

Poetry at Catholic Imagination Conference

At the Catholic Imagination Conference, I saw the poets Lawrence Joseph and Fanny Howe read some of their poems and talk about their lives in relation to their poetry. First, Fanny Howe read some of her work and talked a little bit about when she had written them. Then, Lawrence Joseph followed by doing the same thing. After they had finished there was a guy who sat up there with them and asked them questions to go a little deeper into their thoughts about their poetry and relating it to God and the Catholic religion. I have never been a big poetry reader, but I do enjoy it when I read it. I think that poets are very interesting people with a special way of thinking that they can organize all their thoughts into a specific set of words that without being large in length can have the strongest messages. I was able to take some notes during the conference and write some of the things that both Lawrence Joseph and Fanny Howe said in general and specific to religion that were interesting to me.

“I believe that God doesn’t love me” This was what Fanny said in the beginning of her discussion. I was really surprised when I heard this, and I felt like many other people in the room were too. Some of the things she said were a very interesting way of approaching religion and I thought that was mind opening to hear her talk about. She went on to discuss prayer and poetry and said, “Poetry is the ultimate act of attention nothing courageous about it, attention is prayer, attention to what God isn’t paying attention to”. I really liked when she said this, I think just like in music as well as poetry, writers are putting the utmost importance on the topic they are writing about and are calling attention to the things that they are feeling so strongly about at that time in their life even if it is written with the intention to be for God or not. And although God is all knowing and loves all of us, everyone has felt like they were alone, and that God wasn’t helping them at points in their life.

Some of the stuff that Lawrence Joseph talked about was similar to that of Fanny, yet they were still very different people. He said that poetry was a form of prayer. This is just like what Fanny said. I really like the idea of that. Poetry is an art and to express everyday thoughts and ideas through it is beautiful. Lawrence also said, “Love is fundamental, it makes us survive, fight, give, and is a gift to see it and feel it” Although this is not directly related to God I think its just a really good reminder that when we have people in our lives who truly love us they should not be taken for granted because love is such a powerful thing. For me when I think about this I think about my mom and dad and grandparents, but I do also think about God and just the idea

that no matter what is going on in my life God is there and he loves me and I don't always pay enough attention to that.

In conclusion, I think that both Fanny and Lawrence said some things that were very interesting and leave room for more thought and processing with them. They were both different individuals who come together through poetry but can still express life in a unique way. But they can agree and overlap in thought of many things as well. When I left the conference, it made me want to start writing poetry and just be in contact with my feelings and life at a deeper level. I really enjoyed this event and made me think about a lot of things I wouldn't normally think about in the craziness of everyday life.

Catholic Imagination Conference: Angela O'Donnell & Dana Gioia

The 3rd biennial meeting of the Catholic Imagination Conference was held on Loyola University Chicago's campus. Focused on the interconnected nature of the Catholic faith within literature and the arts, the Open Plenary session was led by speakers Dana Gioia and Angela Alaimo O'Donnell. Firstly, Gioia – the founder of the initial conference in California – spoke about the doctrine of divine providence which led him to create a shared-value community of Catholic Christian artists. He shared how, as a professor, he has personally experienced the spirit of communion in his classroom through the foundations of faith; therefore, he aimed to create an “infinitely expandable” community celebrating Catholicism – not just a conference – through the Catholic Imagination. Next, O'Donnell – the head of the 2nd conference in New York – emphasized public Catholic self-identification in today's “era of unbelief” and mission-driven young artists. In this, O'Donnell reminded the audience that the overall Catholic Imagination is flourishing from coast-to-coast across the U.S., where religion is central to the work of singers, painters, poets, architects, etc.. Hence, she calls all Catholics to stop apologizing for their faith; instead, society should welcome everyone a seat at the sabbath table so that we can share the beauty in diversity as a commonwealth.

After the session ended, I researched more about Gioia's essay publication *The Catholic Writer Today*. It was interesting to learn about the paradox between the largest religious group in the nation, but an almost secret religion in American public culture. As I tried to understand

how this paradox could exist, I considered that it does seem true that ‘Catholic writers’ are simply identified as just ‘writers.’ This is despite the inevitable and irrefutable impacts that faith has on one’s professional work. In reflection of my own experiences, I find that I show off my identities pretty outwardly. Each day, I wear a cross necklace (Catholic Christian) and an Claddagh ring (Irish). Furthermore, in social settings my advice typically comes back to my core faith beliefs, my friends refer to me for questions about prayer, and my co-workers know that Sunday morning is reserved for mass. While I will always be a sinner with temptations, my faith nevertheless carries into these aspect of my daily life. However, in an academic setting – behind a typed essay submission – only the header with my name is revealed. Meaning without a face-to-face encounter, my other identities are not outwardly obvious. This would hold to be true with published writers. In this respect, I can come to understand how ‘Catholic writers’ are simply ‘writers.’ They do not share their identities outwardly and as easily as personal encounters might facilitate. Rather, their core faith beliefs are masked and must be interpreted through their work’s message. Thus, without employing high-level critical literacy skills to interpret texts or without the author explicating announcing their religious ties, then ultimately, the paradox of hidden Catholicism becomes enabled.

Plenary Reflection: Paul Schrader

While at the Catholic Imagination Conference I went to the Plenary on Friday, September 20, 2019. It was featuring Paul Schrader, a screen writer, director, and film critic. Schrader is a graduate of Calvin College and the UCLA Film program, where he was mentored by film critic Pauline Kael. He is the author of *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer*. His best-known screenplays include *Raging Bull*, *Taxi Driver*, and *The Last Temptation of Christ*. He both wrote and directed most recently, the critically acclaimed film *First Reformed*.

I personally did not know much if anything about Schrader. However, much of what I heard had to do with the making of films rather than the concept and discussion of religion. He emphasized that films from the 60's were highly restrictive in nature but provided a link from the past to the present. This link was specifically about the style rather than the content of the work, and how spirituality is about the how not the what. He went into further detail about why directors do what they do when designing and imagining films. While I do not have an extensive background of film making, I found his talk quite interesting. He emphasized the idea of drawing the audience in by withholding things from the audience whether that was with techniques of production or literally withholding scenes and letting the mind do the work. He mocked, in the most tasteful way, how cinema nowadays, is to quote on quote "easy", and outlined the way in which cinema should be not only produced but watched. He also criticized society for not being willing to reach for more or think more intensely when watching films, but rather we seek for the movie or show to hand over everything on a silver platter.

Society he explains, is guilty for feeding into this. A way in which he tries to engage his audience is by making sure his viewers are active rather than reactive. The technique he encourages people to do this through the use of delayed action. Since the main goals of production are to produce action and therefore aim to have the audience feel empathy, he says how movies that make you lean in and allow the movie or production crew lean away, are the ones that allow you to truly deepen your understanding of the cinema. Something that stood out to me was when he said "...the mind begins to wander, as the viewer is watching a movie, they are also creating one" (Schrader). I found this highly relatable because as I am watching things, I am constantly inferring or trying to put the pieces together. Sometimes I am spot on, and sometimes I by habit, create my own version of the story. The idea of characterizing yourself with a character in cinema is also something you tend to do, but not necessarily notice you're doing so.

I also really enjoyed when he mentioned that when actors are doing the crying, they are doing the work of the audience, and I understood more so from the point of view of the director. Their goal in essence is to move people and make them feel empathy, but sometimes directors try to compensate for what they cannot provide to their audience.

Further in his discussion he explains that Transcendental Style seeks to escort their audience to another level of consciousness. After Schrader admits to repressing his feelings and then allowing them to emerge onto the production of a film, one individual in the audience asked if in essence his subconscious was responsible for the main characters (not entirely sure which film they were referencing), had been involved in what he calls “the suicidal glory”, or the idea of earning redemption through suffering. The concept of earning your own transcendence is said to be portrayed in his films, despite the fact that Jesus Christ has already suffered this for us. I wish they had taken a more theological approach to this session.

Overall, I thought the conference session was highly interesting. I did not necessarily know what I was walking into and it turned out to be quite different than I had imagined. I thought the conversation would be a bit more religious based, and while I am slightly disappointed it wasn't, I also learned a lot about the perspective of a director. This standpoint was something I hadn't considered or thought of before, so I am happy with the outcome of it.

On September 20th, I attended the Handmaids, Prophets, and Misfits: Cinematic Moments and Transformative Encounters panel in Damen Cinema. This panel consisted of a handful of TV producers and screenwriters, as well as a film critic, who all discussed their personal thoughts on the topic of transformation and its relationship with communities. After viewing some of their work, we had the opportunity to listen to the panelists discuss their processes not only with these films but how past works, life experiences, and religion all played into the final edits. For example, Dorothy Fortenberry, one of the producers and screenwriters of Handmaid's Tale, had the audience watch a clip from an episode she directed, where the main character is torn about introducing her child into an abusive aristocratic family. She pleads for another character by the name of Aunt Lydia to be her child's Godmother. This began a conversation of Catholic ideals and how many popular films and TV shows have underlying religious roots. Popular directors and producers, such as Ryan Murphy, most commonly known for Glee and American Horror Story as well as someone who is very vocal about his disapproval of the Church, still seems to constantly create content that surrounds religion itself. This accompanied the panel's discussion on the importance of community and how it often leads to transformations of characters and storylines both on and off camera. Community is an aspect of humanity that is vital for not only survival but appreciation of life. This can come from family, friends, spouses, or even individuals who happen to be in your life without realizing it.

Communities are created and survive through all sorts of connectivity, and religion is one of the largest and most common examples of this. It is for this reason that producers and screenwriters naturally find themselves drawn towards creating stories involving religion. Their job is to convey emotion through a screen and convince the audience the story unfolding in front of their eyes means something. The transformations these characters go through can just as easily be applied to someone else's everyday life. Many films, including the ones produced by these panelists, have groups of individuals working together from all sorts of religious backgrounds, from hardcore Catholics to Muslims to atheists. It takes these conflicting opinions to establish what community actually is. In reality, every community of individuals is going to have opposition, for no one shares the same mind, the same morals, and the same definitions of this world. However, people with different upbringings are the only people who can initiate and spark transformation. Our own beliefs and morals, regardless of where they stem from, make us who we are; they also are nothing without the influence of others, and only get stronger as the communities we describe ourselves to be a part of begin to open our eyes to the rest of the world, differences and all.

On Friday, September 20th I attended the Catholic Imagination Conference at Loyola University Chicago. The event I attended was the ten o' clock to eleven o' clock event called the "Opening Plenary: On the Catholic Imagination- an Unfolding Story of Shared Commitment" in the Sister Jean Ballroom. The event was centered around the dialogue of Dana Gloria and Angela Alaimo O'Donnell and was introduced by Dr. Murphy. The dialogue focused upon the beginnings of the conference and what its purpose was and what has changed about it throughout its first couple of years. Dana Gloria claimed that the objective of bringing Catholic scholars and artists together is to create and foster a community of Catholic and Christian writers who would form a human community. Angela Alaimo O'Donnell emphasized how far the community has come and how far it still needs to go. She discussed how there was a time not too long ago that Catholic writers had to hide their religion in order to be taken seriously. She also noted that there is still much more work to be done to open doors for Catholic writers, but that there has been great progress made by making students aware of Catholic art. The main point of this conference, according to Gloria and O'Donnell, was to have a call to community among Catholic writers.

This event was enlightening to me as a student at Loyola who is not Catholic. I am sure many Catholic students at Loyola would not be aware of some of the issues that these writers raised, but I was particularly unaware of them as I am not attending as a Catholic student. Before

hearing this conversation, I would not have figured that Catholics had to hide their religion in order to be taken seriously. I did not consider that Catholicism would play a role in an artist lacking recognition or respect. I also found it interesting the artists that they mentioned that were Catholic, such as Frida Kahlo, Bruce Springsteen and Ernest Hemingway. They mentioned these artists by discussing how it was their goal to introduce them and others to students in order to help students become aware of the work and start to see it everywhere. I think this strategy would be effective because I had not known this previously and it left me intrigued after the event was over.

The question and answer portion of the event at the end was also particularly interesting to myself. I found the older generations' perspectives about people my age to be not necessarily surprising, but thought-provoking. Some of their comments seemed like they lacked some perspective about the way that myself and my peers think, but some of them were accurate in some ways. I do think that people my age lack a certain reflective nature. We do not often take time to reflect, but I do not think that social media and technology are inherently bad like some of the guests at the event suggested. Social media has created a unique culture and togetherness globally that could never have occurred without it.

I attended the Opening Plenary of the 2019 Catholic Imagination Conference held at Loyola University Chicago. I attended the conference without any prior knowledge of what to expect or what it would be about, however, I was pleasantly surprised with some of the information that was said. The two main speakers were Dana Gioia and Angela Alaimo O'Donnell and they shared the story of how the conference came to be what it is today and what they hope for it to become. Dana Gioia is a poet and he started the conference because he believed there was a need for it. As a Catholic writer he knew the importance of faith and spirituality had in his work and having a community to share his experiences in was crucial for him but also others like him. What I found very interesting about this decision was his willingness to give the conference away. He worked so hard to put it all together but knew that in order to make it even more powerful it had to be shared. I thought this was a brave because he trusted that his hard work would be carried on by others.

Angela Alaimo O'Donnell carried on the conversation by giving a brief overview of all the progress that their work has been able to make since they started. The main point of her speech was that more and more writers are beginning to identify as Catholics. I didn't realize that it used to be embarrassing and almost shameful for people, especially writers, to identify as Catholics. I guess I never really paid attention to it seeing all the progress that was made has really opened my eyes. It made me think about my experience as a practicing catholic. I don't think I've ever been in a situation where I felt I had to hide my faith, however I also never have been in a situation where I have professed my faith other than church. It made me question if I subconsciously hide my faith or if it's just a product of today's less faithful society, or maybe both. I also thought about the communities/ groups that I am in and the role my faith has on them. Aside from my church, I am not a part of any group that identifies as Catholic entirely. Even though a majority of the members are Catholic, faith is never a main topic. I think this is because in today's society a label like that can turn others away or make a group look exclusive, which isn't the case at all. This made me wonder if what role faith will have as time goes on, especially what it will look like for my children. Another surprising thing that I noticed was the question portion of the presentation. What sparked my attention was a comment made about the catholic imagination being alive everywhere around us in art, comedy, media, ect. I realized that I most frequently connect with my faith only when I am in church or during religious holidays but I don't usually connect with it in my daily life, at least I've never considered it to be everywhere I look. This made me want to push myself to connect with my faith in all aspects of my life.

Overall my experience at the presentation was a good one and I'm glad I attended.

On Friday, September 20th, I attended a session presented by the Catholic Imagination Conference called Seeking After the Whole: The Catholic Imagination as Critical Context. In this session, we watched short clips of films, shows, and documentaries directed or put together by Christian thinkers. Each of the clips displayed some type of connection to Christian principles.

The three key concepts that I took away from the event was the connection between media and religion through displays of community. Aside from the documentary, none of the clips shown stood out to me as particularly religious. On the surface, they just seemed like typical media consumption, made for entertainment. The most memorable being a scene from *A Handmaid's Tale*. One of the screenwriters was present, and she was able to give insight about the scene, and the thinking that went on behind it. She explained that in the beginning of creating the series, she noticed that the main character had made a decision that implied that she was Catholic, so she tried to make that consistent throughout her character development. The playwright explained that she made community a big part of the main character's life, because she believed that community is a big part of Catholic Christianity. This was especially present at the time of the birth of her child. This stood out to me because it relates to much of what Rubio talks about in her chapter 3, as she discusses Jesus' rejection of the traditional family, and encourages people to expand their definition of family past biological families, and to community. The main character relied on her community as family, and treated them as family.

In another clip, the producer showed how the main character's religious community helped him transcend. While I do not remember the details of the clip very clearly, I remember

the main character was struggling, and looked to someone he considered a mentor, who helped him to see more clearly a solution to his struggle. He looked to his mentor for help, even though he was forced to be vulnerable, his community was able to help him.

One of my main takeaways from this session, was seeing how religion ties in to everyday life. When I think of religion, I automatically think of institutional religion. Hearing what the directors and playwrights had to say about the thoughts behind the making their medias was interesting, as many of them incorporated what was important to them, such as community, or transformation, and how they can share and incorporate that into their medias.

I had the chance to attend the full “Seeking After the Whole: The Catholic Imagination as Critical Context” seminar at the Catholic Imagination conference. I found all of the speakers’ topics very interesting, but the one I resonated with the most was Abigail Favale. She talked about the role of women in the Bible. I took a class last semester, a feminist theology class, that talked about this and I felt that her talk expanded more about what I learned from that class. I enjoyed when she said that women are not shown/understood in the Bible because the Bible is in terms of man. I know how little representation of women there is in the Bible and I know that the women that are in the Bible aren’t shown in the best way. I like this statement because it makes me feel less weak in a way. Women are always shown as weaker and more fragile and the statement that we are not understood because it is in the view of a man makes me feel like there is opportunity for that to change. I also enjoyed how she said since she didn’t find women in the Bible she turned to other books. I also feel like I did this. My favorite book series was always Harry Potter and although Hermione was not always portrayed as the best she was always portrayed as a strong independent woman. I also really enjoyed the Hunger Games series and I feel like it was because the main character, Katniss, spent the whole time proving how she didn’t need any men to help her. This really made me think of how I turned to books and shows with strong female characters because that is what I wanted women to be. I didn’t like the idea of men being better or stronger so I found things that made me feel empowered.

On September 20th, I attended the Catholic Imagination Conference in which I attended a session titled “Seeking After the Whole: The Catholic Imagination as Critical Context”. In this session, three speakers discussed the Catholic imagination critically. One of the speakers was a Protestant and her discussion was heavily based on her Protestant background. One of the other speakers was a newly converted Catholic and she spoke about that as well as her women and gender studies background. Finally, the last speaker was a professor who spoke about the Catholic Imagination and culture.

To be quite honest, I found the panel interesting, but a lot of what they were saying went over my head, for a lack of a better term. The speakers were very well spoken, and I could see that they were intelligent and passionate about the topic of the Catholic imagination. However, even as a Catholic myself, it was hard to follow at times because they often spoke of readings, authors, and subjects that were foreign to me.

However, one of the people that they mentioned in the discussion was Flannery O’Connor, whom I am somewhat familiar with. I had remembered reading something that she wrote in high school, but I could not remember what it was. After the conference, I went home and looked up Flannery O’Connor trying to find the story that I had read. I actually ended up finding the story, which was “A Good Man is Hard to Find”. I remember reading it in my senior year of high school and honestly really enjoying it. The story is about a family who is taking a family vacation to Florida, even though there is an escaped murderer called the Misfit on the loose. After deciding to take a small detour, the family crashes the car because of the grandmother and end up being found by the Misfit. After the Misfit kills everyone but the grandmother, she has a discussion with him about God; she then touches his shoulder claiming that he is one of her children, and he startles and kills her.

The story has multiple interpretations and I remember there being quite a discussion about it in my high school class. Many of the interpretations focused on moral judgement and how the grandmother redeems herself at the end by acknowledging that she is not morally superior like she previously acted. Other interpretations saw the grandmother's act as one to potentially save herself from death. Personally, I thought it was a bit of both, considering the fact that if I were in the same situation, I would want to save myself; additionally, though, the redemption arc is visible and plausible.

Ultimately, I found that the conference showed me a side of thought that I had not previously been accustomed to. I noticed that the speakers read novels and stories with a religious lens, one that I have not thought to use. When I read "A Good Man is Hard to Find" for the first time, I was not looking for a religious meaning. But, after reading it again after the conference, I noticed more religious symbolism and themes than I had previously. I am now more intrigued to study and read with more of an open mind and critical thought than I have before.

Catholic Imagination Conference

This past Friday I attended the Catholic Imagination Conference in which I attended the session titled “Seeking After the Whole: The Catholic Imagination as Critical Context” The only reason I really chose this session was because it seemed the most general and I would be able to learn more about the conference and what it stood for as a whole. There were three panelist speakers. They each had their own ideas of what the catholic imagination stood for. One took it in a protestant direction but also connecting and contrasting that with catholic and orthodox beliefs and how they relied on each other. The next panelist talked about the feminist theory and how women are seen in religion and in the catholic faith specifically. The last panelist talked about the christic imagination and the mystery of faith.

Personally, my favorite speaker was Abigale who talked about feminist theory. She was a recent catholic convert and she grew up as an evangelic. The thing that resonated the most with me is how she said women need to be seen in terms of genesis rather than Plato. She has studied feminist literature for many years so she is much more well versed than I could ever be but, I agreed with her in the sense that women are really only seen as powerful or equal in catholic or orthodox religion. In other religions, Mary isn't seen as anything special and they don't have saints to recognize and pray to. Another part of her talk that resonated with me was when she was talking about how women need to be seen as their own rather than a comparison to man.

Women are always talked about how they aren't men and in all they ways they fail at this, but women are their own and should be seen as this! I never really realized how special the catholic faith was in that we see women as these powerful figures as well and the focus isn't JUST on Jesus (in the sense that he is a man).

The other speakers had interesting points but no parts of them really resonated with me. They were both very educated in their fields and a lot of what they were talking about went right over my head. I am very happy I went to this talk and was able to learn about the idea of what the catholic imagination was and how I can seek it out in my daily life.

Catholic Imagination Conference

The Conference that I went to was focusing on the nature of the catholic imagination through different perspectives. There were people from several different backgrounds that offered insights into how they viewed the Catholic imagination. Jessica Hooten Wilson is a professor of literature at John Brown University. Jessica is also a protestant which offered a different view on the catholic imagination. Abigail Favale is a recent convert to catholicism and she is a writer. Finally, Johsua Hren, who is a professor at Belmont Abbey, teaches courses on political philosophy, theology, and literature also was on the panel.

Jessica presented the findings on the Protestant imagination which is very focused on sola scriptura, or only the word. She also said that the orthodox's view has a trinitarian view in which the trinity is always at work. She compared this to the Catholic view of a sacramental view which always tries to open and see the trinity. Abbey dove into the feminist theory of the catholic imagination or lack thereof. She talked about how there is no mention of women in the old testament. She mentions how women in the bible tend to go from virgin, bride, to a mother which becomes a reflection of divine things and divine love. Joshua discussed the subsets of the catholic imagination and how things are a mystery to be absorbed. For example, he said there are no words to describe mercy, so we witness the effects of mercy to fully understand it. He also stated that we should take things as they are, not as we wish of them. Finally, he stated, "we should be getting as much heaven in as little earth time as possible."

Overall, I thought the conference was interesting because it was not only Catholics telling Catholics about the catholic imagination. Instead, there was someone, Jessica, who was a protestant who offered a different view on how to approach theological imagination. However, I disagree with the Protestant view that we should only take the bible for the word. We should also consider the context of when the writings were written, then use that information to apply to our daily lives. When Joshua said that we should be “getting as much heaven in as little earth as possible” that resonated with me. It resonated with me because it made me realize that we should be living our holiest lives, in order to spend eternal life with God in heaven for we are finite beings. Another thing that I did not really like was Jessica’s reasoning for staying in the Protestant church. The way she made it sound, at least to me, was that she was only staying in the Protestant church because she felt that had a voice there. But I don’t think that should be someone’s reasoning for staying in a Church (maybe I interrupted/heard her wrong). In short, I think the conference offered a good insight into exactly what the catholic imagination is and how we should view it.

During the Catholic Imagination Conference, I attended the session entitled *Handmaids, Prophets, and Misfits: Cinematic Moments, Transformative Encounters*. This session focused primarily on how the Catholic imagination operates within moments of transformation and how the cinema can make that happen. We were shown clips from a few different movies, short films, and television shows such as *The Handmaids Tale* and *Clear McKenna*. All of these clips had different moments of transformation that the writer really wanted to portray to us. After these clips were shown to us, film critic Jonathon Rosenbaum shared with us his favorite transformation films he has written about. The overall theme in the three films he discussed with us was the relationship to the community. Throughout the entirety of the panel, all of the writers focused on the different senses of community they had in their films or television shows. I found this session, and most importantly the panel, to be very interesting. The discussion about community really made me think about the sense of community I had growing up and how it has changed over my short lifetime thus far. My family is a member of a Catholic parish, and I attended Catholic schooling from kindergarten until 12th grade. I was very much so a member of the Catholic community in the fact that I had godparents, I have gone through all the sacraments I can go through at this time, and my family would regularly attend church. Going from grade school to high school, I noticed a shift in this sense of community. My high school

was a private, Catholic institution, but we had a handful of students who practiced different religions. I remember being confused the first time I attended mass in high school because there were people my age who were not going up for Communion. Before this, I had only ever seen my younger siblings not receive Communion, but it was because they had yet to receive their First Communion. At the time, I did not understand the disconnect there was between the different religions. The more I thought about it, the more I almost felt bad for the students who did not go up and receive Communion. I had a friend at my high school who was Jewish, and she would tell me that she felt so awkward sometimes sitting while everyone around her got up to go receive Communion. At the same time though, these people were still members of my school community. They wore the same uniform as everyone else and went to the same classes as the rest of the students. In my situation, I feel that the Catholic community is very accepting of people of different faiths but at the same time, does not always make everyone feel welcome in a Church setting. Coming to Loyola, which is a Jesuit university, I have seen more acceptance of people who practice many different religions. I believe that having all of these different faiths is what makes a community stronger because we come to understand how to be more accepting of our differences. This session really opened my eyes to how my Catholic community has changed from my childhood to what it is now and how it has affected my idea of faith today.