experienced a change in perspective.

I feel as if, well before coming to high school, before I really started trying to get involved in service, I think one of the biggest views on people being in poverty or people being marginalized, and this is, I think a general view that is a lot of times it is because people are lazy, and I think part of me, part of me believed before getting into high school, it's like, well, if people are like really hurting, I knew that there were definitely exceptions, but I think part of that was, you know, if someone isn't doing well then part of that must be because they didn't put in, like, the effort or whatever.

Although Aaron served a night at the homeless shelter as a freshman and worked at the food bank during his sophomore year, his junior year provided a more sustained look at poverty, and it was during his experience as a junior that he came to confront some of his personal views.

I totally realize I was ignorant when I got into high school. Specifically, in junior and senior year, when I actually started interacting with people who were marginalized.

What seems to have made the difference to Aaron was having personal contact with people he previously thought of in perhaps stereotypical ways. He came to see them in a new light.

At the Head Start program, I saw parents coming in to pick up their kids, and I got to talk to the teacher. That was Miss Debbie. And it was incredible, like talking to her about what she's had to go through in her life, and what she's giving to the community. And I think I kind of came to the conclusion that I

didn't really like. Before I'd thought about how does the person get to where he is now, or get to where she is now. I think at this point in my life, I, specifically, from high school, I kind of came to the, [conclusion that] if I could help her serve in anyway I can, like I will, but I don't necessarily care so much about why they are in the situation they are in. I care about what I can do to help try to serve the people while they're in the situation, which is something Jesuit did a good job facilitating.

Aaron has come to the place where he is not sitting in judgment of the people he is serving with. He seems to understand his role as a person who serves as a way of being present to other people. However, Aaron does not talk about addressing the root causes of the marginalized. He is at the first step of feeling compassion and seeing the humanity of the other person, but he hasn't arrived at addressing systemic causes. Aaron goes on to say,

It was like, don't judge people for the situations they are in and don't ever put yourself on a pedestal because there but for the grace of God go I. Just be there for the people as much as you can. I think that was an important step for me to take. It's not about like helping, it's about, it's about, I don't know simply, like just being there.

The idea of "just being there" seems to reveal a belief in sharing experiences and being a presence of comfort and companionship. In order to do this fully, Aaron indicates he had to fight his preconceived ideas and his own fears about Alzheimer's. In order to truly accompany people, he had to let go of the desire to assign blame.

He then connects the idea of “just being there” to his Jesuit education. He says “secure personalis” which in Latin means care for the whole person. He explains secure personalis in this way.

I think that [secure personalis] is extremely valuable, just as a whole mind set because if you look at it as care for, instead for care for the person, I’ve always seen that as care for humanity, care for the whole community. So yes, you can care for humanity that is very close to you, like your family or your friends, but maybe look beyond that and try to broaden your horizons and care for the whole of humanity. The people you don’t see every day. The people who are struggling to get enough food for their children for dinner, which is some of the people I saw at the Head Start during my junior year. So yes you should care for your whole person, but in looking at your personalis in a worldview, it also helps to take that in and say, care for humanity, not just the humanity you see in front of you.

Secure personalis, for Aaron and for Jesuits is the same as the Golden Rule, love your neighbor as yourself. Aaron sees his neighbors in a way that is consistent with Catholic teaching, which holds that every person is our neighbor and we are all responsible for one another and for the world we create.

Aaron later delved more deeply into this idea of what it means to have a worldview of humanity and he connects the desire to serve with how he sees himself as a Catholic person. This is precisely the impact he sees his high school trying to make upon students.

I think always trying to tie it back to more Catholic Christian values, like with doing your service work, trying to, in the journals, like talking about the life of Jesus, and how your service work, like how you can tie your actions between serving humanity, and what Jesus did in his life was a big factor. And then also, I think that's definitely the biggest thing I got out of it was the connections that I, that I wanted to make between my faith and serving humanity, instead of just me serving humanity as a requirement, or me serving humanity because it's the right thing to do, but instead, me serving humanity because the best, that's and incredible way for me to act out being a Catholic and being a Christian in a Catholic high school.

For Aaron service is putting his faith in action. It is a way to take the head knowledge, the doctrine the words from scripture, and make them come alive in the practice of serving others. However, it is also about suspending judgment of others, and more about meeting their needs and being present to the other person. In the earlier quote Aaron talks about not putting himself on a pedestal, and that "secure personalis" means caring for everyone regardless of how or why they are who they are. He also has come to an understanding that he is privileged and that he could very easily not have that privilege. He sees the humanity in the other person, and for Aaron, acting on the belief of secure personalis connects him to his understanding of himself as a person "with and for others". These two adages from the Jesuit charism are rooted in Christ's teaching to love one another, and for Aaron, it is his love for everyone that motivates him to serve and act. He seeks to behave in ways that are consistent with the person he wants to be. Aaron

indicated his desire to seek more service opportunities in college, and perhaps like Anna and Mia, he will be moved to action at the systemic level. He is on a trajectory towards that, but not yet at the same point they are.

Jesuit High School has given Aaron opportunities to come to an understanding of who he is and the kind of person he would like to become. Aaron talked with me that the school retreats and Chi Rhos, both of which supported the religious and service goals of his high school. He says

First of all, I think I, well one of the, you know Chi Rhos and service ties together, and Jesuit is the facilitator of being, well one of the biggest reasons we have retreats, is being able to be fully comfortable with the person that you are, and growing in that person. Being able not to wear masks in front of people or anything like that. And so I feel as if I try to be honest with that.

At Chi Rho's Aaron had to confront one of his own masks and that was also a pivotal moment for him. He shared with me one experience that he feels changed him.

There have been times in high school maybe, where I've like, even though like there's brotherhood tossed, brotherhood and friendship are tossed around all the time where I've failed at being like being the best person I can. And failing to treat people with dignity, like with the dignity they deserve, like with the respect they deserve. It seems like a lot of people go through phases in high school where they're kind of in a, like, almost, I don't know, like trying to be like in a cool stage, I guess you can count on getting into those stages. I definitely had a little bit of an attitude my sophomore year. I specifically remember like being

exclusive, like one person. I felt in the aftermath, that I was not being, like not living up to the standards that Jesuit sets out, you know the kind of person Jesuit expects you to be. I remember feeling terrible about maybe excluding this, like my brother, like a classmate of mine, and there was definitely, like I knew I should invite him to this get together or whatever, and I purposely chose not to, which he was hurt by.

The Chi Rho's retreat helped Aaron recognize more than his act of unkindness. He also came to see that his behavior was not in keeping with what he termed the "standards" of his school. He didn't treat his friend like a brother. Augusto Blasi's theory of moral development, holds that people who have developed morally are uncomfortable and in a state of disequilibrium when they behave in ways that are inconsistent with the person they perceive themselves to be. Aaron states that he wanted to behave in a manner that is consistent with his own sense of responsibility and sense of identity. Therefore, he was able to recognize and regret those times when he did not behave consistently with his own values and beliefs. This acceptance of his past poor behavior at the Chi Rhos retreat motivated Aaron to go beyond feeling bad about his behavior, and to act in a way that is consistent with the kind of person he wants to be.

When we went to Chi Rhos, and I remember finding, like during Chi Rho's that he [the friend he excluded during his sophomore year] was actually in my Chi Rhos group, in my small group, and I sat down and talked to him a long time about how sorry I was for just excluding him earlier that year, and for not

being the kind of friend he deserves, so that's one time that specifically stands out to me because it's like something I have learned from.

Not only did Aaron come to see his behavior in a new light, but also he came to overcome his fear and seek reconciliation with his friend. Aaron quickly notes that this story does not specifically relate to service but he does understand and connect how people should be treated to what he has learned about Christ's treatment of others, and that treatment extends to everyone. He says,

It's not specifically related to service, but Jesus wants treatment of, treatment of people in the world, even if, it's the people you go to class with, or just someone you meet on the street. They deserve to be treated with dignity, and so that was something I definitely regret. I don't regret, because I learned a lot from it, but I definitely made the wrong choice at the time.

This example of Aaron's self-recognition of his own behavior seems to help him to behave in a way that is consistent with his religious and moral beliefs.

Furthermore, Aaron's coming to self-awareness, and seeking reconciliation is the purpose of the Examen prayer I mentioned at the beginning of the vignette. The *Examen* is intended to help us recognize our failings and grow from them. In addition, the *Examen* calls us to dedicate all of our actions for "ad maiorem dei gloriam" or in another words for the greater glory of God. This is a saying coined by St. Ignatius of Loyola, and the Jesuits were taught that every action should be about making the world a better place and in so doing, we honor and thank God.

Aaron's apology was a step that brought him closer to self understanding and it required him to overcome his fear of admitting his mistake and to move forward to strive to act in ways that are respectful and good. Aaron's apology to his friend is an act of moral courage, which Aaron defines below.

Well, okay, so I was always taught when I was younger that being courageous is being, is not being, is not being scared, but having the, for being able to do what you know is right even when you are terrified. So I think as far as moral courage goes, like there are things that I know to be right. There are things I

believe to be right. Things that I want to strive to continue to do. There are a lot of things that require moral courage, like Rick Fredericks, like him going to the Dominican Republic for a semester, he had the courage literally, like that's the harder road.

Aaron then links this idea of courage to what he learned at Jesuit High School and he applies it to Mr. Frederick's choice to serve in the Dominican Republic. He said, its "stepping out of the environment you are used to, like the place where you've lived your whole life, and go live in a culture that's different from your own". Although Aaron sees Mr. Frederick's choice as an example of courage, Aaron also made a step out of his comfort zone, and his experiences during his service placements and through Chi Rho's changed his thinking and he learned to companion others. His work with the children at Head Start gave him a new insight into not just poverty, but also into his own humanity and moved him towards reserving judgment and "just being present".

Aaron's sense of self-understanding has also inspired him to think about what he hopes to do with his life. Although he hopes to double major in theology and philosophy, he isn't sure about his final career choice. What he does know is that he wants to do something that he is passionate about. He said,

Well, obviously, I want, very much still want to do something that I love doing. So I try to work at like my talent level, like my talents and what I am interested in, and those through those things, how I can serve humanity. So I very much enjoy theology, and I very much still enjoy philosophy, psychological thinking, and if I do end up, well one of my interests is going to law school, but at the same time there's I think, my biggest thing, if I do end up going to law school, I will want to be extremely open to doing a bunch of pro-bono work, and maybe trying to come to the defense of people who would not be able to afford an attorney in certain situations. I think in most any profession I'm considering I will find ways to make it a large part of what I want to do to help serve in some way. I

like what Rick Fredericks is doing.

Although Aaron has not made a final decision regarding his vocation, he does want his work to be about serving in some way,

He is currently exploring service opportunities at his university. This year he worked at a local day care for needy children, and he is going to apply to be a part of a different social justice community next year. In this community students live together in a dorm and they spend the year focusing on issues of social justice. This group called

Arrupe, named after a famous former Superior General of the Society of Jesus is dedicated to service. Aaron describes it below.

Arrupe is just a much more kind of special dorm for service [which is where he is now] and is focused on leadership with a large part dedicated to service in leadership. Arrupe is solely focused on social justice and service, so it's a more centralized community, that this one [his current service community]. At least that's why, that's something I am pretty much looking forward to. But if I don't get into that, then I'm just planning on maybe taking on, instead of just doing weekly service, like hopefully, doing about two or three a week. And then yeah, hopefully going on some fall and spring break service trips as well.

As Aaron continues to explore his options at his university, he opens himself to new experiences and possibilities for serving. Like Mr. Fredericks, and perhaps like all the Jesuits before, Aaron hopes to courageously go forward into the world and be a presence of hope and love.

Chapter Summary

This chapter consisted of the results of my data collection and brought to light the factors that impacted the lives and religious moral identity of the four exemplars in each vignette. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the themes that emerged through my exploration of each exemplar's service experiences. Furthermore, I will seek to provide an understanding of the socio-cultural contexts and meditational tools each exemplar acquired through their service-learning experiences and continues to apply in their lives beyond high school. These meditational tools reveal the exemplar's adaptation

of the socio-cultural contexts and should provide an understanding of the possible links between their socio-cultural context and religious moral identity. Where appropriate, I will reference the literature and perhaps provide a variation on current ideas and theories. Furthermore, this will hopefully, guide service-learning practitioners as they strive to provide meaningful and impactful programs for adolescents.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of service-learner exemplars in the distinct socio-cultural context of the Catholic high school. This study was grounded not only in theories of moral development (Blasi & Milton, 1991; Blasi, 1993; 2004) but also based upon a Vygotskian understanding of cognitive development. Catholic high school service-learning is a distinct socio-cultural context. My study explored the experiences of Catholic high graduates as service-learner exemplars, and the processes, tools, language and symbols used to describe their experiences and their subsequent moral actions after leaving high school. Four moral exemplars were purposely selected based upon recommendations of faculty and school administrators, and an interpretive case study methodology was used. Each student was considered a distinct case, and data was reported within each case. Qualitative methods were used in order to provide an in depth portrait of each student's unique experiences and personal development. All of the participants in this study were Catholic, Caucasian, middle to upper middle class, graduates of Catholic elementary and high schools. In addition, all but one student is currently enrolled in a Catholic Jesuit college or university, and the remaining student is at a public college in her home state.

The major research questions guiding this study are: What key experiences and relationships provided Catholic service-learner participants with insights into their moral, religious identity as well as their movement toward moral action, and do service-learner

understanding of service-learning?

This study also sought to answer the following sub-questions:

Experiences:

- c) What experiences influenced participants' thinking about service?
- d) What experiences influenced participants' desire to continue serving after high school?

Relationships:

- c) What relationships influenced participants' thinking about service?
- d) What relationships influenced participants' desire to continue serving after high school?

Language:

exemplars use the language that reflects Catholic moral identity when describing their service-learning experiences? What language, words and ideas do participants use to describe their service-learning experiences?

- a) What language, words and ideas do participants use to describe their subsequent service experiences?

The data obtained from each participant were analyzed to generate themes that provide an understanding of multiple socio-cultural experiences that include a wide range of service-learning experiences. These service experiences are complex and layered with language that reveals the importance of the nurturing relationships between students, teachers, peers, families and key individuals at the service locations. In addition, the interviews articulate each exemplar's effort to frame an understanding of their own

moral, religious and personal development. Their choice of language demonstrates the meditational tools and factors that fostered the continuum of religious, moral and personal growth revealed by each exemplar. In addition, their stories and words uncover the underlying factors that influence their continued service.

Summary of Findings

Using the research questions guiding this study, I will summarize the detailed findings described in Chapter four.

Experiences:

1. What experiences influenced participants thinking about service?

These findings reveal that varied experiences shaped each exemplar's thinking about service-learning. All of the exemplars began their service within their particular Catholic elementary schools. While these activities in and of themselves don't constitute a service-learning program as defined by Eyler and Giles (1999) they did provide participants with a cultural framework defined by the Catholic school. Although the exemplars attended different schools across the country, the language and concepts the students describe is distinctly Catholic and rooted in an understanding of every human being as sacred. Also, their school cultures articulate giving and sacrificing on behalf of others. Beginning in elementary school, participants acquired the language and sense of efficacy about their role as human beings who are *called* to serve and become God's hands and feet on earth.

As the exemplars and their peers matriculated into high school, the concept of becoming God's hands and God's loving presence to others was further articulated by

their schools and required more demands on the students' time and efforts. All of the schools required more hours and deeper levels of service, as students become upper classmen. The exemplars shared that they often began their school service as freshman by performing service outside of school and in some cases they were supported by the presence of a parent or relative who went to the service site as well. As the participants matured, they were asked to perform more demanding service. Particularly, in the Jesuit high school students were encouraged to go outside their comfort zones and to encounter people that challenge their thinking and thus foster personal growth. Each participant described feeling supported not only by family and teachers, but by peers as well. In addition they shared numerous examples of pivotal discussions and experiences with mentors. These support systems, and nurturing relationships helped students to value their role as active people in the world.

All of the participants indicated a sense of responsibility for being a presence of comfort and care to others as an outgrowth of their religious beliefs. Each service experience seemed to build student confidence and commitment to continued service. The data revealed that the most impactful service occurred when students were face to face with the real people and not separated by a task or job. Exemplars valued the experiences in which they were asked to encounter the poor, the needy, and the suffering. In addition, they felt a sense of efficacy and accomplishment in overcoming their fears.

2. What experiences influenced participants' desire to continue serving after high school?

The sense of accomplishment and personal growth each student explained was supported by adult mentors who encouraged each exemplar to continue the exemplars' service beyond high school, and in two out of the four cases the mentors influenced students to choose a Catholic college in which they could find ways to serve.

Each participant indicated that the service-experiences that had the most impact on their desire to continue to serve was the forms of service that were relational and communal. During the service program students forged relationships with the people they encountered and they found these relationships caused them to think about themselves and their values and beliefs in new ways. Mia recalled the humility and gratitude of the people she encountered through Habitat for Humanity. Rebecca forged a deep and warm relationship with Noah, the young child with disabilities she worked with each year at camp. In addition, Aaron recalled the life story of the scientist he came to know at the Alzheimer clinic.

Often, students found themselves re-framing what they learned in religious education or from teachers as they came face to face with people in different situations from themselves. For example, Mia seemed frustrated by the alcoholics that came into the emergency room, but because of her encounter with someone from the homeless shelter, she had a new understanding and empathy for those who live on the streets in her hometown.

In addition, participants most frequently remarked upon their discovery of a shared understanding of their mutual humanity with those they served, and as a result, they began to develop an understanding of their own identity as an outgrowth of these

discoveries. These understandings can be placed upon a continuum ranging from feeling empathy and compassion, to recognition of the self in the other, to a higher development of forging a connection and viewing the self as not an actor upon the other, but as a companion walking with those they encounter. The participants' growth is not hierarchical as it seems to be more of a recursive process. Through a variety of experiences, the exemplars grow not only in greater understanding of themselves, but also the people around them. However, at times, the exemplars seemed to struggle with their feelings about the people they served and they would move between frustration and compassion. For example, Anna experienced the machismo and chauvinism of the men she encountered in El Salvador. Through reflection and the kindness of the families she came to know, she grew to understand the culture and separate their behavior from her sense of self. This was also true for Mia who, at first, resented the homeless patients in the emergency room. It seemed that during the process of working through her frustration, she alternated between what she learned in school, love your neighbor as yourself, and anger at the time and attention the homeless men and women required in the emergency room. Both Anna and Mia moved back forth on the continuum before coming to an acceptance of the way things are in the world and growing to understand their role in the place in which they serve.

Relationships:

1) What relationships influenced participants thinking about service?

Caring adults in the lives of the exemplars played a vital role in the formation of each service-learner exemplar. All four exemplars could point to at least one faculty

member, if not more, who mentored them and encouraged their service and growth. Through conversations at the service site, in class or outside of the classroom, students recalled personal conversations with caring adults who not only modeled service, but also provided the socio-cultural language and tools that are characteristic of Catholic schools. These tools will be discussed further in the next section.

In addition, the exemplars talked about their parents who supported their service efforts, and in two cases, parents modeled and included the family in their own service work. For these two exemplars, parents were significant influences and helped them connect to the high school school's service program and beyond. All exemplars had supportive parents throughout their high school experiences.

Peers also played an important role in the formation of the exemplars. Although some of the schools had a formal way to help students reflect upon the service experiences, students would often turn to one another to talk about what they encountered at their service sites. They discussed what they saw at the sites and shared ideas and best practices. These relationships were important to the exemplars and they still feel close ties to these peers.

At the service sites, adults connected to the service site were also present and available to help students process their experiences. In all cases, someone at the site would take the time to talk to students about their work and about the people they encountered. These conversations fostered the growth of the exemplars and helped to process the culture and context of the service-learning site. In the case of Rebecca, she

was encouraged by the administrator of the summer camp to pursue her desire to become a special education teacher.

In addition, the exemplars forged significant and meaningful relationships with the people they served and these relationships were a catalyst for changes in the exemplars preconceived ideas and perceptions. Each exemplar recalls in great detail the people they encountered and that these encounters aroused feelings of empathy and compassion. Also, their relationships with those served, motivated the exemplars to continue their service efforts. Furthermore, these relationships impacted the life decisions many of the exemplars have made with regard to their future profession and desire for continued service.

2) What relationships influenced participants desire to continue serving after high school?

Perhaps the most significant factor to influence the exemplars' desire to continue to serve is the relationships they formed with not only teachers and mentors, but also with the people they served. The exemplars worked with both children and adults from a variety of walks of life. All of the exemplars spoke of learning from the people they encountered, and that learning was not so much academic as it was a part of their identity development. This learning involved their understanding of themselves as responsible and accountable to the people they serve. This kind of responsibility isn't so much about giving gifts and money, but about being a presence of love and compassion. While the exemplars were committed to making a world a better place, they viewed their relationship to the people they encounter as paramount. Being present and authentic

mattered to the exemplars. They came to respect the people they served and to see them as not the poor or the oppressed, but as human beings with stories to tell and the same feelings and emotions the exemplars had. In the language they used, none of the exemplars revealed a superior or privileged attitude toward those they served. For example, Aaron described moving from wanting to know how people came to be the way they are, poor or homeless, to accepting that it didn't matter. What came to be important to Aaron was their essential dignity.

In addition to loving the people they worked with, the participants were often inspired by them to want to continue serving. For example, Rebecca forged strong attachment to Noah, a child she came to know at summer camp. Because of her love for Noah, she continues to serve at the camp and maintains contact with Noah. Furthermore, well after her graduation from high school, she sought ways to work at the camp and to be of service to others. In this way, the exemplars found a connection to the kind of work or career they would like to have.

Their goals with regard to the world of work involve professions that in some way help others. Because of Aaron's respect for his service-learning teacher, Mr. Frederick, Aaron is considering a similar career. Mia also desires to enter the medical profession, so that she can continue to be of service, and Rebecca has been moved to become a special education teacher. Although Anna is entering the military, she also views her work as a means for mentoring and leading others. She wants to model care and concern for the men and women she will serve alongside in the Navy.

Furthermore, all of the exemplars spoke about their relationship with God. They felt close to God when they were serving others, and they all mentioned God's presence in the people they encountered. In addition, they noted that they had a responsibility to embody God's presence here and earth, and that it was up to them to make the world a better place. This relationship with God and His presence in others created in them a sense of social responsibility. A part of that responsibility stems from their desire to want to be a part of the lives of the people they encounter.

Also, the exemplars remarked about the faith of the people they worked with, and they often spoke of the ways the people they encountered inspired their own faith. All of the exemplars spoke of witnessing the faith of the people they served, and that faith was a source of strength and courage.

Language:

The second central question that was a part of this study centered on the language the exemplars used to describe their own moral development and service-learning experiences. The first sub question is:

1) What language, words and ideas do participants use to describe their service-learning experiences when describing their understanding of service-learning?

This study revealed a rich connection between the exemplar's high school service-learning experiences and their religious beliefs and spirituality. When the exemplars first began talking about their service they used words like "we had to" or "our school required" but as they moved into telling the stories around their service, they began to use words that connected their work with others to their faith and beliefs about service. This

language demonstrated their growing comfort level with service and its links to the Catholic culture of their school. First, service was addressed as a school requirement, and then moved into a continued desire to build relationships with the people they met through service. Their relationships with their teachers grew. Not only did teachers and staff mentor the participants, but also the faculty modeled their faith and beliefs. The language the participants not only heard but also witnessed included concepts such as living a life “centered in Christ” and “caring” for others.

In addition, when the exemplars explained the reasons for their high school service, Rebecca said “ Jesus gave up his life for us. That’s the ultimate act of service in my opinion.” Adam talked about the Jesuit model of service and connected his work to great Jesuits like Pedro Aruppe whom Aaron quoted. “Men and women shouldn’t want to live simply for themselves, but for God and Christ.” Anna and Mia also discussed faith as a basis for service to others. Anna said “ Maybe it comes from my faith and I am feeling guided. In that faith sense, like God. It’s a feeling that there is something more I should be doing with my life.” For Anna, service was a pull that she believed came from God, and that God is moving her to use her life in a way that gives meaning and connects her with other people. Mia also revealed similar feelings. She said “ I think that concept of us being loved by faculty and by each other, and you know, we’re loved by God. I think that spreads to the way we treat other people and to our service involvement. For these young people, service flows from their love of God that is reflected in the way they believe they should treat other people.

As students continued further into their service, and as they told more and more of their story with me. Their service descriptions revealed a language of faith that demonstrated a growing commitment to being present for other people and that connection is rooted in their understanding of God as a moving force in their life. This understanding deepens as the students move into their college years.

2) What language, words and ideas do participants use to describe their subsequent service experiences?

The mediators, or the language tools the exemplars use, to describe their subsequent service experiences can be placed on a continuum of growth and development. As the exemplars described their elementary and early high school service and then moved into more adult and independent forms of service, their language becomes more reflective and less focused on the self as an actor on others and more introspective. They talk about the need to grow in relationship with the people they encounter. Furthermore, at the higher end of the continuum of Catholic moral development, as the exemplars matured, like Rebecca, who began to speak in terms of feeling a “calling” to act on behalf of others, to Anna, at the highest end of development called her service “companioning with others”. The companioning that Anna describes seems to require her to be fully present to the other person, and journeying with them as they hear their stories and experience the kind of life they lead. Through walking with the other person, the exemplars develop a connection, not only to the person they serve, but also with God and themselves. They form a spiritual connection, and reflect on their role as a human being in the world. Mia describes this when she talks about her reflection on

the Abbot's speech about human love. She says, "God does love me perfectly and that's incredible". She extends this idea by relating that human love is not perfect, and that "we can't expect them [people] to love us perfectly", to do so "is asking them to be God".

Mia further articulates her acceptance of human limitations, when she comes to terms with the homeless people she saw in the emergency room where she works with her Dad. She at first resented them for taking beds from truly sick people, but was moved to feel compassion for their homelessness and began to see them as "human beings".

In addition, the exemplars seem to come to an acceptance of the way things are in the world of the people they serve. Through that acceptance they come to understand that they are not messiah's who can swoop in and fix everything. That doesn't mean that they won't act to address the systemic causes of the injustice they see. Anna speaks clearly of her commitment to act politically when she returns from El Salvador, but her actions while serving or *companioning* with the people in El Salvador appear about coming to an understanding of their world and extending her care to the people she encounters. Her presence is meant to be a sign of love and hope, and this is an extended and much further developed version of what she learned through her service experiences in high school. Her college experiences gave her a deeper understanding of her self in relation to the people she serves and she is able to more clearly articulate the purpose and meaning of her high school service.

Major Themes

Meaningful Service a Key to Understanding of the Self

The participants in this study had opportunities to participate in meaningful service. Service-Learning research indicates that in order for service to impact learners, it must offer students the means to encounter and form relationships with the people they serve. Furthermore, the work itself must have a connection to classroom learning and to the lives of the people they encounter at the site (Eyler and Giles, 1999; Furco, 2001; Goodman, 2001; Melchior and Bailis, 2001). It is during these times of service that students hear the stories of those who are marginalized or underprivileged (Younis and Yates, 1997). The exemplars learned how those they serve came to be in need, but more importantly, the students began to understand the essence of the other person. By that I mean, that through the process of the student getting to know those he or she served, they come together and form a mutual recognition of their shared humanity. (Youniss and Yates, 1997). I have come to term this the “but for the grace of God go I” understanding. It is in these encounters with others, the students recognized and acknowledged the journey each of the people they served, endured and the students grew in empathy and compassion. (Youniss and Yates, 1999; Goodman, 2001). The exemplars see the people they serve as human beings just like themselves, but they differ in the paths their lives have taken. For example, at the beginning of Aaron’s service, he wondered about the choices people made that led them to be unemployed, poor or homeless. Mia also felt similarly about the homeless people in the emergency room. As they matured, they became less concerned about judging them and focused on being a presence of love and

kindness. This shift from judgment to empathy is also clearly revealed in varying degrees by all of the exemplars.

According to the research, meaningful service experiences, experiences in which students grow in relationship with the people at the service site, moves students to question stereotypes and offers participants insight into their own thinking and into their identity development (Eyler and Giles, 1999; Goodman, 2001 and Youniss and Yates, 1997). The four exemplars in this study worked with people who were much different from themselves, and they performed tasks that allowed them to interact in ways that not only benefitted the persons served, but provided the exemplars with insight into the lives and stories of the people they served.

Furthermore, the research indicates that the more time students are given to be present at the service site, the more likely they are to grow in not only understanding of the persons they serve, but also in understanding of the self (Eyler and Giles, 1999). Eyler and Giles contend that the duration of service in conjunction with work that is challenging and stimulating is also a hallmark of meaningful service.

Immersion Experiences: A Place To Grow

Participants in this study seemed to find the extended periods away from school and immersed in a different place with new cultures and work to be most impactful. For Anna, El Salvador was an experience that helped her connect deeply to the people she encountered. She walked with people on the mountain and ventured into the coffee plantations. These connections to the people of the village where she worked were

brought her to love them and their country. This love and deep respect has moved her to want to continue working on their behalf long after she leaves El Salvador.

Rebecca also remarked on her experiences in Mexico. She was moved by the faith she saw in the people at the ranchos and by their desire to attend mass and adoration. She witnessed their struggles in work and in poverty and seemed to be awed by their devotion to the Catholic Church, and that was a model for her. Her own reflections on the faith experiences she witnessed and participated in while in Mexico, also deepened her own faith and commitment.

The exemplars in this study all revealed such experiences and their identity formation can be placed upon a continuum that is linked to the duration and quality of their experiences. For example, Anna, who seems to be the most mature exemplar in this study, has not only served throughout high school, but also throughout college. Her time need in that country. As she says, she “companioned” with the people of the community. Each exemplar has varying depths of experience with people different from themselves, but they all came to an understanding of their role and place in the world.

Support Structures that Lead to the Exemplars Growth in Self-Understanding.

Vygotsky’s theory of cognitive development posits that all mental functioning is “socio-cultural and institutionally situated” (Penuel & Wertch, 1995, p.84) Furthermore, it is the guiding “knowers” within the institution that foster learning. The knowers hold the socio-cultural tools, the language and practices that are the hallmarks of the particular socio-cultural milieu. In other words, learners model their words and actions after the

words and actions of the knower. However, in the case of Catholic schools and Catholic service-learning, administrators and teachers are called to create a particular socio-cultural context (NCB, 1972, USCCB, 1998 and 2001). It is a context that must include in El Salvador was an entire semester and there she daily, encountered, the poverty and the language, vocabulary and doctrine of the Catholic Church. In addition, that language is coupled with actions and behaviors that put into practice those teachings. Therefore, the Catholic high school must work to create a climate and structure that fosters such learning in the school.

In addition, moral development theory holds that in order for persons to act upon their moral beliefs, they must first recognize the moral decision and then feel a sense of obligation to act upon those beliefs (Blasi, 1992; 1993; 2004; Colby and Damon, 1992). Based on Blasi's theory of moral development and Vygotsky' theory of cognitive development, in order for students to accept responsibility for moral action they must be provided the tools and examples provided by adult models. Furthermore, students must be given the opportunity to practice the concepts.

Each exemplar in this study came from a unique socio-cultural context, a different Catholic High School. However, at the core, the schools are solidly Catholic. All of the exemplars came from schools that intentionally tried to structure a learning environment in which students would be provided the Gospel values of being Christ's presence to others, and the opportunity to practice that teaching with adult guidance and supervision. As Vygotskian theory suggests, the learner gradually moves away from the knower,

acquire the tools or mediators and act in a way that is consistent with their socio-cultural context (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978).

Although some of the schools had varying levels and structures of support within their service-learning programs, all of the students had some form of supervision and mentoring from teachers and caring adults. Jesuit High School seemed to have the most structured support for students, and Aaron, although only eighteen at the time of our interview was clearly on a path that is moving him toward greater commitment to service. At Jesuit, not only were students expected to serve; an adult who came to talk to students while they were at the service site guided them. In addition, Aaron was asked his senior year to choose a service placement that he would find challenging. The school made this request, because it is grounded in their culture of forming young men who are “open to growth”. Although Aaron and Mia are the same age, their levels of religious and moral understanding are subtly different because of their different experiences.

Aaron clearly reflects a Jesuit understanding of service, and uses, quite freely, the language and vocabulary he acquired at his school. He says “men and women for others” and quotes Pedro Arrupe and other Jesuit thinkers. In addition, he was comfortable expressing his struggle to grow and face working with Alzheimer’s’ patients. As he described his experiences, his vocabulary echoed the vocabulary and socio-cultural context Jesuit High School had in place to support students who were engaged in service. Aaron’s choice of word and language is consistent with Vygotsky’s theory of cognitive development, and Aaron’s language reveals the Jesuit socio-cultural context in which he learned. The Jesuit ideas and language Aaron learned through high school continues to be

with him today, and his choice of Jesuit College also reinforces Aaron's acceptance of his faith and the Jesuit charism.

Mia's school also had a structure in place. Through guided reflection activities on the immersion trips, Search, and dialogue with peers and adults, Mia had a means for processing her experiences. She had a place to process what she experienced and a means for placing it within the context of her school's Catholic culture and community. but her connection is deeply rooted in her respect and admiration for her mentor. Unlike Aaron, she speaks more about the connection she had to Mr. Mullin and his careful nurturing of her. She watched Mr. Mullen and learned from him, and then she applied what she learned from the structured environment at her school to the work she performed in the Emergency room with her Father.

Caring adults also supported Rebecca in her community, and provided her with a clear socio-cultural context that is rooted in Catholic Doctrine and Tradition. Most notably, Rebecca came to view Noah as a "holy person". She said, "He is holy". The belief that all human beings are sacred is the foundation of Catholic social teaching, and Rebecca not only learned the concept, but she internalized it and experienced it herself. Although she graduated from high school, she still seeks the company and advice of her principal and service-learning teacher. In addition, the relationship she has formed at the camp with Noah continues to be a source of inspiration and support to her. In a sense, Noah was a teacher for her as well. He taught her to be comfortable with his disability, and his love for Rebecca, and her love for him fuels her drive to continue to be of service to others, particularly students with disabilities.

Anna on the other hand, was attracted to service because of her school experiences with the Sisters of Mercy. Sr. Deirdre continues to be what Anna called “a source of inspiration to her”. However, much of Anna’s current understanding of her high school service is rooted in the growth she achieved as a result of her college experiences, particularly in El Salvador. The Mercy charism and Sr. Deirdre moved Anna to seek opportunities for continued service while at her university. It is there that she had further guidance from caring peers and young adults in the program. For Anna, El Salvador was the opportunity to put into practice her own understanding of service, and consequently, she came to dislike the word service as a descriptor for her work. In El Salvador, Anna grew to use the word *companion*, which flowed from the Jesuit mission that permeated the community in which she lived.

Each exemplar was formed within a particular socio-cultural context, and the structures that were in place at their schools helped to shape and frame their understanding of service. In addition, they speak of their faith and moral beliefs as an impetus for their continued service. However they frame their understanding in terms of their work being an expression of love for God and for God’s presence in other people.

Reflection

Studies of service-learning pedagogy emphasize the value of providing students with varied processes and time for reflection. In some cases in my study, participants had very little time for structured reflection, but in some cases they found ways to process their experiences.

Reflection is a means for students to use language, either oral or written to think about, question and organize their thoughts regarding activities, experiences and encounters with others. Vygotsky speaks extensively of the important role language plays in fostering higher mental processes. When Vygotsky (1972) speaks of his experiments with young children he says,

These observations lead me to the conclusion that children solve practical tasks with the help of their speech, as well as their eyes and hands. This unity of perception, speech, and action, which ultimately produces internalization of the visual field, constitutes the central subject matter for any analysis of the origin of uniquely human forms of behavior.

This also seems to be the case in adolescents and adults as well (Meizerow, 2000). Mia reveals this quite clearly when she shared with me her experiences with the monks. She talked about the speech gave a talk about prayerful work. The abbot explained that the monks work and pray at the same time. Such prayer, is a form of inner dialogue with God, much like Vygotsky describes inner speech. Mia practiced this prayer form and this practice and form of prayerful reflection, seemed to deepen her relationship with God and with the monks with whom she came to know. In this way, reflection was a means for deepening her faith.

Mia also spoke quite extensively of Mr. Mullin's reflection binder that was a part of their immersion trips. Mia and her peers were asked to record Christ sightings. This too seemed to have a significant impact on Mia, and she not only remarked upon the

ways she saw Christ at work in the people around her, she also saw Mr. Mullin as a model for Christ at work in the world of her school.

Key Relationships: A Source for Personal Growth and Support

Mr. Mullin's modeling and mentoring of Mia is a salient example of the importance of mentoring relationships between caring adults and service-learners. Positive relationships with teachers and staff were a significant outcome Elyer and Giles (1999) noted in their research of college students and service-learning. Several other studies found this to be true as well (Furco, 2001; Goodman, 2001; Melchior and Bailis, 2001). Youniss and Yates (1997) also found in their longitudinal study of high school service-learners, that the teacher in their study had a profound impact on the thinking and lives of the students in their study. Years after their service, students remembered their service-learning teacher and his passion for social justice.

Also, the moral development research of Colby and Damon (1992) found that the mentors in the lives of the moral exemplars they studied profoundly impacted their desire to act on behalf of others. All of the exemplars in the Colby and Damon study recalled people in their lives who gave them the tools and the courage to serve and act unselfishly. Furthermore, the Colby and Damon exemplars were mentored and guided by people who moved them to social action, and they described these mentors as people who inspired them to become better people.

Furthermore, the need for such relationships is also supported by Vygotskian theories of cognitive development. Vygotsky's theory rests on the notion that learning is social and cultural. In his observations of children playing, he noted that higher mental

functions are socially formed and culturally transmitted. However, Vygotsky never had the opportunity to explore the nature of the relationships between adults and learners. In the area of moral development, what remains to be explored is the depth and caliber of the relationships between mentors and participants and their possible impact on moral and religious development.

However each exemplar in this study could name numerous adults, and usually a significant adult from their school, who encouraged and mentored them to serve on behalf of others. Teachers and administrators at each student's school are still a part of the lives of the exemplars in this study. They continue to communicate with one another and in many cases the adults from the exemplars' high schools still mentor and encourage each participant.

For Anna, her principal, Sr. Deirdre is a touchstone for her. Anna's relationship with Sr. Deirdre is one of love and profound respect, and Anna's love for Sister extends to a love for the entire community and charism of the Mercy sisters. Although Anna is beginning her senior year in college, she stays in contact with Sr. Deirdre and returns to the school during her breaks to share her service experiences with the girls at Mercy Academy. In addition, Sr. Deirdre shares a deep admiration for Anna and sees tremendous growth in her. She too, describes Anna's service as *companioning*, and Sr. Deirdre is proud of who Anna has become. Mia, Rebecca and Aaron also maintain close relationships with the teachers who mentored them while they were in high school. Rebecca frequently visits with and seeks the advice of her school principal. Aaron also remains in contact with Mr. Frederick, his service-learning coordinator.

The relationships each exemplar describes, Anna and Sr. Deirdre, Mia and Mr. Mullen, Rebecca and Mrs. McCall, and Aaron and Mr. Fredericks, reveal deep mutual respect and admiration. All of the exemplars speak of wanting to emulate these adults. In some cases it was by vocation, such as Aaron and Rebecca. For Mia and Anna it was in their way of walking and being with other people. Each of the exemplars describes being inspired by these adults and they express a desire to continue to be the kind of people their teachers saw them to be. The relationships forged during high school have remained a part of these students' lives, and they credit their teachers with inspiring them to become good people, people who, as Mia said, "walk the path of Christ".

In addition to teachers, peers at the exemplars' respective schools were a source of support. However Rebecca revealed difficulty with some classmates who did not seem to see the importance of service. In Anna's case, where there was little or no classroom process for reflection on her service experience, she found that the girls she served with to be a source of comfort and sought dialogue with them

Mia also stated that her friends were involved in the same activities she was, and she even indicated that she sought friends who were involved. She mentioned that it was difficult for her to relate to people who lacked a commitment to faith or to others. For example, Mia spoke about a young man she dated " She said, "I was dating a boy this winter, and he was not Catholic, which wouldn't really make a huge different to me any way. He was Christian, but he was not, didn't really care, and hew wasn't involved at all. And I realized how much that really bothered me. " Mia goes on to say that "there was such a disconnect between my priorities and his." Mia seems to reveal that for her, it is

important that people not only have a faith life, but also live it, and that she would seek people who valued living the kind of life she has come to respect and appreciate.

Although Rebecca stated that many of her classmates did not value service in the way that she did, she was able to friendships with peers who supported her efforts. However, these friendships did not come through her school service, but through her Church mission work in Mexico. There she established relationships with two girls who were interested in serving. Rebecca seemed angry and disappointed in the students at school who were dismissive of the service program. She said “I felt like nobody took it seriously and it kind of upset me for Mrs. McCall, it upset me for our teacher”. Rebecca felt a deep sense of loyalty toward her principal, teacher and service sites and she was moved to want to defend the work her school requires.

Aaron, like Anna and Mia found his peers to be a source of support to him as well. Because Aaron and his classmates were required by Jesuit High School to seek service that would stretch them beyond their comfort zones, Aaron and his peers at the same service site would often talk with one another. They discussed the Alzheimer’s patients they encountered and the difficulties they faced at the Alzheimer’s unit. Aaron and his peers processed a lot of their insights and feelings about their service experiences with one another.

In addition to teachers and peers, Eyler and Giles (1999) also found parents to be a source of support and inspiration. The exemplars in this study reported similar experiences. However, Colby and Damon’s research on Moral Development was skeptical of early experiences in forming persons with extraordinary moral commitment.

(1992, p. 8). And the research in this study cannot definitively link moral commitment to early experiences. Three of the four exemplars, in this study, could trace their desire to serve to their parents. In the case of Mia, her father encouraged her during her high school years to work at the emergency room with him and her mother was also a source of encouragement. Furthermore, Mia credits her mom for instilling in her a desire to serve. However, the extent of moral commitment Mia has remains to be seen as she is just at the beginning of her college experience.

Rebecca also notes that her Dad also went on the mission trip to Mexico, but she revealed very little else about her parents and their connection to her desire to serve. This is also the case for Anna.

In Anna's case, her father and her Granny were frightened and deeply concerned about her safety as she set off for El Salvador. Anna was determined, and ultimately, in spite of the objections of her family she went. This is consistent with findings in the Colby and Damon study of moral exemplars. The exemplars in their study had a strong and individualized sense of who they were and how they wanted to live their lives. In this way Anna is much like the exemplars in the Colby and Damon study. She demonstrates extraordinary commitment to service and seeks to act upon her beliefs.

Aaron's family experiences are unique among the exemplars in this study. He quite clearly has strong family role models within his family. His vivid memories of watching his family make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the poor and of his Dad's encounters with the homeless are source of pride and inspiration to Aaron. He said

“my parents were always kind of preaching the importance of acting on what you believe”. He spoke of an atmosphere in his home that encouraged service.

In addition his brothers continue to be involved with service. Aaron referred to his home life as “an atmosphere that not only encouraged social work, but also to have the atmosphere at school”. Clearly, Aaron is proud of his desire to follow in his family’s footsteps and has chosen to attend a Jesuit college with his brothers, and where he can continue to serve in the way he learned in high school.

Service as a Path to a Vocation

According to Eyler and Giles (1999) service-learning often assists students in their efforts to determine a career path. However, I have chosen to use the word vocation, which is used in the Catholic Church to describe one’s personal calling. This word means that there is a connection between the work of our hands and God. The Catholic Church teaches that the primary vocation of every person is the vocation to holiness, to the perfection of love. Traditionally this notion of love is the essential form of every Christian vocation and that love provides the key to understanding vocation to particular states of life, such as marriage, religious life, or the priesthood. However, vocation is not just a particular state in life, such as priesthood or married life. The Catholic understanding of vocation is that our choice of work and state in life flows from an understanding of God’s purpose for our lives and that comes from a period of serious discernment.

In addition, Colby and Damon found in their study of moral exemplars, that the participants in their study were not particularly discerning about their life path. They

came upon their service and discovered that they could not bring themselves to not act on behalf of others. In some senses, this is true in this study. For Anna, her vocation or her choice to become a Naval officer does not seem consistent with the service work she has chosen to do throughout college. However, Anna has come to terms with that, and in reality, she sees her work with the Navy as a vocation and a calling. She said “When I graduated I decided to accept a Navy ROTC scholarship, mostly out of a sense of service, in that I feel called to serve my country”. She also views her role as a leader in the Navy as a means for her to mentor others. She is committed to leading other men and women and to being a source of moral character and a presence of love for those she will lead. In the Catholic sense, Anna’s leadership flows from her love for other people and no matter what capacity she serves, she is going to love her fellow man and act on behalf of what is good and right. Rebecca also mentions the same kind of love for others. Her love for Noah compels her to want to work with other special needs children.

Aaron also talks of the love he has for children, and although he has not clearly determined the kind of work he will do, he does seem himself as a person committed to being a presence of care and concern for others. Whatever career path he chooses, he is choosing it based upon the love he has for the people he is encountered in their lives.

Mia also speaks of the love she has for God, and her desire to help people as a doctor seems to flow from her desire to grow in relationship with God and with others.

Love: The Well Spring of the Spirituality of Moral Action

Augusto Blasi’s (Blasi & Milton, 1991; Blasi, 1993; 2004) theory of moral development and the research of Colby and Damon (1992) reveal that in order for persons to act upon

their moral conviction, they must first feel that they have a responsibility to do so. Colby and Damon's research discovered that the sense of responsibility to act on behalf of others comes from not only the exemplar's love of people, but also from their love for God. Although Colby and Damon were not seeking information about religious beliefs and their connection to moral action, they did find that the majority of the exemplars believed that their work was inspired and required by God. My study differs in that I intentionally sought links between religious beliefs and continued service. By using a Vygotskian lens to understand the experiences of the participants in this study, I sought to explore actions and language as a basis for understanding the participants' socio-cultural context and continued service. Because the exemplars were maturing in a Catholic high school socio-cultural context, it would be expected that their actions, words and language would be grounded in Catholic teaching.

Each exemplar in this study shared a deep connection to the religious beliefs they learned both at home and at school. Their choice of words and language to describe the feelings and beliefs they had about service were rooted in a Catholic understanding of what it means to be people of service. Much like the above discussion of vocation, these exemplars expressed a desire to be God's loving presence on earth. Rebecca described Noah as *holy* and Anna talked about *walking* with others and being a *companion*. Aaron also used the language of his socio-cultural context when he talked about being "a man for others" and about being a part of the "brotherhood" of his school. Mia also talked about "God's perfect love" and our attempts to find that kind of love in life.

Furthermore, all of the exemplars shared experiences of feeling God's loving presence in their lives, and that presence was found in the people they encountered. Mia called these "Christ sightings". These experiences deepened their own spiritual understanding, and they sought ways to be a presence of compassion and love to other people. As Anna says, we are called to "make the world more loving".

The idea of *calling* is echoed by all of the exemplars. Each participant reveals a sense of feeling life has a deeper meaning and purpose. It is in giving of themselves to others, that the exemplars find themselves connected more deeply and profoundly to God, and flowing from that spiritual connection they are able to give freely of themselves.

Not only did the exemplars reveal their love for God, but they also shared an openness to other people and a way of understanding without judging. This was particularly clear in the case of Aaron who talked about his efforts to not worry about why people are in the situation they are in, but to love them for who they are. Anna, Mia and Rebecca also expressed similar feelings.

All of the exemplars connected their service work to their faith in God and to belief that they are *called* to some form of holiness, and that holiness comes from the recognition of the sacred nature of every human person. Anna was the most able to express that, and she said that the best way for her was to be fully present to other people is to simply, *walk* with them. Aaron also seemed to find this to be true with the Alzheimer's patients. Although he got very little recognition and conversation in return from the patients, he found he could demonstrate love and care by just being present. He did not have to have a sign of appreciation in return. Rebecca described Noah, the

handicapped student she worked with at the day camp as *holy* and was reverent about his sacredness to her. Mia also found God's presence in others. She moved from resenting the homeless people in the emergency room to feeling compassion for them. She too was moving away from judging and toward empathy and compassion.

All of the exemplars shared that their experiences with service deepened their faith. Their work with other people was an expression of their belief in God's love and of their belief that they must be God's presence to others. This desire to be God's presence fuels their sense of moral responsibility, and they see failure to act in ways that are loving towards other persons as inconsistent with their view of themselves as Catholics. For example, Anna says, "We have to make this place more loving".

Clearly, the language these exemplars use to describe their service experiences both in high school and beyond is a reflection of the socio-cultural contexts they experienced throughout their lives. All of the exemplars consistently heard the Gospel message of love for neighbor throughout their lives. They heard it at home, and those values were put into practice throughout their years in Catholic grade school and high school. These experiences have become a way of being for each of these participants. In other words, their moral identity is distinctly Catholic and reflects an desire to live in a way that is consistent with the message to not only love one another, but to do so in a way that is generous and open.

Implications for Practice

This study has a number of implications for practice. First, educators can use the results of this study to inform bishops and Catholic high school administrators of the importance of supporting service-learning. At this time, when the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops is deeply concerned about the lack of doctrinal knowledge and understanding demonstrated by graduates from Catholic high schools, this study revealed that service-learning not only offers a means for students to understand and grow in their faith, but also for putting their faith into action.

First, Catholic Service-Learning programs that are rooted in Catholic Teaching and Tradition make a difference, and the exemplars in this study are clear examples of the success of such programs. One of the grave concerns expressed by the Bishops of the Catholic Church and in the research conducted by Hogue et. al (2001); D’Anotnio et. al (2007) and McCorquodale et. al (2004) is that young people have little knowledge of Church doctrine and they talk about being good people, but don’t seem to continue to serve.

However, the exemplars in this study, clearly articulated the message they gained in Catholic school, and although that message is spoken in simple terms, they most clearly expressed the moral obligation to behave in ways that are loving and generous to the other human beings we encounter in the world. Furthermore, they not only articulate this message, they act upon it. Catholic service-learning, in order to be authentic, must also ground the work students do at service site in the teachings of the Gospel.

Also, this study demonstrates to parents that not all meaningful learning comes from pen and paper, but that students grow in efficacy and self reliance as they are given meaningful work. The intentional application of what is learned in the classroom to real-world contexts had an impact on the exemplars in this study. Therefore, service-learning must combine these two elements. Through the work outside of the classroom, students can grow not only in self-understanding but also in coming to see the world as a place where they can have an active role. Not only did the exemplars hear the Gospel message of love for neighbor, but also they saw it modeled by teachers and other people at their service sites. However, what is most extraordinary is the exemplars in this study had a drive to act in ways that are unselfish and counter-cultural. They quite humbly went out into the world and served other people in ways that were respectful of the people they encountered. They learned the theology behind the Church's teaching, but more importantly, they have come to live that message. Experiential learning gave them the opportunity to practice what they learned in a real-world context.

Teachers can encourage this experiential learning by incorporating it into their content areas. Aaron's example of his math teacher who talked about the service students were performing had a profound impact on him, and he clearly saw the entire culture of his school as supportive of the kind of learning that occurs through service. It is the experience of putting into practice, the head-knowledge, the theology and the doctrine that allows students to integrate the learning into their own moral identity. Such learning seems to occur exactly as Vygotsky theorizes. The exemplars in this study were taught the theology, encouraged to put into practice and slowly moved to greater

independence. Consequently, the exemplars in this study embody what they have learned and continue to put into practice the lessons from their service experiences. This makes service-learning a powerful means to inspire students to not only memorize Church teaching, but also more importantly, embody it in the way they live their lives.

Also, reflection is a powerful tool teachers can use to assist students in framing their understanding of not only the academic content of service-learning, but also assist students in understanding their own thinking about their service experiences. Such discussions provide students with a place to reflect and share their experiences. Anna spoke about the lack of structured reflection in her high school experience, but she came to appreciate the value of discussion and journaling as she had guided reflection opportunities in college. In contrast, Aaron found that his teacher mentor who came to see him and helped him process his experiences at the Alzheimer's ward was very helpful. Eyler and Giles found that reflection is a valuable tool in helping students understand stereotypes and assisted students in challenging preconceived notions and ideas. Reflection provides a means for students to internalize learning and experience and make the learning a part of their own identity.

Furthermore, schools can assign teachers to mentor students at their service site. Aaron's difficult assignment at the Alzheimer's Unit was supported and helped him grow, because he was placed at a site where adults were willing to mentor him, and a familiar teacher from his school came out to see him and help him process the experience. The involvement of the entire faculty in the service program reinforces its importance and helps students continue to grow and mature. Furthermore, the

relationships the exemplar's formed with adults in their schools and service sites mattered to them. This modeling and the clear and consistent message of the school faculty and staff was recognized and valued by the exemplars in this study.

Next, schools and families can seek ways to give students a place to process their service experiences. The exemplars in this study that had opportunities to discuss, write reflection papers and to share their experiences grew from it. Those who did not have such experiences, in hindsight see great value in having someone to talk to about what they see at the service site, and provide them with the tools to deal with possibly difficult tasks they may encounter, particularly as they grapple with relationships to people much different from themselves. When all teachers in the school community support service-learning and provide a means for students to reflect, students are able to form deeper and more meaningful relationships. Furthermore, they gain insight from multiple points of view. In addition, when the entire community supports the service-learning, students see the program as valuable and hear a clear and consistent message.

Finally, student efficacy can be greatly encouraged by developing ways to understand student strengths and weaknesses. Through understanding the difficult issues and fears students may face, it is possible to provide them with what Jesuit High School calls opportunities for growth. Instead of helping students serve somewhere comfortable, we should encourage them to encounter experiences in which they are asked to confront prejudices and fears. I do not mean put students in harms way. Jesuit High School's efforts to help students see opportunities for growth inspires greater growth in students, and in the process builds student self-confidence.

Through the intentional development of a service-learning program that supports Catholic teaching, includes reflection, mentoring and a consistent school culture that is supportive of the school's aims, students gain not only an intellectual understanding of the Gospel message, but also come to acquire and value the means to live out that message in their lives.

Components of Effective Service-Learning Programs

Consistent with the findings of Youniss and Yates (1997) and Eyler and Giles (1999) this study of service-learner exemplars outlines several key ingredients required to create effective service-learning programs. Although previous research did not consider a religious socio-cultural context or moral development, aspects of their research clearly contributed to the growth and development of the exemplars.

First and foremost, academic content tied to the Gospel message and to the Church's social teachings had an impact on the way the exemplars viewed service. A clear and consistent message regarding each person's responsibility to one another, and a grounding in the theology of Christ's love for us was remembered and internalized by the participants in this study. They articulated and connection between God's love for them, and their responsibility to not only share that love with others, but also they must be open to experiencing that love from others in return. This message of Christ's love is a core component of each of the exemplar's identity and it is the impetus for their continued action in the world.

Next, loving and caring mentors from within the faculty were essential to these exemplars. They all experienced love, care and concern from their teachers and

principals. All of them noted that adults in their school made them feel welcome, secure and efficacious. These relationships served to, as Anna said of Sr. Deirdra, “inspire” her long after she left Mercy Academy.

Furthermore, service placements which allowed the exemplars to form relationships with people in the community and to perform meaningful work consistent with the school’s message regarding service had an tremendous influence on these exemplars and their desire to continue service long after high school. Aaron noted that he loved working with children and his service placements at Jesuit High School has inspired him to seek similar experiences while in college.

Finally, opportunities for reflection are critical to the development of identity and understanding. Through the process of reflection the exemplars were able to connect the work they were performing at the service site with what they learned in theology class. Mia recalls the reflections Mr. Mullen had them do during alternative spring break. These reflections, called “Christ sightings” were important to Mia. They seemed to help her step outside of herself and to see Christ all around her and in the people she encountered. Furthermore, these sightings helped her transfer that belief in Christ’s presence in others to the people she encountered at the emergency room, and at her school. At one point she notes, “Mr. Mullen is always serving no matter what he is doing”. This idea is important to Mia and becomes a way of being in the world for her.

All of the exemplars had the good fortune to be in service programs with a clearly articulated mission and structure. The scaffolding provided by these programs helped

these young people to form their own sense of moral identity and that moral identity is grounded in the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Areas for Further Research

At this time, quantitative data about the types of service-learning programs in Catholic Schools is lacking. Religious order schools such as the Mercy Sisters and the Jesuits have developed structured programs and the Jesuit school in this study seems to have the most consistent program. In diocesan schools, school administrators and teachers juggle multiple priorities and each school seemed to be working to develop their own programs. More quantitative data about what kinds of programs Catholic Schools offer and the impacts of their programs on students is sorely needed and will benefit students and schools struggling to develop quality programs.

Another area for further study is to explore the impact of service-learning on students who struggle in school socially. How does service impact students who are self-absorbed biased and privileged? This study focused on exemplars, but how does Catholic service-learning impact students who are on the fringes within our buildings? Could it bring about change and efficacy in such students? In addition, does Catholic service-learning foster Catholic moral identity development in students who come from families with little parish or Church affiliation? These are questions for further study.

Furthermore, very little longitudinal data exists about the impact of Catholic service-learning on students. Data, both qualitative and quantitative, about what experiences students valued and its continued influence on their personal and religious

identity development would also assist schools as they try to create programs that assist the community and foster student growth.

In addition, many Catholic religious education programs for students who attend public schools require service. Almost no data, qualitative or quantitative exists with regard to the impact of these programs. Such data would assist in understanding the ways in which service further faith development, foster spirituality and the Catholic moral development of these students. Such data could be collected through the Religious education offices at the diocesan level and would assist researchers in understanding the impact of such programs.

While some research exists on the impact of service on minority students, in particular students in inner city schools, very little data exists about the impact of service on immigrant students. Such data would be helpful in assessing the role service plays in civic engagement, acculturation and identity development.

Researcher Reflections

As I mentioned in Chapter Three, I brought several biases that impacted this study. As a Catholic school administrator and former theatre teacher, I offer a unique approach to analyzing and reporting the experiences of the exemplars. In this section, I will share the differences between my experiences and those of the participants and discuss my reactions to some of the major findings of this study.

Unlike the exemplars in this study, I did not attend Catholic school or Catholic college as a child or young adult. I came to my Catholic faith on my own, with very little adult guidance. At age fourteen I chose to become Catholic and went to classes on my

own. Soon after my family joined me. I attended public school, and did not have any experience in serving others. I have spent my thirty some years as a Catholic trying to catch up and learn the language and vocabulary of a faith, that is also a socio-cultural context. The exemplars in this study are persons of deep faith and unlike a great many young people in recent faith studies (DeAntonio, Dinges, etc.), they value and cherish their faith.

Also, unlike the participants in this study, it wasn't until I was an adult that I had a place to really experience and live my faith. I went to public schools, public university and taught at a public high school. However, I sent my son to Catholic elementary school and that changed my life. I became a Catholic school principal, and received my master's degree in administration from a Catholic college, and am seeking my Ph.D. at The Catholic University of America. It is through the vocation of teaching and ministering in a Catholic school that my faith deepened and grew. That experience returned to me a deep respect for the faith I chose at such a young age.

Like the participants in this study, my work in a Catholic school with families and children has taught me how to live and practice my faith in my daily life. Everyday is a struggle to be God's loving presence to everyone I encounter. This challenge gives me great empathy for students who also struggle to be loving and generous persons.

As I reflect on my own life, I see parallels between the exemplars and myself. The difference is, my lived faith and development came much later in life, and like them, along the way, I have had mentors and caring people help me find God and His presence in me and others.

Conclusion

This study has uncovered the socio-cultural factors that impacted the Catholic moral development of the exemplars in this study. Although additional research is needed in this area, the findings of this study support Catholic service-learning as a means for developing faithful, socially conscious and civically engaged adults. This study's findings suggest that meaningful relationships between students and mentor teachers, supportive parents and peers, and caring adults at service sites dramatically impact the sense of moral responsibility these exemplars demonstrated.

Service in a real world context, when it is juxtaposed with academic and theological content has a positive impact on the Catholic moral development of young people. The kind of learning they achieved is deeply engrained in them and is a part of their very identity. It is this kind of learning that fosters the growth of students who will become the future of not only the Catholic Church, but also of our country. Their moral courage and concern for the sacred and holy nature of the human person is a sign of hope for our complex and ever changing world. Over time, these young adults have become people of faith and light for our world.

Appendix A

Letters of Reference

Cristiana Ritchie-Carter <13ritchiecar@cardinalmail.cua.edu>

Research - Some Do Care

2 messages

Cristiana Ritchie-Carter <13ritchiecar@cardinalmail.cua.edu>
To: colby@carnegiefoundation.org

Mon, Nov 9, 2009 at 10:37 AM

Dear Dr. Colby,

Last year I contacted you regarding the use of the interview protocols you developed with William Damon in the *Some Do Care* study. You kindly granted me permission to use them for my dissertation.

Unfortunately, when I changed my e-mail address, I didn't get some of the documents out of the folders I had saved. Consequently, I cannot locate my copy of the email you sent me granting your permission, and of course I will need that for my proposal and defense. I was wondering if you would mind re-e-mailing your permission? Later, when I go before our IRB committee, I may need to ask you for an official letter. I will certainly check on that and let you know in plenty of time.

For now, however, an e-mail response is all that is required by my committee. I also attached a draft of my abstract just in case you have any questions.

Thank you again for your generous assistance, and please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Cristiana Ritchie-Carter

ABSTRACT 11_9_09.doc
53K

Colby, Anne <Colby@carnegiefoundation.org>
To: Cristiana Ritchie-Carter <13ritchiecar@cardinalmail.cua.edu>

Mon, Nov 9, 2009 at 2:48 PM

Yes, you have my permission to use the interviews. I look forward to learning more about your research.

Anne Colby

From: Cristiana Ritchie-Carter [13ritchiecar@cardinalmail.cua.edu]
Sent: Monday, November 09, 2009 8:37 AM
To: Colby, Anne
Subject: Research - Some Do Care
[Quoted text hidden]

Appendix B

Nominator Questions

The following questions will be asked. Modifications to the Colby and Damon questions are noted by the use of italics.

- 1) *Briefly describe your school's service-learning program and the kind of service that typically engages students?*
- 2) *What is the school's philosophy about service?*
- 3) *Is service required for graduation?*
- 4) *Could you briefly outline the history of your school's service-learning program?*
- 5) *How do parents and students feel about the program? Faculty?*
- 6) *Could you recommend any graduates of your school's service learning program who demonstrate a sustained commitment to service, to moral ideals or principles that include a generalized respect for humanity, or a sustained evidence of moral virtue?*
- 7) *Do these students display a disposition to act in accord with one's moral ideals or principles, implying also a consistency between one's actions, intentions and between the means and ends of one's actions?*
- 8) *Do these students demonstrate a willingness to risk their own 's self-interest for the sake of their own moral values?*
- 9) *Are these students inspiring to others and move others to moral action?*
- 10) *Do these students display a sense of realistic humility about their own importance relative to the world at large, implying a lack or concern for one's own ego?*

Appendix C

Interview Protocol for Participants

My questions are in italics and will become the new section A. In order to delineate my additional questions, I used the numerical order Colby and Damon listed in their study.

INTRODUCITON:

We are studying people who in their lives have made sustained commitments to moral values. You have been suggested to us as someone who has done so. We would like to ask some questions about how you, in your own life, have thought about your values. We are also interested in how you have confronted moral issues in your life, especially in critical life decisions.

A. *CATHOLIC SERVICE-LEARNING EXPERIENCES*

1. *What do you remember about your high school service-learning program? What was required of you? Whom did you work with?*
2. *Did your service program offer time for reflection? Tell me about that.*
3. *Describe some of the relationships you formed in the program.*
4. *Can you think of times when you were surprised by something during your high school service, that is, when you suddenly looked at a situation or issue in a way that you hadn't before and when you realized that you needed the answers to some new question?*
5. *What ideas and statements, if any do you remember from your high school service program.*
6. *What elements of your service-learning program, if any would you say were distinctly Catholic?*
7. *Where their any experiences you had that are still with you today? Why or Why not?*
8. *Who helped you when and if you were struggling with something within the service-learning program?*

A. MORAL OBJECTIVES OR GOALS

1. What would you say at the moment you spend most of your energy on?
2. Which of these goals would you consider essentially moral goals? How would you characterize other goals?
3. You've mentioned a number of goals and objectives; do these (or some of these) contribute to your sense of who you are as a person? How?

1. MORAL ACTION What are you currently doing to try to achieve these objectives?
2. Can you tell me about an incident in your life where you weren't sure of the right course of action? How did it become clear to you what to do?
3. Was there a time in your life when the course of action was clear but for other reasons it was difficult for you to follow this course?
4. Why do you keep going in the face of difficulties?
5. What does the phrase moral courage mean to you? Would you say that the difficulties you described demonstrated moral courage? Were there times when you think you were a coward?

B. DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY AND INFLUENCES

1. Are there incidents that have changed your beliefs? Did they alter how you behave?
2. Can you tell me how you got involved in the things that currently occupy you? Would you say that your friends are preoccupied with the same things you are? What about spouse, lover, etc.? Did you try to impart these values to your children? Have you encountered opposition from your friends, spouse, etc.?
3. Apart from particular people were there other things that influenced you, e.g. books, films, particular experiences, etc.?
4. What do you think have been your greatest successes?
5. Have you felt that you have ever been an influence on others?

Bibliography

- Baron-Cohen, S. (2003). *The Essential Difference*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bergman, R. (2004). Identity as motivation: Toward a theory of the moral self. In D.K. Lapsley & D. Narvaez (Eds.), *Moral development, self and identity* (pp. 21-46). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Blasi, A. (1993). The development of identity: Some implications for moral functioning. In G. Noam & T. E. Wren (Eds.), *The moral self* (pp. 99-122). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Blasi, A. (2004). Moral functioning: Moral understanding and personality. In D.K. Lapsley & D. Narvaez (Eds.), *Moral development, self and identity* (pp. 335-347). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Blasi, A., & Milton, K. (1991). The development of the sense of self in adolescence. *Journal of Personality*, 59(2), 217.
- Colby, A., & Damon, W. (1992). *Some do care: Contemporary lives of moral commitment*. New York: Free Press.
- Colby, A., Gibbs, J., Lieberman, M., & Kohlberg, L. (1983). *A longitudinal study of moral judgment: A monograph for the society of research in child development*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Congregation for Catholic Education (1988). The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school: Guidelines for reflection and renewal. In M. Connell (Ed.), *The catechetical documents* (pp. 491-529). Chicago: Liturgy Training Press.

- Conrad, D., & Hedin, D. (1989, December). High school community service: a review of research and programs. *National Center on Effective Secondary Schools*.
Retrieved from Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (ED 313 569).
- Cresswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Curran, C. E. (1999). *The Catholic moral tradition today: A synthesis*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Daniels, H., Cole, M., & Wertsch, J. V. (2007). Editor's introduction. In H. Daniels, M. Cole & J. Wertsch (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Vygotsky* (pp. 1-17). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- D'Antonio, W. V., Davidson, J. D., Hoge, D. R., & Gautier, M. L. (2007). *American Catholics today: New realities in their faith and their Church*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Day, J., & Naedts, N. H. (1995). Convergence and conflict in the development of moral judgment and religious judgment. *Journal of Religious Education*, 97(1), 1-26.
- Eyler, J., & Giles, D. E. (1999). *Where's the learning in service-learning?* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Furco, A. (2001). Is service-learning really better than community service? In A. Furco & S. Billig (Eds.), *Service-learning the essence of pedagogy* (pp. 23-50). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Goodman, D. J. (2001). *Promoting diversity and social justice: Educating people from privileged groups*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Groome, T. (2003). *What makes us Catholic*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (pp. 195-220). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hart, D., & Fegley, S. (1995). Pro-social behavior and care in adolescence: Relations to self-understanding and social judgment. *Child Development*, 66, 1346-1359.
- Hart, D., Yates, M., Fegley, S., & Wilson, G. (1995). Moral commitment in inner-city adolescents. In M. Killen & D. Hart (Eds.), *Morality in everyday life: Developmental perspectives* (pp. 317-341). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hoge, D. R., Dinges, W. D., Johnson, M., & Gonzalez, J. L. (2001). *Young adult Catholics: Religion in the culture of choice*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press.
- Holland, D., & Lachicotte, Jr, W. (2007). Vygotsky, Mead and new sociocultural studies of identity. In H. Daniels, M. Cole & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Vygotsky* (pp. 101-135). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Howard, J. (2001). *Service-learning course design workbook*. Ann Arbor, MI: The Michigan Journal of Service Learning-OCSL Press.

- Keating, J. (2005). A share in God's life: Mystical/liturgical foundations for a Catholic morality. *Logos*, 8(2), 65-87.
- Kreitemeyer, R. (2000). *Leaven for the modern world: Catholic social teaching and Catholic education*. Washington D.C.: National Catholic Education Association.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and emerging confluences. In N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 163-188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Manley, T., Buffa, A. S., Dube, C., & Reed, L. (2006). Putting the learning in service learning: From soup kitchen models to the black metropolis model. *Education in Urban Society*, 28(2), 115-141.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McCorquodale, M., Shepp, V., & Sterten, L. (2004). *National study of youth and religion: Analysis of the population of Catholic teenagers*. Washington, D.C.: Liturgy Training Source.
- Melchior, A., & Bailis, L. N. (2001). Impact of service-learning on civic attitudes and behaviors of middle and high school youth. In A. Furco & S. Billig (Eds.), *Service-learning the essence of pedagogy* (pp. 201-222). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Meshcheryakov, B. G. (2006). Terminology in L.S. Vygotsky's writings. In H. Daniels, M. Cole & J. Wertsch (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Vygotsky* (pp. 155-177). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In Mezirow, J & Associates (Eds.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 3-33). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- National Catholic Education Association, & Catholic Relief Services (Eds.). (2005). *Living faith, loving action: Catholic social teaching in Catholic secondary schools*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.
- National Conference Of Bishops (1972). To teach as Jesus did. In M. Connell (Ed.), *The catechetical documents* (pp. 80-116). Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications.
- Nucci, L. (2004). Reflections on the moral self-construct. In D.K. Lapsley & D. Narvaez (Eds.), *Moral development, self, and identity* (pp. 111-132). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.
- Oser, F., & Gmunder, P. (1991). *Religious judgement: A developmental perspective*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press.
- Penuel, W. R., & Wertsch, J. V. (1995). Vygotsky and identity formation: A socio-cultural approach. *Educational Psychologist*, 30(2), 83-92.

- P.M. Peryl & E. M. Bendyna (Eds.). (2005). *Living faith, loving action: Catholic social teaching in Catholic secondary schools*. Washington D.C.: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.
- Schuttloffel, M. (1999). *Character and the contemplative principal*. Washington, DC: National Catholic Education Association.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Tappan, M. B. (1997). Language, culture and moral development: A Vygotskian perspective. *Developmental Review*, 17, 78-100.
- United States Catholic Conference Of Bishops (1998). *Sharing Catholic social teaching: Challenges and directions*. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference of Bishops.
- United States Catholic Conference Of Bishops (2000). *Leaders guide to sharing Catholic social teaching*. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference of Bishops.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962) *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA. M.I.T. Press.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Walker, L. J., Pitts, R. C., Hennig, K. H., & Matsuba, M. K. (1995). Reasoning about morality and real-life problems. In M. Killen & D. Hart (Eds.), *Morality in every day life* (pp. 371-407). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

- Walker, L. J., & Reimer (2005). The relationship between moral and spiritual development. In P.L. Benson, E.C. Rochlkepartain, E. King, & L. M. Wagner (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 224-238). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Wertsch, J. (1991). *Voices of the mind: A socio-cultural approach*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wertsch, J. V. (1985). *Vygotsky and the social formation of the mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Youniss , J., & Yates, M. (1997). *Community service and social responsibility in youth*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.