



3. Lived Roman Catholicism in Lima

*Catalina Romero**
*Rolando Pérez**
*Veronique Lecaros**

Abstracts

Lima is a city where religions flourish in a context of religious transformation. The Authors approached lived Catholicism from a qualitative perspective considering urban diversity and different lifestyles. Differences in lived religion were found in three local domains of everyday life: 1) the family, which paves the way for school and sacred spaces; 2) the parish, where individuals seek to live their religion; 3) civil society, including the workplace and social organisations.

Keywords: lived [Roman] Catholicism, family, church, society

Lima es una ciudad donde las religiones florecen en un contexto de transformación religiosa. Los Autores estudian el catolicismo vivido desde una perspectiva cualitativa, considerando la diversidad urbana y distintos estilos de vida. Encontramos diferencias en la religión vivida en tres espacios locales: 1) la familia, que lleva a la escuela y a lugares sagrados; 2) la parroquia, como institución donde individuos buscan vivir su religión; 3) la sociedad civil, incluyendo organizaciones sociales y de trabajo.

Palabras claves: catolicismo vivido, familia, iglesia y sociedad

Lima è una città in cui le religioni prosperano in un contesto di trasformazione religiosa. Gli Autori studiano da una prospettiva qualitativa la pratica del cattolicesimo, considerando la diversità urbana e i diversi stili di vita. Si riscontrano differenze nella religione vissuta in tre differenti spazi quotidiani di vita: 1) la famiglia, che introduce alla scuola e ai luoghi sacri; 2) la parrocchia, come istituzione in cui gli individui cercano di vivere la loro religione; 3) la società civile, che include le organizzazioni sociali e sindacali.

Parole chiave: cattolicesimo vissuto, famiglia, chiesa, società

* Pontificia universidad católica del Perú; e-mail: jromero@pucp.edu.pe; rperez@pucp.edu; vgauthier@pucp.pe.



Preamble

Lima is the Capital city of Peru overlooking the Pacific Ocean, with more than ten million inhabitants, most of them born outside Lima, the offspring of either first generation or recent internal migrants, and a small number of middle-class wanderers attracted by the apparent buoyancy of the country. This population lives in a sort of cultural kaleidoscope, analogous to any other modern cosmopolitan city, but different at the same time.

Religion is one of the constitutive dimensions of Lima's diversity (Romero 2016). The capital city of Peru has changed character over the last few decades: from being a Catholic¹ city known for its traditional baroque-style churches and the Catholic faith of its people, it has become a multi-religious area with Christian churches of different origins emerging everywhere. People with new creeds and traditions, all of them seeking to settle down and flourish, are well received in the former City of the Kings.

1. Moving toward religious diversity

Lima represents one-third of the Peruvian population, and the Catholic Church has four territorial jurisdictions (dioceses) in the metropolis. Three of them were created in 1996 following the city's rapid urbanisation around the old and modern residential areas of Lima: Carabayllo to the North, Chosica to the East, Lurín to the South, and Lima, the original archdiocese at the centre.

Catholicism played a key role from the 1950's on, during the initial process phase of urban growth that led to the original way in which urbanisation took place in Latin America: precarious neighbourhoods, like *favelas* in Brazil or *barriadas* in Lima, built by inland migrants looking for a job and a better life. The initial invasion of public and wasteland gave way to an organised distribution of land for future

¹ In the article the adjective "Roman" will be omitted for the sake of brevity.



homes, and since this imagined future included a place for a Catholic church, a police station, and a municipality, substantial allotments were assigned to each in a central location.

Foreign missionaries (i.e., priests and nuns) following the *Fidei Donum* convocation of Popes Pious XII and John XXIII arrived in Lima and other Latin American cities were invited by the new settlers to participate in building the new urban territories (Degregori, Blondet, Lynch, 1986) and share the same living conditions as their parishioners, starting from scratch. Working together as good neighbours, they built houses, organised themselves, and participated in the battles for public services, public transportation, electricity and water, schools, hospitals, and so on. Catholics were strengthened by their faith and church in their commitment to building a better life for the families and neighbours they served. At the same time, important events were taking place in Catholicism. The Second Vatican Council, the Medellín and Puebla meetings of the Latin American Conference of Bishops, and the strong commitment of the Peruvian church² reinforced their historical experience of living religion.

It was in this period that the option for the poor – both as a theological statement supported in the Gospel and as the praxis of Latin American Catholics, laypeople, clergy, and bishops – linked religion and spirituality as a way of life, based on involvement, solidarity, and friendship with others in need.

It was also a time for ecumenism, and many Protestant pastors and communities shared this experience with the Catholic majority in an active civil society. As Dafne Sabanes asserts,

Protestants and Catholics also worked together in defence of human rights in the church committee of Paraguay, the peace and justice service of Uruguay, and in the Sao Paulo archdiocese in Brazil. In Central America, the World Church Council human rights office carried out important work in protesting against violations of human rights ... The dialogue between Catholic and Protestant liberation theologians was intense during these years as an international movement of progressive theologians began to take shape (Sabanés, 2004: 21).

² Until 1980, the Catholic Church was the Peruvian Church, recognised by the State under a Patronage agreement with the Holy See. From 1980, a process of separation began with small changes in the former relationship, but important in terms of autonomy for the Catholic Church and for freedom of religion.



Today, in the twenty-first century, Lima is a mega city with challenges derived from new problems related to the organisation of housing, mobility, and services for a vast citizenry, among which a growing minority of Christian churches has settled. It is in this new urban and religious context that we carry out research on lived religion³, taking Catholicism as our central focus, considering former urban and religious research, both qualitative and quantitative.

In this article on lived Catholicism in Lima, we describe and analyse how religious beliefs are linked to everyday life in the family and neighbourhood (including local sacred spaces like churches, chapels, and places of devotion), examine the Church as an institution represented in the parish, parish priests and pastoral agents, and civil society.

The transformation of the religious domain, documented through census and survey data, reveals a slow but definitive growth of other religions in Peru and in Lima. According to data provided by the 2007 census, 81.3% of the Peruvian population claimed being Catholic, 12.5% Christian and Evangelical. The data of a recent survey, the *World Values Survey* (2012) tell us that the figures are now 73.4% Catholics, 10.8% Protestants and Pentecostals, 4.6% belonging to other religions, and 10.1% not belonging to any denomination. As Daniel Levine (2009) points out, the contemporary religious face is characterized by pluralism instead of monopoly, a plurality of voices. He describes the characteristics of this new religious face in the following terms:

The contrast with the traditional face of religion reflects a net of related changes. Where there was monopoly, there is now pluralism; where a limited number of spaces were once officially reserved for religious practice (with a

³ This research is part of a larger project, under the direction of Gustavo Morello from Boston College, and has been possible thanks to the financial support of the John Templeton Foundation. It was carried out in Lima-Peru, Cordoba-Argentina, and Montevideo-Uruguay, with Catalina Romero from the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, as principal investigator (PI) in Lima, Hugo Rabbia, from the Catholic University of Córdoba, PI in Córdoba, Argentina, and Néstor Dacosta from the Catholic University of Uruguay, PI in Montevideo,. Rolando Pérez and Veronique Lecaros acted as associate researchers in the project in Lima, and Fiorella Arteta and ClisYépez were involved in different stages of the project, as well as Elizabeth Vallejos, who provided administrative support.



limited number of authorized practitioners), there is now a rich profusion of churches, chapels, and mass media programming, not to mention campaigns and crusades that carry the message to hitherto 'profane' spaces... Instead of a limited number of voices 'authorized' to speak in the name of religion, there is now a plurality of voices, not only from among distinct denominations, but within churches as well (Levine, 2009: 406).

Internal pluralism within religious confessions or denominations is not necessarily new. What is new is that pluralism within and among religions is affecting the political life and other public processes related to Latin American democratic transitions and the re-classification of civil society (Romero, 2009).

In the latest edition of the *World Values Survey*, the Peruvian team added two questions on 'the basic meaning of religion,' providing two alternative answers for each one: 'to follow norms and ceremonies' or 'to do good to other people,' and 'to make sense of life after death' or 'to make sense to life in this world'. The answers in Peru for 'to follow norms and ceremonies' scored 16.9%, as against 78.7% for 'to do good to other people'. The next alternative, 'to make sense of life after death' was chosen by 20% of the people interviewed, and 'to make sense of life in this world' by 75%.

Quantitative data analysis provides important signs and clues of changes in beliefs, values, and practices in general. Qualitative research looks for reasons which help comprehend why people do what they do, how they understand it, and how they link God and religion to other dimensions of their lives.

We shall focus on how Catholics in Lima live and experience the presence of God and religion in their lives. We shall use qualitative data from our research in Lima on the transformation lived religion in urban areas, following the perspective of a sociology of lived religion (Ammerman, 2014; Orsi, 1997; Mc Guire, 2008), considering other Authors (Ferrarotti, 1993; Cipriani, Losito, 2006; Levine, 2012; Wood, 2014)⁴.

Our methodology for the general project is guided by the theoretical sampling perspective, looking for the different ways in which people

⁴ Ammerman provided special guidance and advice, along with other colleagues. We would like to mention Peter Berger, Daniel H. Levine, José Casanova, Roberto Cipriani, Renée de La Torre, Silvia Fernández, Gisela Cánepa, Iziar Basterrechea and Verónica Roldán, among others, who contributed with their knowledge and advice to the general project.



live their religion not only inside church walls but how they integrate beliefs and values in different situations in everyday life.

From the general number of cases including Evangelicals and Pentecostals, those who practice other religions, non-believers or the indifferent, we have selected forty-five Catholics, to account for internal diversity within Catholicism, divided into nine groups of five persons each to represent different types of communities and spiritualities, considering those who attend parish services and participate in parish life (including communities that emerge in the parish), and those who belong to Catholic movements created for lay people or by religious orders for lay people. We have chosen four main personal stories from diverse social milieus as types that represent different forms of living religion. The stories are those of two men and two women who embody different ways of living their faith among Catholics in Lima: Roberto, Ruby, Isabel, and Pancho.

Roberto is a middle-aged man who lives in one of the new districts undergoing urbanisation in the southern area of Lima. He is a social leader in his neighbourhood and knows the parish priest because he works with him to improve essential urban services such as water, electricity, transportation, and security in their area. He is not a church person, but he is Catholic, believes in God, and attends services on special occasions and for particular celebrations.

Ruby is a middle-aged woman born into a very poor family in a small town in the north of Peru. She did not finish school and started working in her teens. Her religious devotion helps her to face severe problems in her life. She currently lives with her husband in his family's home, and is a housewife.

Isabel is a middle-aged woman. She was involved in church activities in a small chapel that provides religious services to a new middle-class housing project. She is an engineer and works monitoring industrial and agricultural water management.

Pancho is a lawyer in his late fifties. He is divorced and therefore he is not involved in parish life. He is a loyal devotee of St. Jude Thaddeus and is a Mason.



2. Exploring lived religion in families, church, and civil society

It is well known that families are places «entral to social life and to the development of local culture where future practices are built on those previously established and safeguard participants from external demands» (Fine, 2010: 366).

According to 71.33% of the people surveyed⁵, families are the first reference for religious formation. However, the second most influential institution were considered the schools and parishes.

But how is religion transmitted by families?

What do we know about family religious culture at this moment of religious transformation?

How do they relate to other local and intermediate religious groups and places to express their ideas, concerns, and questions about how the religious context is changing?

Most of all, how do they live religion today?

Doing research in lived religion aims at understanding how people live religion in three local spheres: 1) the family, which will extend to the neighbourhood and the school as important contexts that appear in their stories;

2) the church, starting from the local parish and religious communities of reference as concrete meeting places for individuals and families, and permitting contact with the religious institution that identifies them as Catholic;

3) civil society, which involves other regular commitments in everyday life, such as work, involvement in civic and political associations and cultural groups, and leisure activities.

2.1. Lived religion in families, neighbourhoods, and schools

Roberto lives in Villa María del Triunfo, a district created in the 1960's after a group of families occupied public land and started a pre-

⁵ Catalina Romero PI, 2006 survey on Catholic society in Peru. Institute for Public Opinion, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. Financed by Instituto Bartolomé de Las Casas, Rímac, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.



carious human settlement. He talks about his father with admiration as a man of values, and remembers him for always being there for him and his siblings.

We always had something to eat; he never left us to our own devices⁶. And he was an honest man; he never had problems with the law or with his neighbours, never. He was a good father, and did not abandon us.

However, Roberto's life was not easy. He was involved in a local youth gang, where he consumed drugs and alcohol and got involved in fights and other acts of violence,

I was not only a member of the group. I was the leader. And there was a moment when they all would follow me. Then, I did not accept abuse, and at critical moments I had the reaction that we shouldn't rob, and we should not be excessively violent.

He now thinks that he had values that helped him to draw a line for himself and for the group. Later, he recalls how some of them were able to abandon illegality, while others who were not able that were caught and imprisoned. But they had help from a group of neighbours who understood their risk-laden situation and created a social club for the young people there.

Forty years later, we invited him to participate in this project as a respected leader in his neighbourhood. The most important element of Roberto's childhood was neither his nuclear family life nor the school he attended, where he was not a good student: it was the neighbourhood. It was there that he grew up and displayed his bent for leadership and met friends, both men and women, who helped him to put his life back on track to become the person he is now.

He thinks that a turning point in his life was when his girlfriend asked him to join her on a journey to visit Our Lord of Muruhuay, whose Sanctuary is three hours east of Lima. He had never heard of Him, but he thought she wanted to touch something spiritual in him. It was very hard for Roberto to accept that she wanted to end the relationship they had. He remembers that a few weeks later he felt the need to go back to visit Our Lord of Muruhuay, this time by himself, and only

⁶ In urban areas of Perú, 28% of families are in the care of a single female parent.



after that visit was it possible for him to look forward to a different way of life.

Roberto recalls how difficult it was to come out from the complicated arrangement he had built in his youth:

Sometimes it's not that easy to come out of that world just like that, from one moment to the next, without any professional help, you know? It is about constantly going and talking with God, right? [It's about] asking Him to help you (sic).

Later, when he started dating an Evangelical Christian friend, he was able to start changing his life with her help. Now they are married and have children and he tells us :

I think that things don't happen just by chance. It is God who, one way or another, like when we were children, extends His hand to you, and it doesn't matter whether you hold it or not: one has to take the opportunity and never let it go.

His wife is an active Christian at Agua Viva, but she respects his faith, while her cousin, who is a pastor at another Christian Church (World Mission Movement, Wmm) tries to convert him.

He tells me to put myself in the hands of God, that in any moment something might happen to me and I will go to hell. And I answer: No. God knows that I still have so many things to do and He is not going to take me; don't worry. Then, I am always in contact with God, asking him to help me to go forward, because I get very sensitive when I see little kids in the street; I get angry and worried, and I ask, 'Why is this happening? How much longer will this last?'

Since he married an Evangelical Christian, he describes himself more often as Catholic, and is trying to get to know his religion better. Their children join them at their religious services and church activities, and ask them questions about how to interpret the Bible and how to understand the rituals of both churches. Their children have not been baptised because they want them to be free to choose their religion and Church as adults.

When we move to analyse lived religion at church and in society, we find that his relationship with the local parish in Villa María del Triunfo is not only a personal issue, but that it also relates to private and



public issues in his life. When asked where he made his religious acquaintance, he says,

I have attended two Catholic retreats; they were not spiritual, but [designed] for the laity. They offered an analysis of the social reality. I have been there. And since then I am a good friend of the pastor of my wife's church. Now he talks to me though he is not trying to convert me. But the best relationship [I have] is with father Juan, who invited me to the retreat. When I went to the retreat, I had not brought a Bible with me, which was required. Then I couldn't follow the readings, but I started to talk to God, and ask Him to help my family and me. [...] What happens is that I am not a member of the parish: I only participate in special celebrations, or when a relative goes, like for Christmas or a funeral. But I pray not only to ask God to give me something, but also for guidance to do the right things. And I am a friend of the priest; he invites me to courses, like the one for leaders in 'Bartolo'⁷.

In society, we find Roberto to be a well-known person: a leader in his district and in the southern suburbs of Lima. He is proud of what he is doing to improve the urban condition of the district. In his own words

I am a neighbourhood leader, but I am also a politician, and we have plans to participate in the next elections. Our politics are good; we work from the base to grow from there upwards. Of course, we are considering our beliefs in this work. Without ethic, you don't have values.

If, in his original nuclear family, he did not participate in church services and sacraments, in his adult nuclear family he lives religion trying to defend his individual autonomy and his children's autonomy in the religious field. This leads him to live religion in his nuclear and extended family, in civil society and in the church as social spaces in which to live religion.

Moving to a second experience of lived religion, centred in the family and the home, we have Ruby, a Catholic housewife who believes in the Virgin of the Nativity and in Saint Rose of Lima, because she was told that she was unable to have children and when she prayed to both,

⁷ Bartolo is the short name people use to refer to the Bartolomé de Las Casas Institute, in Rímac. He mentions the Hugo Echegaray School for Leaders, which provides general education courses lasting two weeks to leaders coming from all over the country sent by their local parishes.



they helped her. Now she has children the hospital was wrong, she says, meaning that she knows it was not a miracle.

But I had already gone to pray to the Virgin and to Saint Rose, and I told them that I wanted to have a baby and the Virgin granted me my wish, and therefore I have faith in her.

Thus, she starts living religion in her family. As Manuel Marzal says:

Many popular Catholics live in the wonderful world of the miracle. For the popular Catholic a miracle transcends the real chances of the devotee. The low level of education they receive, the poor conditions in which the health services operate, and structural poverty in Latin America does not permit poor people to respond to unexpected situations (Marzal, 2002: 375).

It is not that miracles transcend natural laws and scientific possibilities.

It is the relationship established between the devotee and the Saint, the Virgin or Christ that produce the miracle. Because they supported their faith and hope, this helped them insist and achieve what they aimed at. And this relationship is what they are grateful for, therefore they fulfil their promise to visit their shrines, to pray or to organize a Novena as Ruby did.

Devotion to the Virgin Mary under different names has been part of her life since she was a child. She remembers when she saw the Virgin of Mercy crying in a procession. She was ten years old then, and she felt that «the Virgin was telling me that my life was going to be tears and sadness, because my life has always been like that. I've always had many problems». She encountered problems of abuse and mistreatment when she was sent to work as a maid when she was thirteen years old⁸.

She lives religion at home

I teach my children to believe in God always because He helps us in one way or another. To me, it is very important that they believe in God. I don't want them to believe in other things that will take them down a bad path. The

⁸ She was sent to work by her family when she was 13 years old, and suffered abuse and mistreatment from the family that employed her as a maid.



only thing I tell them is to pray to God, to ask Him [for] everything, and that He will help them. That is the only thing I tell them.

She also lives religion in church. Ruby explains that going to church is also very important to her, «because you go there to talk to God», and she talks to the Lord on the Cross. She attends Mass, listens to the priest's sermon, and then she can teach all that to her children. Her lived religion also extends to the neighbourhood, because she promised the Virgin of the Nativity that she would organise a Novena for her every year, to thank her for having borne children. For 15 years now, she has invited her neighbours to participate for one week, and one of them is asked to be a steward for the Virgin and to oversee organising the prayer, the food, and everything. Now there are different families involved in the Novena, taking turns to receive the Virgin in their homes and sharing food with each other.

When her husband cannot find work, she prays to the Virgin of the Nativity.

Please, sometimes we haven't got money, as sometimes my husband has no work. Please help him, I pray, and she will listen to me, and my husband finds a job.

Ruby communicates directly with the other world.

I don't know if this is a personal belief, but since my husband's uncle died I started asking him. I have a picture of him and I trust him, because when my husband hasn't got a job I also ask him, and he listens to me and my husband gets a job.

She asks him for help because he is already close to God.

As a housewife, Ruby considered it very important to be respected by her husband, so she decided to leave him once, with her mother's consent, because she felt he did not respect her. She did not want to talk about this, because now they are back together. On that occasion, she went to church to talk to the Lord on the Cross, because she lived alone in Lima.

As a mother, she says that even though she did not complete her education, she tells her children that they must go on and be someone in life. She believes they «must build their future in this life», and she always helps them to do their homework and study. Her eldest son «has



very good marks at school and he is already going to secondary school». Everyone asks her how she manages to do this if she herself was unable to obtain an education, but she answers that she can make them read and review their notes to learn more.

Like Roberto, Ruby has experienced living near relatives with different religious beliefs. She mentions her brother-in-law, who tells her that she should only believe in God, and when she brings the image of the Virgin home, he leaves the house and does not join the Novena because he says, «it's only a plaster image», and his behaviour confuses her. What she likes most is to help people when they are in need: that connects her to God, and she does it because she has learned to do that, even when she does not have to,

because there are people who have and don't give; I haven't much, but I give all I have. And God is watching me, and He is sending me blessings, because I like to share with all those who are also in need.

Loving thy neighbour and love of God appear to be related in her daily life. This is what Ammerman refers to as the Golden rule in religion: to do good to those in need and this is what Ruby does even when she does not have to.

Roberto and Ruby have not an easy life. Roberto had a direct and active experience with urban violence as member of a social tribe in his youth, but he learned the importance of leadership. His contact with religion was occasional as a child, but he is more actively searching for the meaning of faith today, due to the permanent conversation he has established with his wife. He is interested in knowing more about the Gospel and the Bible, always in relation to the social reality, and this connection is what he finds in the Catholic Church.

Ruby was abused and mistreated at a very young age, but she was able move forward with the help of her family, God, the Virgin, and the Saints. Her experience of loneliness and social abandonment contrasts with her energy and determination to advance in life and her hope for her children's future.

There are some important things to say about how these two people live religion in the church and society. Roberto works very closely with the parish in his district. He invites the priest to public meetings, where the priest can learn about local problems and listen to different alternate solutions that neighbours propose to solve them. This way Roberto con-



tributes to a better relationship between the parish and the residents based on awareness of their everyday problems. He has incorporated the parish as a neighbourhood organisation, legitimating it as a civil institution. On the other hand, he is engaged in interreligious dialogue through his family's relations with other faiths. He crosses the borders between church and society, and he works to link religion to everyday life.

Ruby, as an anonymous parishioner, goes to Mass and listens to the priest's sermon. The church as a sacred space is very important for her. It is a place for prayer, to talk to God, and for meditation. For her it may be a private place to enjoy a moment of confidence. Nevertheless, she lives religion in her family interacting with her children and relatives, and in her neighbourhood, where she organises an annual Novena for the Virgin of the Nativity. She has attenuated the borders between her home and her neighbourhood (Ammerman, 2014) by connecting her private faith, to that of her neighbours, all participating in the annual public procession she organises.

2.2. Lived religion in the church and in civil society

The next two stories are those of Isabel and Pancho, two professionals with different degrees of commitment to the Catholic Church. They tell us how they live religion in church, and in society in a middle-class social context, as well as family references.

Isabel is an adult woman, a geographer-engineer. According to her, she comes from a Catholic home where her dad and mom not necessarily went to church.

Well, we didn't go to church often, and the parish church was across the street.

However, her parents were the ones who opened the doors for Isabel and for one of her brothers so that they got in contact with a religious



pastoral group⁹ that involved them in a process of religious education, soon becoming members of the group, as catechists, and as pastoral agents, and her father acted as an example to her.

Continuing with the question on how she lived religion with her family, she refers to values:

The issue of honesty is an example from my family, and the issue of solidarity comes from my family, as well. Every year, in December, they would knock on the door and bring chickens, baby goats, and rabbits for him. And he would come home and ask, 'who brought all these?' and then he would take back every piece to the student who did that. And that has been very important to me. I remember it... I remember.

And she adds,

When we lived under the curfew¹⁰ when I was a child, in the 1990's, my parents used to take my grandparents to the bus station, and when they found people still there, they invited them to come home, because they couldn't stay there or in the street during the curfew. I remember that because I was very impressed by it. And now I argue with my mother for her frugality. We have lived, six persons, on the salary of a teacher, but now we are doing well; why is she so concerned with not spending money? Because: 'God wants those who receive more to share more'.

How does Isabel live religion in the church? By coming close to people and communicating with them. Since she and her group started working in a precarious chapel and aimed at having a church built, they had the opportunity to receive different priests who work with them. One of the priests was very enthusiastic and accepted her proposal to express more joy, to use more music and to perform the liturgy better. Isabel and some of her neighbours created a group called the 'Pilgrims of San Borja' and they organised activities for the neighbours: They created a choir under Isabel's direction, a 'pilgrim rosary', inviting the nearby residents to unite them in different buildings, and a

⁹ Pastoral work means a call to all Christians to announce Jesus Christ, to help Christian communities to grow in faith and actions, and to promote the values of the Gospel in everyday life.

¹⁰ Isabel refers to the early 1990's, when the Shining Path was active in the city of Lima and curfew was frequent at nighttime.



group called the 'pilgrim Virgin', that got involved in local problems of environmental pollution.

After a parish was established and the church institutionalised all services, Isabel and the pastoral group which had built a community together, started another pilgrimage around their neighbourhood looking for a parish that would accept them to live religion in the church. Isabel has been accepted at the choir of a nearby parish, and she lives religion there. And she proposes taking processions onto the street, to recite the rosary in the park, «because that attracts people and they will come».

Isabel is happy with Pope Francis, because he brings up issues that the church had not been willing to discuss before, like wealth and bogus poverty within the church. For her this is an important and sensitive topic after so many years celebrating Mass in a hut made of cane. It may be a problem for some traditionalists, but «we need a faith that doesn't close, but, rather opens up to others».

They need an outgoing church. Isabel considers herself a person that has faith in God.

He exists because He moves me to do things that make me happy and that may make others happy. I am a believer because I have had the opportunity to develop my spiritual life, and that concentrates on what the Lord is in my life: what God is in my life.

For Isabel, to live religion in society is to do her job. She is an environmental engineer, and her career is where she develops her individuality. Living religion in her job means to have God with her always, and to try to see how she develops as a human person in her professional career. For Isabel,

Being honest, minimising conflicts at work, faith doesn't mean standing on a chair and becoming a prophet. No. It means using humble language, [both] reflective and quick to respond even with statements that will be different from those of others.

At her job, she can deal with environmental problems, like overseeing industrial and domestic water.

What I don't like is that my spirituality at the end is often reduced to honesty, because I live under pressure. But I remember my family, where I learned honesty and solidarity.



Life trajectories relate religion to different challenges in personal stories. Coming from a Catholic family not related to parish life, Isabel had the opportunity to do so when they moved to a new housing development and started building a religious community.

For Isabel and her neighbours, it was also an invitation to live religion as individuals, creating, in the process, a community to live religion: to learn more about how God is present in their lives, explore other forms by which to express their faith, through music, theatre and cultural events and to relate faith to everyday social problems. This experience was possible while the local church depended on the neighbours' commitment to religious agency. The church contributed with them by sending pastoral agents – clergy and laypeople from other parishes – to organise the celebration of Mass, the preparation for other sacraments, and other initiatives related to lived religion in the neighbourhood. This situation changed once the parish became established. As Isabel narrates, her workplace has now become the centre where she can live her religion.

Pancho is the fourth of the participants that represent different approaches to lived religion. He is a middle-aged Catholic lawyer. He is associated with three different communities that influence his everyday life, and he makes them interact in a 'coherent' way. When he was a boy, he accompanied his mother to the church of Saint Francis in downtown Lima to visit St. Jude Thaddeus. His mother had promised the Saint that she would go once a year to take part in the saint's procession, and Pancho, as a child, joined her every year. When she emigrated to the United States, she left him the task of fulfilling her promise, and so he became a member of the Fraternity and goes at least once a month, on Thursdays, to greet St. Jude, and once a year to the procession.

Pancho acclaims having a very intimate relationship with St. Jude. He prays to him every day in what he calls The Trilogy: The Lord's Prayer, a Hail Mary, and a Glory before leaving home and every time he feels inspired to do so. He prays at home, first to God, and then to St. Jude, and he does the same when he visits the big church of St. Francis, where the statue of Jude is. He enters the church, kneels facing the altar where God is and prays and recites the Trinitarian formula three times, and then he turns to the right, where 'old Jude' is, and greets him



in the same way. He talks to Jude, asks him to prevent him from being anxious, he asks him to give him peace, and help him be calm. He asks him to guide him and illuminate him with ideas. And St. Jude helps him, a man who lives with great uncertainty, since he is a lawyer and his job depends on the cases he can solve and on the clients who bring their problems to him. He relates to Jude as he does with a friend.

Pancho, says that he goes to Mass every Sunday at churches near his home, but he is not involved in parish life because he is divorced, and prefers not to be censored or rejected by the parish priest or the community.

He also explains that he repeats the formula and the sign of the cross three times, because it is a symbolic number of Freemasonry.

How does he juggle his association with the freemasons, his Catholicism, and his devotion to St. Jude? He says that in Peru, Masonry is Roman Catholic.

For instance, Masonry was the first place where I practiced virtues. Why? Because when you go 'to work' – as we call it, for instance, when we talk about ethics or justice – we start talking about virtues. Then we talk about things that are not present in religion.

Nevertheless, he always associated them with religion. For Pancho, Catholicism and Freemasonry are complementary, and ethical issues and concerns are closer to his experience with Masonry than with the church.

It is in his friendship with St. Jude that he lives religion. His image is in his home, and he starts the day by praying to God and to Jude to obtain their help, good ideas, peace, work and he finishes the day by praying to thank first God and then St. Jude for what he got that day. He asks St. Jude:

Help me to be a better person and to live in this life the best I can get. And if he can help me to think, I ask him to illuminate me to solve my problems and other people's problems'.

This because he has to assist his family and friends in the Fraternity of St. Jude who are in need as well as his individual employers, since he is a lawyer.



His lived religion combines an active involvement in popular religiosity in the Fraternity of Saint Jude with a timid participation in parish rituals, and his personal free membership of the Masonry.

3. Conclusions

In a context of religious transformation, where religious diversity is already present, and there is a growing minority of Christian churches – with Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal movements – the perspective of lived religion displays a variety of situations where individuals are keeping traditions on one side, and on the other, innovating their religious practices that are not limited to the church space and performance.

Roberto lives religion in his neighbourhood, as a local leader with a public position in the municipal administration, where he tries to help his neighbours to have a better life. He lives religion in the Church with great autonomy participating in special religious activities, and having a friendly relationship with the parish priest since he is learning about his self-declared Catholic identity. At home, he lives faith as an interreligious experience with his family. He talks about God, and about Our Lord of Muruhuay with his wife who is an active Christian in an Evangelical church, and they respect each other's beliefs, share values and actions.

Ruby lives religion at home with her family and takes her religion to the neighbourhood. She has experienced a miracle. As Marzal says:

Most popular Catholics live in the wonderful world of the miracle. For the popular Catholic a miracle transcends the real chances of the devotee, very limited because they are not educated, experience health services that work in very bad conditions,. Structural poverty in Latin America doesn't permit them to respond to unforeseen circumstances (Marzal, 2002: 375).

From his mother Pancho inherited the mission of continuing her promise to Saint Jude, but now he has his own reasons for being a devotee. As well as that, he has reasons for being a member of the Great Masonic Lodge, because they work on virtues and ethics, and because 'in Peru Masonry is Roman Catholic'. Renée de la Torre (2012) in her article on Popular religion refers to «an 'in-between' institutional religion and individual spirituality



[that] helps to understand this modern mix of popular religion with other beliefs systems», not all of them religious.

Isabel, an engineer and geographer, is now professionally involved in environmental issues, where she is afraid to reduce her spirituality to the sole function of being honest, a value she acquired in her family. As a pastoral agent, she was committed to taking the church to the neighbourhood. Following her vocation, she lives religion in her personal and collective action in favour of her neighbours, the people who need a clean environment and by doing so she articulates values and spirituality.

Families constitute an important topos of mediation and a key source of identification with traditional Catholic beliefs, values, symbols, and images. Participants in the project refer to their family homes as important places where they learned about God, Christ, the Virgin and their family's Saints. They link the private with the public in many senses through their devotions, or living it in both ambits. They may add pictures of family members who have already passed away, and who they remember for their good works and now see as mediators. Families also constitute a factor of legitimation of traditional beliefs, which «justify certain ways of believing and acting and hence operate as a matrix for living in the present» (Sakaranaho, 2011: 145). Hence, in the context of family, traditional beliefs and rituals are constituted as references both to legitimate religious identity and to maintain the continuity of a religious community (Sakaranaho, 2011), which may start in the family, continue in the neighbourhood or workplace, and which may be associated with the local parish.

Within the family, and in the neighbourhood, in the workplace and even in the church environment, religious rituals are reconstructed and given new meaning, making it a place where secular and sacred experiences interact fluidly. It is important to notice that, in this context, «location, action, and time are important components in the construction of meaning and suggest the effects the sacred may have in the social worlds of ordinary people» (Williams, 2010: 772). Location allows believers to connect not only with God or the transcendence, but also with their personal and family stories. In this way, as Ammerman asserts, religious and spiritual understanding operates across the many domains of daily life experience, eliminating borders in some cases and building new ones in others.



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