

# Attitude and Practices of Filipino Catholic Youth towards Mary, the Mother of God: Implications to Religious Education in the Philippines

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**Abstract:** Mary, the mother of God, has a special place in the Catholic Church. In various countries around the world, Catholics develop attitude and perform practices to venerate Mary seeking for intercession to her son Jesus Christ. This research describes the attitude and practices of Filipino Catholic youth towards Mary. A descriptive research design was utilized involving participants ( $n = 389$ ) from a Catholic university in the Philippines, who answered a Marian survey adapted from the study of Roten (1994) of the International Marian Research Institute. Data analysis was employed using frequency and percentage distribution as well as Likert scale means. Results revealed that participants are spiritually conscious about Mary in terms of their attitude and practices towards her though some problems were encountered such as the proper understanding of Marian doctrines and full participation in Marian devotions. Also noteworthy is that the participants perceived Mary to be a caring mother and a model of an ideal woman. The research concluded that the Church, family and school have significant influence on the attitude and practices of the participants towards Mary.

**Key Words:** attitude; practices; Mary; Filipino Catholic youth

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mary, the mother of God has a special place in the Catholic Church's tradition and even in the life of every Christian. Some Catholic devotions and practices are ways of honouring and venerating the Blessed Virgin Mary, being an intercessor that leads to the adoration of her Son Jesus Christ; thus, the famous expression of Pope John Paul II, "to Jesus through Mary" is being adhered to.

In the case of the Philippine Church, devotion to Mary is a widespread phenomenon which can be traced back in the early beginnings of Christianity in the country (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1975). This devotion is considered as one of the many forms of popular religious practices that are prevalent among Filipinos. Consequently, teachings about Mary form part of religious education among Catholic educational institutions as well as of catechetical

programs in local parishes because devotion to Mary is a vital part of the Filipino religiosity and spirituality.

Given the significant role of Mary in the spirituality of the Filipinos, attention is inevitably drawn towards the attitude expressed and practices observed by the youth nowadays towards Mary alongside the influence of secularism and commercialism in the modern world; hence, it is the aim of this research to give a present description of the attitude and practices of Filipino Catholic youth towards Mary and their possible implications to religious education in the Philippines.

### *1.1. Mary in the Salvation History and the Church*

Meanwhile, to deepen the understanding about Mary, it is important to go back to the biblical roots of her role in the Salvation history. Mary has

been involved in the life of Jesus Christ as his mother. She has been with Jesus from womb to tomb which signifies her involvement in God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

Brown, Donfried, Fitsmyer and Reumann (1978) made an investigation in a roughly chronological sequence of the New Testament writings that make reference to Mary. They further explained that the mother of Jesus appeared in all four Gospels and as a group, these writings constitute the major witness to Mary in the New Testament.

Apparently, Mary, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, has a special place in our Church's tradition which enriches the Catholic faith life. The following literature presents Mary and her role in the Universal Church:

The Second Vatican Council's Post Conciliar document entitled *Lumen Gentium* (1964, 52) states that "joined to Christ, the head, and in communion with all his saints, the faithful must in the first place reverence the memory of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church also known as CCC (1994, 484) explains that Mary is part of the plan of salvation that God has revealed to humanity in the person of his Incarnate Son Jesus Christ. It is the Annunciation to Mary that inaugurates "the fullness of time", the time of fulfillment of God's promises and preparation. Mary was invited to conceive Him in whom the "whole fullness of deity" would dwell "bodily".

Moreover, it is through the "*fiat*" (which means, "yes") of Mary that the plan of God has been fulfilled to his people. Mary is a true disciple of God, a person who has submitted herself to the plan of the Almighty Father for the rest of humanity. Moreover, *Lumen Gentium* (1964) presents the idea that the sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments, as well as venerable tradition, show the role of the Mother of the Saviour in the plan of salvation in an ever clearer light and call our attention to it.'

St. Louis De Montfort's work, as translated by Faber (1941), claims that "it was through the most holy Virgin Mary that Jesus came into the world, and it is also through her that He has to reign in the world."

Furthermore, the Church has been very firm in its stand on the place of Mary in the history of

salvation; that is why, some of the Church's Dogmas are attributed to her. First, the Council of Ephesus in 431 proclaimed Mary as the "*Theotokos*", meaning, the God-bearer, the Mother of God. CCC (1994, 491) points out that Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854. It states the fact that Mary, from the first moment of her conception, by the grace and privilege given by the Almighty God, has been preserved immune from original sin.

Meanwhile, in 1950, Pope Pius XII declared the Dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven as a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians as mentioned in the CCC (1994, 966). Moreover, in the closing address to Vatican II on November 21, 1964, Pope Paul VI acclaimed Mary as the Mother of the Church.

In addition, CCC (1994) expresses that 'the Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship. The Church rightly honours the Blessed Virgin with special devotion... This very special devotion differs from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration. The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an epitome of the whole Gospel, express this devotion to the Virgin Mary' (CCC, 974).

Consequently, in his Apostolic Exhortation entitled *Marialis Cultus*, Pope Paul VI (1974) expressed his stand on the very place of the Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the liturgy.

The previous literatures highlighted the significant place of Mary in the history of salvation whereby she has a special place in the Catholic Church's devotions, prayer, worship, practices and traditions.

## 1.2. *Mary in the Philippines*

In the Philippine Church, Mary has become part of the Filipino religious beliefs and spirituality. According to the pastoral letter entitled "Ang Mahal na Birhen" (The Blessed Virgin) written by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines also known as CBCP (1975), as cited by Santos (1982), "the widespread devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary goes back to the origins of Christianity in the

Philippines.” The pastoral letter presented in detail the place of Mary in the history of the Philippines and demonstrated how deeply the Blessed Virgin has been part of the Filipino heritage and identity. The 1975 CBCP Pastoral Letter attests that ‘over one-fourth of all parishes have the Virgin Mary as titular patron; these do not include the innumerable *barrio* (community) chapels, religious oratories or private shrines dedicated to her.’

On the other hand, the CBCP (2013) issued Circular Letter Number 1, Series of 2013 which announced the Celebration of the National Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on June 8, 2013. The letter reaffirmed the previous pastoral letter issued in 1975 on the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Philippines. It also expressed the views of the CBCP that tremendous flow of divine grace through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary is attributed to her maternal care for those who implore her intercession, especially at the height of the unfortunate events that happened in the country; hence, as stated in the circular letter ‘...it is always our dream and hope that we, as a Filipino nation, may not only grow in our devotion to Mary, but above all, may acquire a deeper understanding of Mary’s role in the Church in the Philippines.’

Recognition of Mary’s vital role in the Church was also expressed in the Second Plenary Council of Philippines, also known as PCP II (1991), which names Mary as the model of discipleship. Filipinos should turn their gaze to Mary who became the first of the Lord’s disciples to form the missionary community of disciples which is the Church.

Moreover, Quirino, as cited by Santos (1982), claimed that ‘the Philippines is a *‘Pueblo amante de Maria’* – a people in love with Mary – because of the fervour of the native Marian cult which is certainly evident in the Philippine culture. This is very evident as we can see many parishes, shrines, chapels and places which are named after Mary and proclaim her as their titular patron.’

Santos (1982), in her book entitled “Mary in the Philippines”, presented the different titles of the Blessed Virgin Mary that have grown popular in every part of the country and that have become part of people’s identity and spirituality in those localities. Conforming with Santos, Gorospe and Javellana (1995) stated that Bicol’s identity is ineluctably

involved with the devotion to the Virgin Mary, especially in her title *Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia* (Our Lady of the Bicol Region).

Furthermore, Bacani (2013) claimed that a big support for the faith of the Filipino people are popular devotions and religious practices like devotion to Christ (*Sto. Niño* - Child Jesus, *Jesus Nazareno* - Jesus carrying the cross) and to the Blessed Mother Mary; however, these practices sorely need purification and enrichment through catechetical instruction. They need to become attuned to and oriented in the liturgy, to be moderated in their expression and to be linked to the daily life of believers.

Mactal (2001) cited that Mary has a place in the prayer life of the Filipino Catholics. He mentioned various liturgical and sacramental celebrations related to Marian devotions which were somehow unique in the country. During the Advent season, *Aguinaldo* Masses or *Simbang Gabi* (Dawn Masses) with renewed liturgy that offer immense richness with respect to Mary, the mother of the redeemer are celebrated although Marian devotions during Advent are directed ultimately to Christ. Likewise, Christmas offers a special opportunity for the people to show their veneration for Mary. During the Lenten season, Mary plays a very important role in the popular devotion of the faithful like the Good Friday commemoration that has a deep appeal to Filipinos, especially *The Way of the Cross* and the commemoration of the sufferings of Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows. In addition, Holy Week celebration in the Filipino culture will never be complete without the *Salubong* or the dramatic encounter of Mother Mary with her beloved Son Jesus after His resurrection.

Additionally, Mactal opined that although popular religiosity in the Philippines like *Flores de Mayo* every month of May and *fiestas* in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary such as *La Naval* in Manila are part of the Filipino culture, there remains the challenge for every devotee of Mary to foster a just and humane society. He further noted that Filipino Catholic Christians who profess to be followers and devotees of Mary must live accordingly to their beliefs and that “faith and action must go hand in hand.”

Barcelona and Estepa (2004) mentioned that Filipino Catholics call Mary as *Yna (Ina)*, the

vernacular for “mother”, for such is the way they have been taught to regard her. Marian devotion to Filipinos bears the character of a culture that is “strongly maternal” in orientation.

Based on the given literature and studies about Mary in the Universal Church and in the Philippine Church, the Mother of the Savior apparently has a special place in the Church, most especially in the hearts of the Filipino Catholics in general.

### *1.3. Mary in the Catholic Schools*

Apparently, Catholic schools may also affect the attitudes and practices of the youth towards Mary. Catholic educational institutions have a significant role in religious education which is an “inalienable characteristic of their educational goal” (Congregation for Catholic Education 2009, 15-18). Furthermore, the Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) released guidelines for the reflection and renewal of the religious dimensions of education in the Catholic schools. The Congregation stressed the point that the Catholic school should be like a home; hence, “an awareness of Mary’s presence can be a great help towards making a school ‘a home.’ Mary, Mother and Teacher of the Church, accompanied her Son as he grew in wisdom and grace; from its earliest days, she has accompanied the Church in its mission of salvation.”

Roten (1994), through the International Marian Research Institute of the University of Dayton in Ohio, conducted a Marian study focused on the attitude of the youth towards Mary. The first survey was administered among students from various *Marianists* Catholic schools around the world. Meanwhile, the second and recent survey was conducted among students from the United States’ Catholic higher institutions. Results revealed that sixty percent (60%) relate themselves to Mary in a positive way, claiming that she has place in their lives and that they maintain a personal relation with her. However, an intellectual acquaintance about the person of Mary was lacking and a negative relation to the Church was high; hence, Mary is the “Madonna well-loved but unknown.” With the given permission of the author, the survey questionnaire used in the said study was adapted in this research. The findings of this study are very significant in

making comparisons between the results of the previous research and this current undertaking.

### *1.4. Present Realities among the Filipino Catholic youth*

Seemingly, there is also a need to assess the present realities emanating from the experiences of the Filipino Catholic youth to further understand their attitude and practices towards Mary. Ocampo, Mansukhami, Mangrobang and Juan (2013) found out in their study that spiritual beliefs and practices of Filipino adolescents are not distinct from their religiosity but instead, they draw from their own religion and find ways to make religious beliefs and practices personal and meaningful to them. Social agents such as parents, peers and the school have spiritual influences that offer support to the adolescent participants’ spirituality.

PCP II (1991), as presented by Salibay (2012), recognized the significance of the youth, stating in its Article 50, Number 2 that, “the Church in the Philippines acknowledges that the youth constitute a large and dynamic portion of her laity.”

The CBCP-Episcopal Commission on Youth (2003) commissioned the National Filipino Catholic Youth Survey in 2002 which aimed to gather substantial data concerning the Filipino Catholic Youth. The study which led to a better understanding of these youth enabled the Church to relevantly minister them in schools, parishes and other youth groups. According to the Commission, as stated in the article of Araneta (2003), many young Filipino Catholics either seldom practice their faith or do not practice it at all and most of the young Filipinos are nominal Catholics. For those who practice their faith, they only pray but seldom or never participate in Church activities. Furthermore, according to the survey, many young Filipino Catholics have a “personalist” or “individualist” faith. They are religious but do not see the need to get involved in the Church activities as an expression of faith.

After ten years, another National Filipino Catholic Youth Survey was commissioned by the CBCP-Episcopal Commission on Youth (ECY) and the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (2013). Results showed that majority confirm a high degree of belief on the basic doctrines

of the Catholic Church like Mary was a virgin before, during and after the birth of Jesus Christ with 95% affirmative responses. In terms of worship, it was found that majority of the respondents observe or perform religious activities with companions. Praying the rosary regularly earned the third spot with 60% affirmative responses. Moreover, there were nine (9) Catholic feasts observed by the respondents, four (4) of which are Marian devotions such as Christmas, *Misa de Gallo*, Solemnity of Mary and Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

These findings helped the researcher understand the very nature of the Filipino Catholic youth that might have influenced the participants' attitude and practices towards Mary.

### 1.5. Conceptual Framework

The research aimed to describe the attitude and practices of Filipino Catholic youth towards Mary, the mother of God, and its possible implications to religious education. As shown in Figure 1, attitude and practices towards Mary are greatly influenced by the interconnection of the three major factors like: (1) the Church which has a vital role in teaching the people of God about Mary; (2) the family that becomes the first teacher of the faith, and (3) the school which sustains and strengthens what the Church and the family have already taught about and practiced towards Mary.

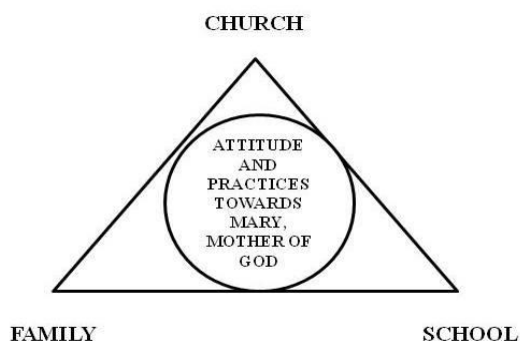


Fig. 1. The figure illustrates the conceptual framework of the research which represents the factors that contribute to the development of attitude and practices of Filipino Catholic youth towards Mary namely, the Church, the family and the school.

### 1.6. Objectives of the study

Generally, the aim of the research is to describe the attitude and practices of Filipino Catholic youth towards Mary, the mother of God. Specifically, the research seeks to answer the following:

- (1) How may the attitude and practices of Filipino Catholic youth towards Mary be described in terms of:
  - (a) Knowing Mary in general;
  - (b) Mary and the Church;
    - (i) Catholic identity and beliefs;
    - (ii) Participation in Marian devotions and prayers;
    - (iii) Perceiving Marian apparitions;
    - (iv) Understanding Marian dogmas and Church teachings about Mary, and
    - (v) Knowing Mary in the Scriptures
  - (c) Mary and the Family;
    - (i) Parents' religion and their influence to Marian devotion, and
    - (ii) Marian devotions and practices in the family;
  - (d) Mary and the School;
    - (i) Teaching about Mary in the school, and
    - (ii) Joining Marian devotion practices in school?
- (2) How may the personal views of Filipino Catholic youth towards Mary be described in terms of her being:
  - (a) An ideal woman;
  - (b) A mother?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Participants

The participants in this research were Filipino Catholic youth from a Catholic university in the Philippines, which is cosmopolitan in character. There were 389 participants (male=181; female=208) with ages ranging from 15-26 years old ( $M=18.33$ ,

$SD=1.73$ ) who were selected using stratified random sampling.

## 2.2. Instrument

The research used a survey questionnaire to determine the attitude and practices of Filipino Catholic youth towards Mary. The instrument was adapted from the Marian Survey: Mary and Youth by Roten (1994) of the International Marian Research Institute of the University of Dayton in Ohio, USA with permission from the author.

## 2.3. Procedures

The study employed the descriptive method of research using a Marian survey questionnaire to describe the attitude and practices of Filipino Catholic youth towards Mary. Participants were asked to answer the survey questionnaire on a voluntary basis. They were assured that all data would be treated with utmost respect and confidentiality. To facilitate analysis and interpretation of the data gathered, the researcher employed descriptive statistics using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 through which the frequency distribution, percentage distribution and computed mean scores of the participants' responses to the Likert items were obtained.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study aimed to describe the attitude and practices of Filipino Catholic youth towards Mary. Results revealed that Mary is still part of the spiritual consciousness of the participants who have all claimed that they have heard about Mary. This affirms the conclusion of Roten (1994) that the youth know something about Mary, that they have a sense of consciousness about her and that many love her and reserve a place for her in their lives.

Furthermore, majority of the participants have known Mary through their mothers, followed by the Church authorities like priests, and the school teachers. As to existential and experiential relationships with Mary, most of the participants answered that Mary has a significant place in their lives and she was regarded as a mother. Such findings confirm the claim of Barcelona and Estepa

(2004) that Filipino Catholics call Mary as *Yna (Ina)* which means "mother" for such was how they have been taught to regard her.

Participants also observed the proper place of Mary in the expression of faith. Mary ranked third after God and Jesus as to existential relationship. Obviously, participants understood that through the intercession of Mary, they could be led to God and her Son Jesus Christ. These findings are in consonance with the teachings of the CCC (1994) that Mary is part of the plan of salvation that God has revealed to humanity in the person of his Incarnate Son Jesus Christ and with Pope John Paul II's belief in the tenet "to Jesus through Mary."

On the other hand, most of the participants claimed to have a strong association with the religion in which they have been raised, thereby, conforming with the findings of Roten (1994) that youth have not separated themselves with religion. In addition, majority of the participants still uphold the religious and moral principles and conduct being taught by the Catholic Church such as the infallibility of the Pope's teachings, attendance to Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation, the Church's stand against the legality of abortion and live-in relationships, and social involvement as a form of responsible stewardship. The results reveal that majority of Filipino Catholic youth conform to a high degree of belief on the basic doctrines and moral teachings of the Catholic Church (CBCP-Episcopal Commission on Youth and the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines, 2013).

Consequently, the participants have shown their Marian devotion practices in the Church with varying degrees of involvement as some claimed to often participate; whereas, others said they sometimes participate while more than 20% claimed to have never participated in such devotional practices. A greater number also expressed that they were not members of any Marian organization. These findings support the claim of the CBCP-Episcopal Commission on Youth (2003) that many young Filipino Catholics either seldom practice their faith or do not practice it at all and that the youth have "personalist" or "individualist" faith; that is, they are religious but do not see the need to get involved in the Church activities as an expression of faith which may probably explain why they do not involve themselves even with Marian organizations.

In terms of Marian prayers, participants have strongly agreed that these have a significant place in their lives. Hail Mary was ranked first, followed by the Rosary and the Angelus in terms of the respondents' preferred Marian prayers. The Rosary, as the most popular Marian devotion, was being prayed by the majority of the participants on an occasional basis, though some mentioned that they prayed it often. Such results conform with CCC (1994, 971) that the Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship, especially in a Marian prayer, such as the Rosary, an epitome of the whole Gospel, which expresses this devotion to the Virgin Mary. The findings also affirm the citation of Mactal (2001) that Mary has a place in the prayer life of the Filipino Catholics. Moreover, they likewise affirm the claim of the National Filipino Catholic Youth Survey (2013) that in terms of worship, majority of the youth regularly observe religious practices including praying of the Rosary.

Apparently, most of the participants agreed when it came to perceptions about Marian apparitions. This may have probably been influenced by various presentations of Mary's titles in the Philippines including the Marian apparitions as presented by Santos (1982). She claimed that the titles of the Blessed Virgin Mary have grown popular in every part of the country and have become part of people's identity and spirituality in those localities.

Meanwhile, results reveal that participants could have been confused with the proper understanding of Marian dogmas, especially those pertaining to the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. Majority of the participants did not know the right explanation of the Immaculate Conception and they mistook it for the divine nature of Jesus. Moreover, a significant number of respondents did not know about the dogma on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary while others have provided the improper explanation. In addition, most of the participants were not familiar with other Marian dogmas such as those pertaining to Mary as the Mother of God and to the Blessed Mother's Perpetual Virginity. There is a need for the enrichment of catechetical instruction on devotions (Bacani, 2013) so that the youth may know these significant dogmas which the Catholic Church has declared to be made known by believers. These results are contrary to the findings of the National

Filipino Catholic Youth Survey (2013) that some Marian feast days like the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception were observed by the youth.

Nonetheless, most of the participants perceived Mary as a person like us. Most of them agreed that Mary is the Mother of God and majority answered that Mary has freely chosen to accept the invitation to become the mother of God. Participants conformed to the Council of Ephesus proclaiming Mary as the "*Theotokos*", meaning, the God-bearer, the Mother of God. Consequently, Mary's perpetual virginity was affirmed by the participants. The results of the study are in consonance with the findings of the National Filipino Catholic Youth Survey (2013) in terms of the positive response of the youth about the Catholic doctrine that Mary was a virgin before, during and after the birth of Jesus Christ.

Participants also agreed on the various perceptions about Mary being taught by the Church such as her being the Mediatrix of All Graces and a co-redeemer as well as her role in leading humans to Jesus Christ, though at some point, they disagreed on the role of Mary in the rejection of evil and communism. Nevertheless, the findings on the whole are in support to the teachings of CCC (1994, 484) which assert that Mary is part of the plan of salvation that God has revealed to humanity in the person of his Incarnate Son Jesus Christ.

As for the participants' personal take on who Mary is, they have strongly agreed on the presence in their spirituality of an affective relation and closeness towards Mary, especially as a caring Mother of the Church who is concerned with the poor. They also affirmed the role of Mary as a source of inspiration, as an epitome of a true servant of the Lord, as the Queen of Heaven, and as an ideal woman and a chaste virgin. These results confirm the conclusion of Roten (1994) that in general, spontaneously formulated representations of Mary are not highly individualized or unique. Usually, they reflect attitudes of affection, admiration, and imitation.

Participants also expressed the importance of Mary in the Catholic Church, which may indicate their agreement with the declaration Pope Paul VI who acclaimed Mary as the Mother of the Church. Apparently, participants recognize the importance of Marian devotions as vessels that transport the

faithful closer to Jesus Christ. Furthermore, most of the participants have agreed that Mary is not an obstacle for Christian unity. The results also conform to the challenge posited by the CBCP (2013) that as a Filipino nation, we should not only grow in our devotion to Mary; but above all, we must also acquire a deeper understanding of Mary's role in the Philippine Church. Likewise, PCP II (1991) highlighted the significant role of Mary as a model of discipleship. Filipinos should turn their gaze to Mary who became the first of the Lord's disciples to form the missionary community of disciples which is the Church. This is the call to follow Jesus Christ by also following his mother Mary in words and deeds.

Moreover, majority of the participants have agreed with statements pertaining to the scriptural basis of Mary both on the factual level and the interpretational level; it could be inferred that participants have been acquainted with these ideas about Mary perhaps due to the claim of most of them that they are reading the bible. Knowing Mary in the context of the scriptures supports the teaching of *Lumen Gentium* (1964, 55) that the sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments, as well as venerable tradition, show the role of the Mother of the Savior in the plan of salvation in an ever clearer light and call our attention to it.

Meanwhile, parents' religion plays an important role in the spiritual formation of children. As for the participants, they have described the association of their parents to the religion in which they have been raised, to wit: majority of the respondents perceived their fathers and mothers to have average to very strong association to religion; however, their mothers have stronger association than their fathers. The results revealed that mothers could have possibly been influential even on the Marian attitude and devotions of the participants. These findings are supported by the claim of Barcelona and Estepa (2004) that Marian devotion to Filipinos bears the character of a culture that is "strongly maternal" in orientation which explains why mothers are mostly the ones who teach Catholic beliefs about Mary to their children. Even CBCP (2013) share the same view as stipulated in its Circular Letter Number 1, Series of 2013 which states that tremendous flow of divine grace through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary is attributed to her "maternal care" for those who

implore her intercession, especially at the height of the unfortunate events that happened in the country. No wonder, mothers have highly influenced religiosity among the youth. This stance is further supported by the National Filipino Catholic Youth Survey (2013) which revealed that parents, especially mothers, have very much influenced the Filipino youth's practice of the Catholic faith. The study of Ocampo, Mansukhani, Mangrobang and Juan (2013) also found that a Filipino Catholic youth's religiosity is influenced by his or her mother and even peers.

Attitude and practices towards Mary could also be influenced by the school. Results indicate that majority of the participants are aware that their school taught about Mary in the last three years mostly as part of their religion course, Marian activities in school and teaching of a specific Marian course. In terms of the participation in Marian devotional practices, more than half of the respondents claimed that they have sometimes participated; whereas, the rest claimed to have often participated. Marian devotions and practices joined in by the participants include praying of the Rosary, attendance to Eucharistic celebrations on Marian feast days, special activities such as special local Marian celebrations like the coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and recitation of other Marian prayers like the novena. These findings underpin the conclusion of Roten (1994) that Mary was not absent from the school. Furthermore, it was found that Marian practices and devotions form part of the participants' religiosity, which could be attributed to the influence of the school, especially in the case of the research locale which is a Catholic school. Findings of the study also affirmed the claim of the National Filipino Catholic Youth Survey (2013) that a Filipino Catholic Youth's religiosity, in terms of his or her religious beliefs (doctrine) and practices (worship), is strongly formed by Private Catholic Schools.

Lastly, personal views of the participants towards Mary might have probably influenced the way they view an ideal woman and their own mother as shown in Table 1. Results show that there is similarity in terms of their views of an ideal woman, their own mother and their perception of Mary. Descriptions which were extremely liked by the participants were: a) humble, b) sincere, c) open-minded, d) comforting, e) warm, f) reliable, g)



friendly, h) gentle, i) strong, and j) patient. These characteristics constitute the respondents' notion of an ideal woman which could have probably been influenced by their view of their own mother and of Mary. These results further prove the conclusion of Roten (1994) that the representation which youths project of the ideal woman corresponds, in large measure, to the images which they have of their mothers and of Mary, and vice versa.

Table 1. Personal Views on Mary in Relationship to an Ideal Woman, Own Mother and the Church's Presentation of Mary

Description	IDEAL WOMAN		OWN MOTHER		MARY AS PRESENTED BY THE CHURCH		PERSONAL VIEW OF MARY		Descriptive Rating
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Bold	<b>2.8</b>	0.81	<b>2.8</b>	0.90	<b>2.7</b>	0.95	<b>2.7</b>	1.05	<b>SL</b>
	<b>3</b>	1	<b>8</b>	8	<b>7</b>	2	<b>5</b>	4	
Timid	<b>2.6</b>	0.84	<b>2.5</b>	0.93	<b>2.7</b>	0.95	<b>2.6</b>	1.04	<b>SL</b>
	<b>7</b>	6	<b>3</b>	5	<b>1</b>	0	<b>9</b>	2	
Proud	<b>3.1</b>	0.83	<b>3.3</b>	0.82	<b>3.1</b>	1.03	<b>3.0</b>	1.10	<b>SL</b>
	<b>9</b>	8	<b>4</b>	6	<b>0</b>	7	<b>8</b>	1	
Humble	<b>3.7</b>	0.50	<b>3.6</b>	0.61	<b>3.7</b>	0.46	<b>3.8</b>	0.49	<b>EL</b>
	<b>5</b>	6	<b>0</b>	2	<b>7</b>	7	<b>1</b>	0	
Sincere	<b>3.8</b>	0.48	<b>3.6</b>	0.57	<b>3.8</b>	0.46	<b>3.8</b>	0.48	<b>EL</b>
	<b>0</b>	4	<b>9</b>	3	<b>0</b>	2	<b>2</b>	5	
Deceitful	<b>2.2</b>	1.05	<b>2.1</b>	0.98	<b>2.0</b>	1.07	<b>2.0</b>	1.06	<b>NL</b>
	<b>8</b>	1	<b>4</b>	7	<b>8</b>	3	<b>0</b>	1	
Judgmental	<b>1.8</b>	0.87	<b>2.1</b>	0.91	<b>1.6</b>	0.86	<b>1.5</b>	0.80	<b>NL</b>
	<b>0</b>	3	<b>6</b>	6	<b>7</b>	1	<b>7</b>	8	
Open-Minded	<b>3.6</b>	0.62	<b>3.4</b>	0.70	<b>3.5</b>	0.74	<b>3.5</b>	0.71	<b>SL</b>
	<b>3</b>	8	<b>3</b>	6	<b>0</b>	1	<b>4</b>	9	
Challenging	<b>3.3</b>	0.74	<b>3.2</b>	0.81	<b>3.0</b>	0.97	<b>2.9</b>	0.99	<b>SL</b>
	<b>3</b>	2	<b>6</b>	4	<b>2</b>	0	<b>8</b>	1	
Comforting	<b>3.7</b>	0.49	<b>3.6</b>	0.58	<b>3.7</b>	0.53	<b>3.7</b>	0.51	<b>EL</b>
	<b>8</b>	3	<b>8</b>	5	<b>5</b>	2	<b>9</b>	3	
Warm	<b>3.6</b>	0.64	<b>3.5</b>	0.72	<b>3.6</b>	0.66	<b>3.5</b>	0.74	<b>EL</b>
	<b>0</b>	1	<b>3</b>	3	<b>3</b>	3	<b>9</b>	2	
Distant	<b>2.2</b>	0.95	<b>2.2</b>	0.98	<b>2.1</b>	1.02	<b>2.0</b>	1.01	<b>NL</b>

	<b>8</b>	2	<b>L</b>	<b>6</b>	7	<b>L</b>	<b>4</b>	9		<b>5</b>	2	
Reliable	<b>3.5</b>	0.69	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.6</b>	0.68	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.6</b>	0.64	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.6</b>	0.66	<b>EL</b>
	<b>8</b>	7		<b>0</b>	3		<b>3</b>	3		<b>8</b>	4	
Inconsistent	<b>2.0</b>	0.91	<b>NT</b>	<b>2.1</b>	0.89	<b>NT</b>	<b>1.8</b>	0.93	<b>NL</b>	<b>1.8</b>	0.91	<b>NL</b>
	<b>0</b>	0	<b>L</b>	<b>0</b>	7	<b>L</b>	<b>6</b>	2		<b>2</b>	8	
Friendly	<b>3.7</b>	0.58	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.7</b>	0.54	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.7</b>	0.51	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.7</b>	0.52	<b>EL</b>
	<b>2</b>	2		<b>2</b>	9		<b>1</b>	3		<b>5</b>	3	
Aggressive	<b>2.3</b>	0.95	<b>NT</b>	<b>2.5</b>	0.99	<b>NT</b>	<b>2.0</b>	1.01	<b>NL</b>	<b>2.0</b>	1.09	<b>NL</b>
	<b>8</b>	8	<b>L</b>	<b>5</b>	3	<b>L</b>	<b>4</b>	3		<b>5</b>	4	
Accommodating	<b>3.3</b>	0.78	<b>SL</b>	<b>3.5</b>	0.71	<b>SL</b>	<b>3.5</b>	0.75	<b>SL</b>	<b>3.5</b>	0.78	<b>SL</b>
	<b>9</b>	3		<b>4</b>	5		<b>0</b>	2		<b>4</b>	4	
Stubborn	<b>1.8</b>	0.87	<b>NT</b>	<b>1.9</b>	0.95	<b>NT</b>	<b>1.6</b>	0.82	<b>NL</b>	<b>1.5</b>	0.80	<b>NL</b>
	<b>4</b>	8	<b>L</b>	<b>8</b>	0	<b>L</b>	<b>7</b>	5		<b>9</b>	9	
Gentle	<b>3.6</b>	0.62	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.5</b>	0.66	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.6</b>	0.54	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.7</b>	0.55	<b>EL</b>
	<b>4</b>	0		<b>7</b>	5		<b>9</b>	4		<b>5</b>	5	
Stern	<b>2.3</b>	0.90	<b>NT</b>	<b>2.3</b>	0.92	<b>NT</b>	<b>2.2</b>	0.94	<b>NL</b>	<b>2.2</b>	1.04	<b>NL</b>
	<b>6</b>	8	<b>L</b>	<b>8</b>	7	<b>L</b>	<b>2</b>	9		<b>2</b>	7	
Strong	<b>3.5</b>	0.72	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.6</b>	0.60	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.7</b>	0.55	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.7</b>	0.55	<b>EL</b>
	<b>7</b>	4		<b>9</b>	9		<b>1</b>	3		<b>4</b>	5	
Weak	<b>1.9</b>	0.78	<b>NT</b>	<b>1.9</b>	0.85	<b>NT</b>	<b>1.8</b>	0.80	<b>NL</b>	<b>1.7</b>	0.83	<b>NL</b>
	<b>3</b>	2	<b>L</b>	<b>1</b>	1	<b>L</b>	<b>0</b>	0		<b>4</b>	1	
Patient	<b>3.7</b>	0.59	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.5</b>	0.73	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.7</b>	0.53	<b>EL</b>	<b>3.8</b>	0.49	<b>EL</b>
	<b>1</b>	5		<b>1</b>	4		<b>4</b>	3		<b>1</b>	0	
Demanding	<b>1.8</b>	0.89	<b>NT</b>	<b>2.2</b>	0.96	<b>NT</b>	<b>1.8</b>	0.94	<b>NL</b>	<b>1.6</b>	0.91	<b>NL</b>
	<b>9</b>	8	<b>L</b>	<b>8</b>	7	<b>L</b>	<b>0</b>	2		<b>8</b>	7	

Note: EL- Extremely likely SL-Somewhat likely  
 NTL- Not too likely NLA- Not likely at all

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the foregoing results of the study, the participants are spiritually conscious about Mary as evidenced by their attitude and practices towards her. Some problems were however encountered particularly on the proper understanding of Marian doctrines and on full participation in Marian devotions. The participants affirmed their love for Mary in varying degrees. The Church, the family and the school have significantly influenced the attitude and practices of the participants towards Mary whom the respondents perceive to be a caring mother for all of God's children and regard as a model of an ideal woman. Though it can be

concluded that the youth recognize Mary as a significant person in their lives, it is imperative that the Church, the family and the school take measures in enhancing religious education to strengthen the youth's conviction since there are a lot of negative influences that may affect their doctrinal, moral and spiritual foundation, especially given the plight brought about by heightened secularism and commercialism in the present age

The researcher proposes the following recommendations and implications to religious education in the Philippines:

The Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines, especially in the parish level, shall aggressively promote among the youth the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in various ways by strengthening religious education programs and catechesis through rigid promotion and dissemination of information on Marian devotions and practices in the form of lively and creative activities such as living Rosary, Marian exhibits, Marian talks, Marian quiz bees, Marian pilgrimages, Marian processions and the like.

The Roman Catholic Church in the parish level shall strengthen the religious education and catechetical programs to address the misunderstanding of children and the youth on matters of Marian dogma and doctrines using modern technology and social media such as through the creation of fan pages about Mary and the production of videos portraying the life of Mary among others.

Parents shall continue taking part in moulding the religious and spiritual formation of their children, especially through living out their teachings about Mary by means of being role models to their children; thereby, establishing in their families a culture of praying the rosary together, attending Mass on Sundays and participating in other Marian religious activities in the parish.

Catholic schools in the Philippines, being the second home of the Filipino youth, shall foster religious education programs, projects and activities that will further develop and strengthen the Marian devotion of students through pertinent activities such as Marian exhibits, Marian symposia, Marian quiz bees, Marian games, Marian song festivals, Marian community outreach programs, praying of the Rosary per office and classroom, living Rosary

and celebration of Masses on Marian feast days. The school shall become aggressive in the promotion and dissemination of such activities to capture students' full participation by producing promotional materials such as pamphlets, brochures, books and mobile applications or games.

Catholic schools shall continue to include Marian teachings in the religious education and Theology courses being offered to students, especially placing emphasis on proper and sufficient explanation of the Marian doctrines and virtues so as to address the misunderstanding of the students regarding the role of Mary in the salvation history and in the Church.

Future research initiatives can be conducted on matters relating to the attitude and practices of the youth towards Mary, a good example of which would be the conduct of an inferential statistical analysis on factors that influence the youth's beliefs about Mary such as correlation of Marian devotion to age, gender, economic status and school attended. Future research initiatives using the same survey tool on a larger scale such as a countrywide study or even diocesan-wide study can also be done.

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