

# Views on the pandemic: Rereading the experience of the religious education of children and young people

*Tiago Neto*  
*José Gabriel Andrade*  
*Patrícia Dias*  
*Isabel Martins*

**Religion and Communication Working Group**

**Submission ID 2158**

## **Abstract**

The current pandemic is transforming social interactions and interpersonal communication. The hypothesis that in the sphere of mediatization, institutions and individuals are inserted in interactions different from those in which the media emerged through mediating condition, leads us to question the place of these media, and the protagonism of individuals themselves, also in the religious sphere. In fact, the means are not just a resource to be used, but they change the way of understanding and living the relationships between individuals and groups and can constitute places of religious experience. This hypothesis is the basis of a survey aimed at families, children and adolescents, and pastoral agents from several Catholic religious communities located in the territory of Lisbon - Portugal.

This empirical study aims to assess the impact of the pandemic on the spiritual life of the groups studied, particularly in the way in which the educational relationship was established, interactions with digital technologies were processed in the context of religious education, and changes in the way of understanding the organization of educational strategies and the exercise of the role of the educator of the faith were found.

The surveys gravitate around five axes: 1) Spirituality: relationship with God; 2) Domestic church: educational function of the family; 3) Children's religious education and digital culture; 4) The role of the educator; 5) Community: liturgy and fraternity. Being transversal to the research, in each type of respondents some are privileged more specifically. Sixteen Catholic religious communities of the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon participated in this study, including 556 families, 598 teenagers, 60 younger children, 288 catechists and 19 priests. Our findings reveal that these different groups maintained a close relationship with God during this crisis and the majority did not experience doubts of faith. They adjusted their religious practices to the domestic context, and the family played a very

important role as a “domestic church”. However, these practices revolved more around prayer, and there was a decrease in attending religious celebrations such as the mass. Concerning religious education online, most children and adolescents preferred face to face interaction, but felt that it was important to them keeping in touch with their catechist and their group. Both catechists and youngsters developed the necessary digital skills to cope with the situation quickly, but the catechists struggled with lacking pedagogical skills to teach on-line, and keeping in touch with their religious community.

These results are an important object of critical reflection in order to help to configure new dynamics in the context of religious education and religious experience.

### **Keywords**

Pandemic, Covid-19, Religious education, Catholicism

### **Introduction**

Religion is a paradoxically complex phenomenon: it connects us to a transcendental dimension but it applies to our daily life; it springs from individual belief but it is nurtured in communal relation with others; it has God as its main focus and purpose but believers find God in others and in the world. In sum, religion must be practiced and lived, instead of just read about or preached. Believers have also used artefacts to embody divinity, and to help them feel more connected to God, or protected from harm. But it is in the applied side of Christian religiosity that religious artefacts become tools that enable daily rituals, such as prayers, learning by reading the Bible or other religious books, reflection and contemplation, talking and debate, voluntary work and dedication to others. Objects such as the Bible, the rosary or the crucifix are symbols, but also useful for supporting such rituals.

On one of his Sunday Angelus (March 5th 2017), Pope Francis challenged the Catholics to act towards the Bible as they do with their smartphone: to always have it at-hand and interact with it frequently during the day. Although this was a provocative appeal to those who do not pay as much attention to the Bible as Pope Francis desires, many believers answer this challenge by literally incorporating the Bible in their smartphone. There is a growing number of religious mobile apps being launched and used, in different languages, for different purposes. Some of them replace religious artifacts of daily use, others connect believers to the Church’s media, others provide useful information, and there are even hybrid formats, such as games about the Bible or quizzes on Catholic themes.

Our empirical study aims to assess the impact of the pandemic on the spiritual life of the groups studied, particularly in the way the educational relationship was established, (re)knowing how interactions with digital technologies were

processed in the context of religious education, and whether changes were found in the way of understanding the organisation of educational strategies and the exercise of the role of the faith educator.

### **Religion in everyday life**

For the Catholic Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News to all the environments of Humanity, and with its influence, to transform from within, to renew the same Humanity. In this mission, mobile applications can play a determining role, since they are a suitable means to carry the Gospel to a good part of our society. It is a means of transmitting the ecclesial message. The translation of the original messages into the digital language, adapting to the features of mobile media, is linked to the mission of the Catholic Church, each with its own purpose.

However, this communication is challenged by finding new ways to convey, say and show the theoretical and practical propositions about its truth without sacrificing the theological content. Theology is linked to the Divine Revelation, that is, to a higher and sovereign level, and communication must always submit to theology, if not it is liable to cause distortions and contradictions.

Marshall McLuhan, the polemic Media Studies visionary, was a devoted Catholic, and worked as Advisor on Social Communication for the Vatican during the 70s and 80s of the 20th century. His mission was helping the Catholic Church transition from linear and literacy-oriented communication strategies and practices to a more networked and multimedia modus operandi, as required by the emergent electronic age (McLuhan, 1999).

As the convergence of mobile devices and the internet make possible McLuhan's vision of the world as a global village (Levinson, 1999), a society globally wired by instantaneous communication that afford a sense of constant up-to-date and belonging (McLuhan, 1964), the structures of the Catholic Church have, sometimes quite timidly, embraced digital media. Official websites are common, both for the various structures of the Vatican, and for local parishes. In 2012, Pope Benedict XVI sent his first personal tweet. In 2013, Pope Francis approved the launch of the first official Catholic app, Missio, by the Pontifical Mission Societies, which includes news and videos from several Vatican sources.

These initiatives are, however, lagging behind believers themselves, who have appropriated these digital media for their daily religious practices. Different groups in Parishes communicate in private Facebook or WhatsApp groups, user-generated resources for Catechesis can be found on blogs, religious songs and videos populate YouTube. If social media support communal practices, smartphones are playing an increasingly important role as facilitators of

daily individual religious practices such as prayer and meditation. Also, they support the organization of activities and the coordination with others. And they are an instant resource of enlightening doubts and finding information on religious themes and debates.

In the last few years, even before the pandemic crisis COVID-19, the number and variety of religious apps available has increased, as well as their download and regular use. A brief overview of the apps available reveals that they remediate the most important personal religious artefacts, such as the Bible and the rosary. Also, there are social apps that connect believers around common interests and initiatives, or support practices such as finding a confessor nearby. There are also informative apps that provide the schedule of nearby celebrations of the Mass, or that allow users to check questions and doubts, for instance on the Catholic Church Catechism. In addition, there are mobile versions of Catholic news media. And there are even entertainment apps, such as Bible quizzes and games.

As a remediator of so many religious artefacts, the smartphone can itself be considered the main religious artefact of contemporaneity. However, the smartphone is also a trigger of shorter attention spans and of addictive behaviour, and it also mediates a great diversity of non-religious content and activities. So, the impact of the smartphone, and technological devices, mediation of religious practices is debatable. Is it positive, as the readiness and at-handness of smartphones, or various technology devices, help believers to find the time and opportunity to stick to daily religious rituals in their fast-paced and hyper-connected lives? Or is it negative, as the smartphone mediation strips religious practices of the context and mental availability that they require, and make a superficial version of religious rituals acceptable?

Our study explores these issues, during the period of the pandemic Covid-19 confronting the perspectives of believers and Church representatives, with 16 Catholic religious communities in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area participating in this study, including 556 families, 598 adolescents, 60 younger children, 288 catechists and 19 priests.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research questions***

This study aimed to know the impact of measures that restricted social interaction due to the Covid-19 pandemic on the religious education of children and teenagers. It included different agents engaged in religious education, namely

children and adolescents, parents, catechists and priests. In specific, we addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: How did Covid-19 affect your relationship with God? (spirituality);

RQ2: How did Covid-19 affect the religious practices of the family? (domestic church);

RQ3: How did children and teenagers cope with changes in their religious education resulting from Covid-19? (youth and digital culture);

RQ4: How did catechists cope with changes in religious education resulting from Covid-19? (role of educator);

RQ5: How did Covid-19 affect religious communities? (community).

### ***Research design and data collection and analysis methods***

The research design was parallel and relied on the quantitative method. We used four different versions of an online survey, using Google Forms, directed at different agents – families (dyads of one parent and one child between 9 and 12 years old), teenagers (between 13 and 16 years old), catechists and priests, aiming to triangulate the results (Creswell, 2018). The questionnaire was divided in five parts, adapted to each group of participants: 1) Spirituality: relationship with God (RQ1); 2) Domestic church: educational function of the family (RQ2); 3) Children's education and digital culture (RQ3); 4) The role of the educator (RQ4); and 5) Community: liturgy and fraternity (RQ5).

This data collection technique was complemented with a qualitative one, directed at younger children, between 6 and 8 years old, who were asked to make a drawing about how the pandemic affected their relationship with God.

All the participants in this study, or their legal representative in the case of children and teenagers, expressed their voluntary collaboration and agreement with the terms of this study through an informed consent sign.

The data resulting from the surveys was analysed with Excel and SPSS, using descriptive and inferential statistics. The children's drawings were analysed by a Psychologist, who supplied an expert report.

### ***Sampling and sample***

The online survey was disseminated through the religious education contacts' networks of 16 different Parishes of the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon, the capital of Portugal. We were able to collect answers from 556 families with children between 9 and 12 years old, of 598 teenagers between 13 and 16 years old, of 288 catechists, and of 19 priests. The survey was online during the month of March 2021.

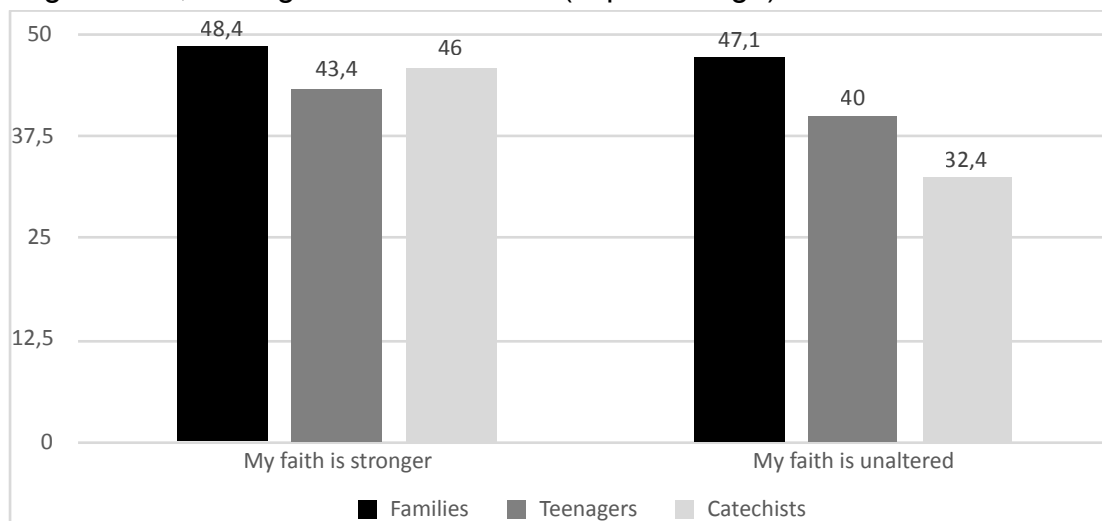
Concerning the younger children (between 6 and 8 years old), we were able to collect 60 drawings in face to face sessions of religious education, in the 16 parishes considered in this study.

## Findings

### *Spirituality*

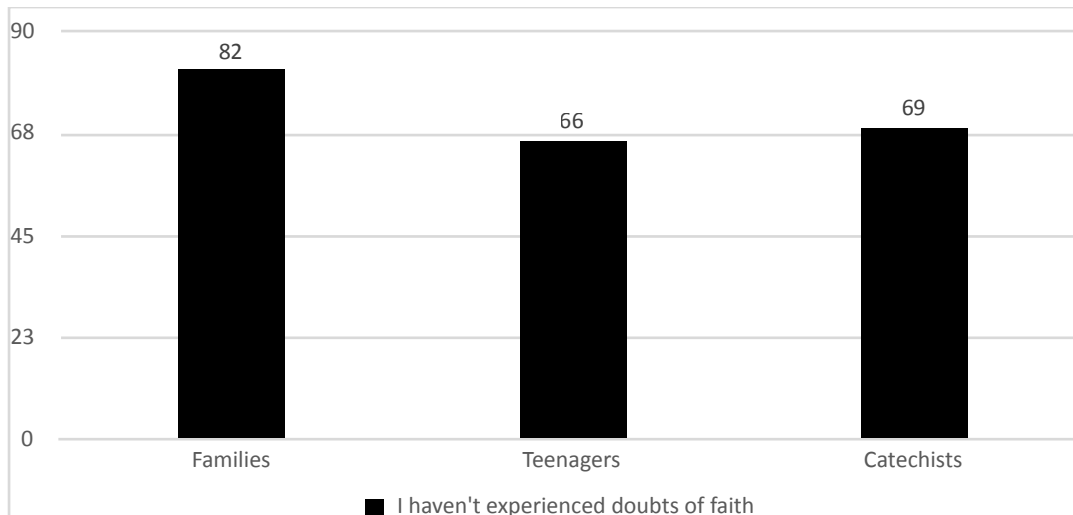
Concerning how Covid-19 affected their relationship with God, most of our respondents agree that their faith was strengthened (Figure 1).

Figure 1. How the relationship with God changed during the pandemic, comparing families, teenagers and catechists (in percentage).



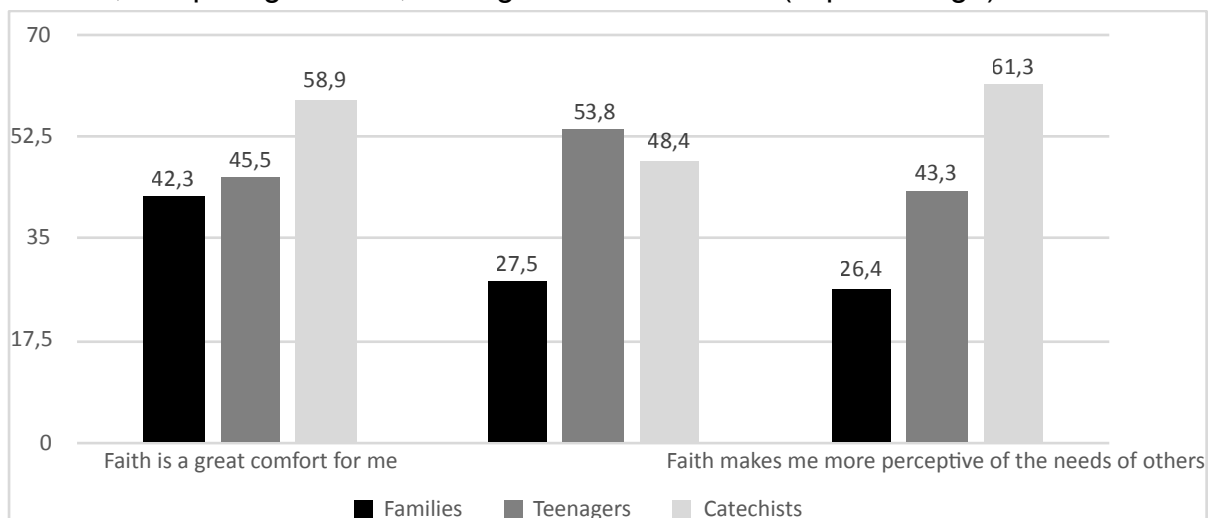
Most of our respondents have not experienced doubts of faith (Figure 2), but among those who have, the most mentioned were feeling distant from God (17,3% of teenagers, 12,5% of catechists, 8,2% of families) and wondering about why God does not prevent evil (14,9% of teenagers, 11% of families, 9,3% of catechists).

Figure 2. Absence of doubts of faith, comparing families, teenagers and catechists (in percentage).



Although teenagers are the group that admits having more doubts of faith, they express agreement with claims about faith being a source of strength for them. The agreement with these claims is higher among catechists and lower in families (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Agreement with claims concerning faith as a source of strength and comfort, comparing families, teenagers and catechists (in percentage).



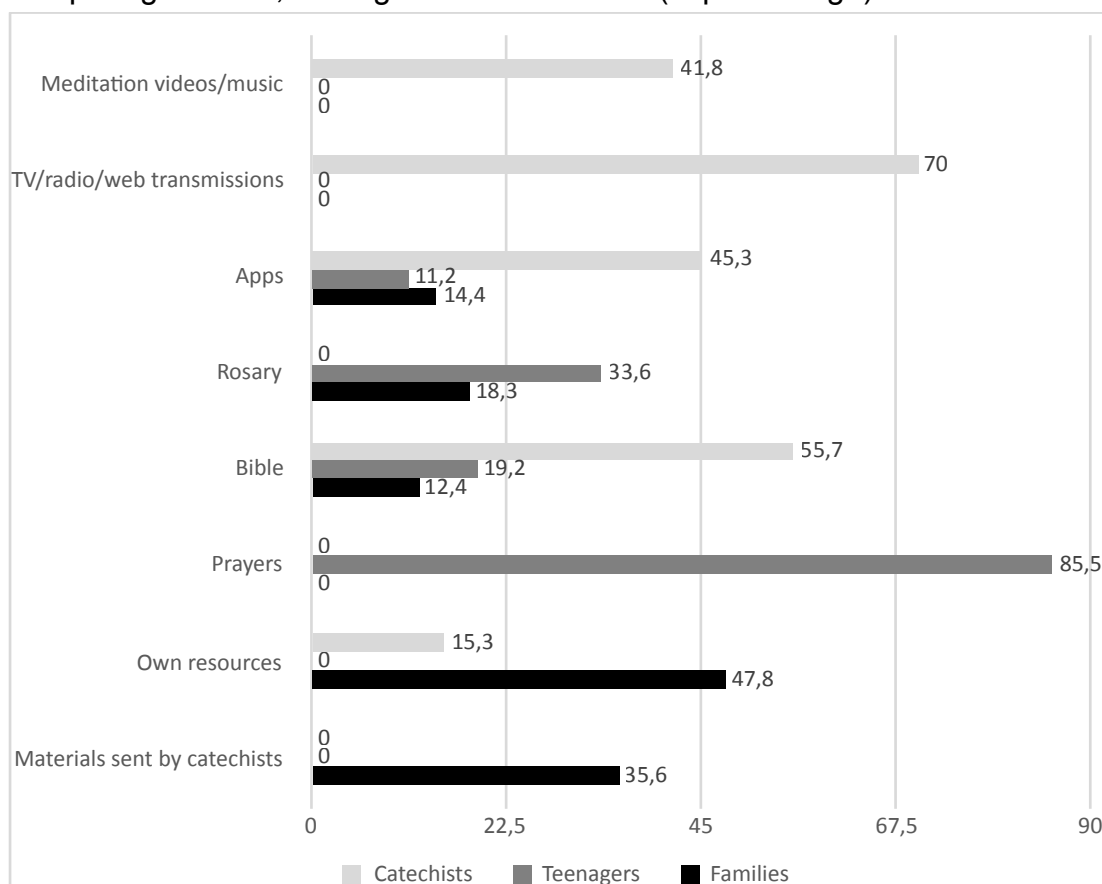
### **Domestic Church**

Unable to attend religious celebrations during lockdown, religious practices were also confined to the home. Within families, 39,7% of the parents declared that they prayed more as a family. In fact, 15% of the families started praying together during the lockdown, and 58,1% of the families declared that the lockdown reinforced them as a domestic church. In addition, 22,4% of the children also declared praying more, and 29,9% of the teenagers prayed every day. However, 25,2% of the families also declared praying less together during this

period, and 17,2% claimed being unable to pray together, as each member was engaged in their own obligations of remote work and school.

Figure 4 shows different resources that these groups used for their religious practices at home. We can observe that families relied on resources that catechists sent them for praying together and also developed their own original resources. Teenagers preferred individual prayer, reading prayers and using the rosary. Catechists preferred communal practices, such as broadcasting of religious celebrations and group prayer online, but also used individual resources such as videos and music, apps, and the bible.

Figure 4. Resources used for religious practices at home during lockdown, comparing families, teenagers and catechists (in percentage).



Note: The options presented in each version of the survey were slightly different. Therefore, the options counting 0% were not showed to that particular group.

Finally, regarding attendance to religious ceremonies, particularly the mass, we can observe that catechists remained more assiduous, as 67,6% declared going every Sunday, and attending remotely if there was no other option. Among the families, 43,7% declared following celebrations online and 41,5% on broadcasting media, but 28,9% admitted having stopped attending. Among teenagers, we found more diverse behaviours: 20,3% attended mass every Sun-



day (in person or remotely), 39% only attended “once in a while”, and 27% declared never participating in such ceremonies, even if attending religious education.

### ***Youth and religious education***

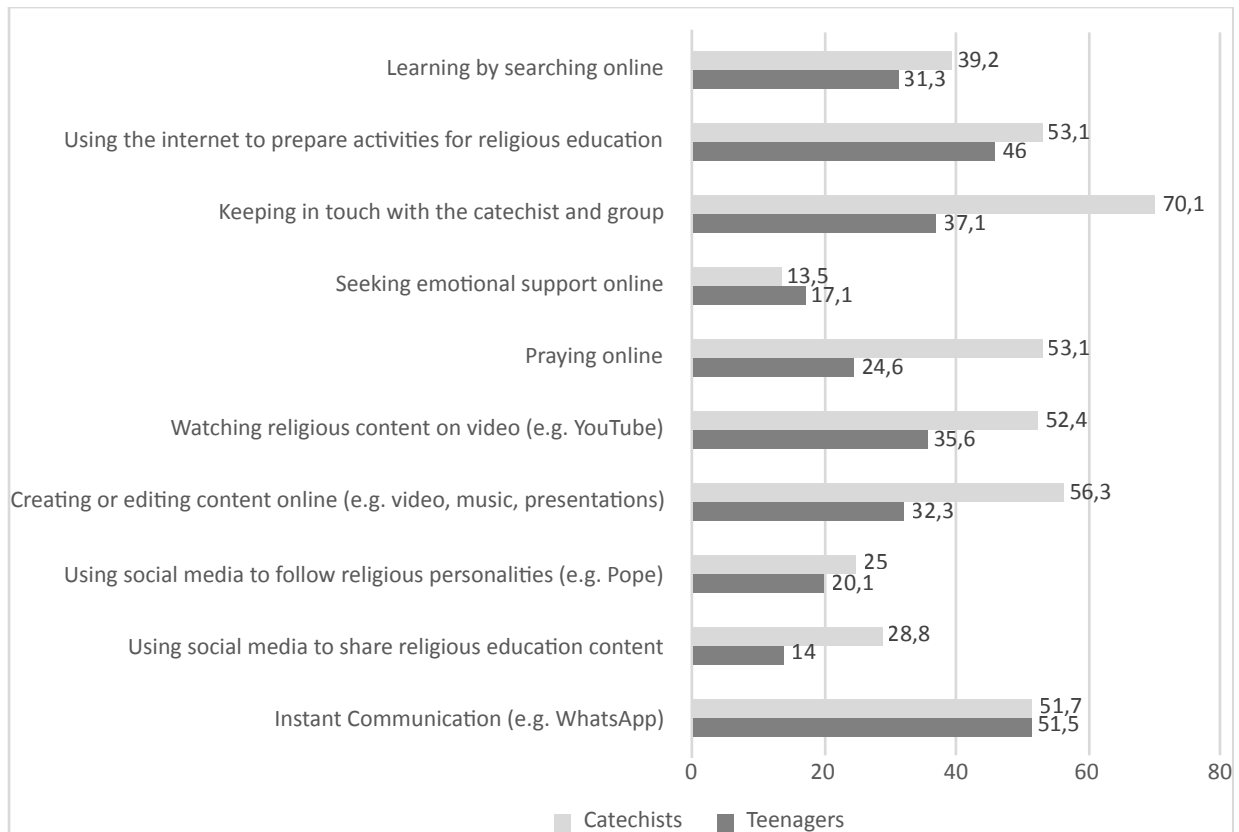
Most families – 89,9% - declared that they felt the Parish and/or the catechist close to them during lockdown.

In all of these Parishes, with different regularities and models, religious education also became remote as a contingency solution to deal with lockdown. This distance demanded a close articulation with families: 37,2% of the parents declared that the catechist always asked for their help during the religious education sessions or activities, and 54% declared that this happened “sometimes”.

Figure 5 shows the activities that become more frequent for teenagers and catechists during lockdown, within the scope of religious education. In general, we can observe that more catechists used digital devices and resources more during lockdown when compared to teenagers, and this can be explained by the fact that teenagers were already more involved in the digital environment previously to the pandemic.

Many catechists - 70% - used social media more often to keep in touch with their group, and 37,1% of the teenagers also interacted among themselves in these groups. In all of the Parishes that participated in this study, there were synchronous online sessions of religious education using platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet and Skype. This explains why 53,1% of the catechists declared having used the internet more to prepare activities for the religious education sessions, and 56,3% created or edited online content more often. In addition, 53,1% of the catechists organized online prayers more often, but only 24,6% of the teenagers participated in them more often. Among the teenagers, the activities that stand out as more often are using instant messaging (51,5%) and using the internet to prepare for religious education sessions (46%).

Figure 5. Activities that become more frequent for teenagers and catechists during lockdown, within the scope of religious education (in percentage).



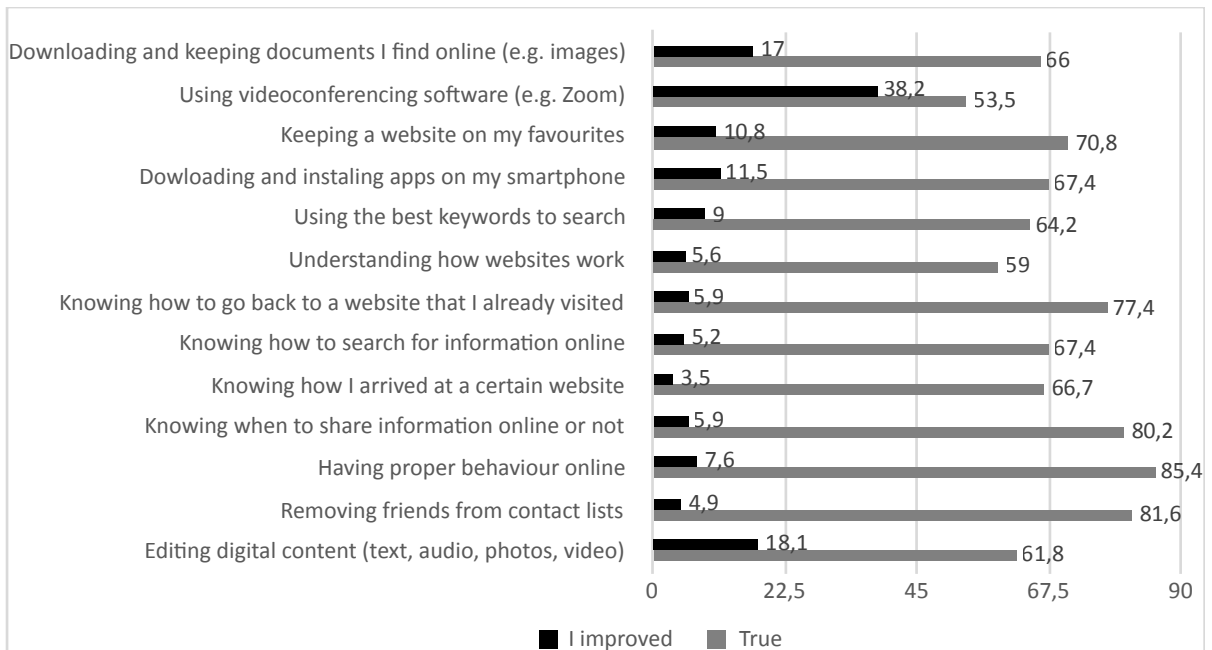
Despite the best efforts of the catechists to adapt to the lockdown, 65,1% of the children declared preferring religious education in person. However, children showed significant resilience, as 53,6% of them claimed having the same enthusiasm to attend religious education, even though they didn't like the online format.

Among the adolescents, 83,9% valued the online religious education sessions because they helped them keep in touch with their group, 53% claimed that these sessions nurtured their faith, and 38,5% declared that these sessions made them more aware about what was going on in the world and more solidarist.

### ***Catechists and religious education***

A big challenge for catechists was developing the necessary digital skills to cope with remote religious education. Figure 6 reveals that, in general, they already had good digital skills before the pandemic, and they improved more significantly in using videoconferencing software (38,2%) and editing digital content (18,1%).

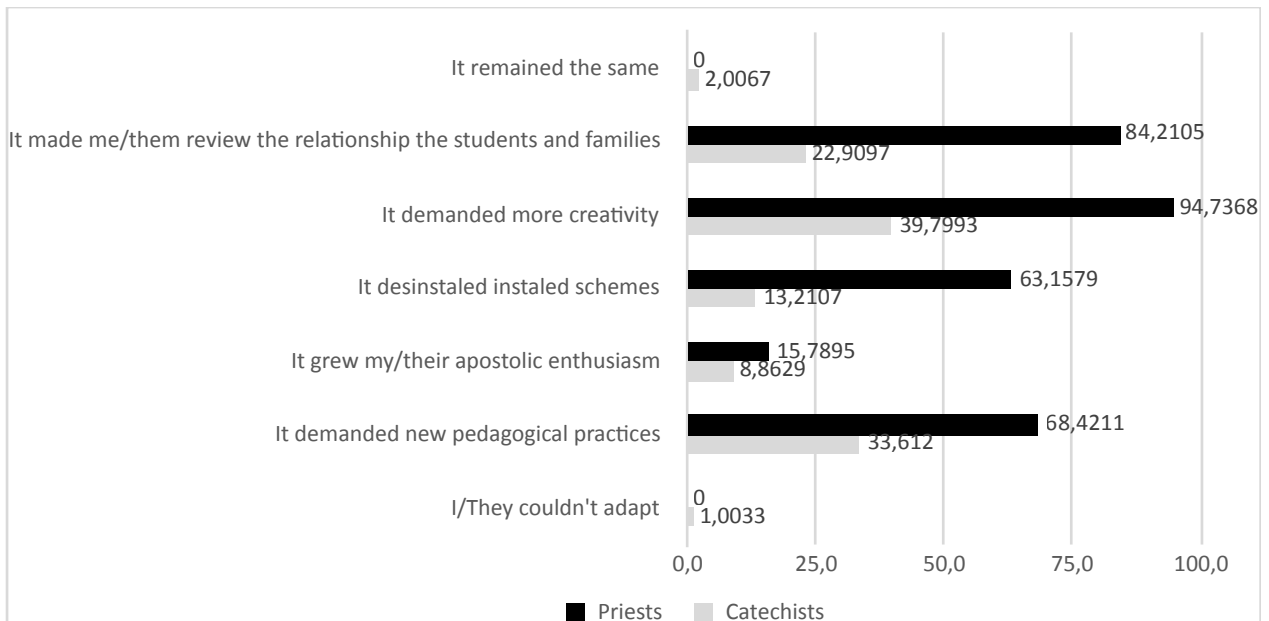
Figure 6. Digital skills of catechists and their level of improvement during lockdown (in percentage).



They learnt mostly by themselves, as the level of agreement on a scale from 0 to 5 with the claim “I acquired digital skills by myself” was 3,43. Also, the level of agreement with the claim “I learned with the help of my peers” was of 3,26.

Figure 7 displays the views of catechists and priests about how the pandemic changed their perception of the role of catechist. We can observe that priests feel strongly that the experience of the pandemic changed the way catechists view (or should view) their ministry. Among the catechists, 39,8% declared that the situation demanded more creativity, and 33,6% new pedagogical practices. In addition, 22,9% admitted that it made them review the way they related to their students and respective families.

Figure 7. Perceptions of catechists and priests about how the pandemic changed their view of catechist ministry (in percentage).



## Community

About the engagement between Parishes and catechists, priests also feel more strongly about it. For example, 84,2% of the priests declared having organized meetings to accompany catechists in their spirituality, but only 29,8% of the catechists attended such meetings. The catechists participated more in meetings regarding planning religious education and learning about the new safety and hygiene procedures. However, they express a high level of agreement – 3,26 in a scale from 0 to 5 – with the claim “I have participated in prayer meetings promoted by my Parish”, but a lower agreement – 2,47 – with the claim “I have sought spiritual guidance from my priest”. Furthermore, priests expressed a high level of agreement – 3,32 – with the claim “catechists participated in specific training regarding digital skills organized by the Parish”, but the level of agreement among catechists was only of 2,4.

Figure 8 shows the agreement of catechists with claims about their relationship with their Parishes during this period. The higher levels of agreement are expressed with the commitment of the Parishes’ priest, the support among catechists, and the effort to maintain their evangelizing mission during the pandemic. A significant number of catechists also agrees that the pandemic made more evident fragilities that already existed in their community.

Figure 8. Agreement of catechists, on a scale from 0 (total disagreement) to 5 (total agreement) about claims concerning their relationship with their Parish.

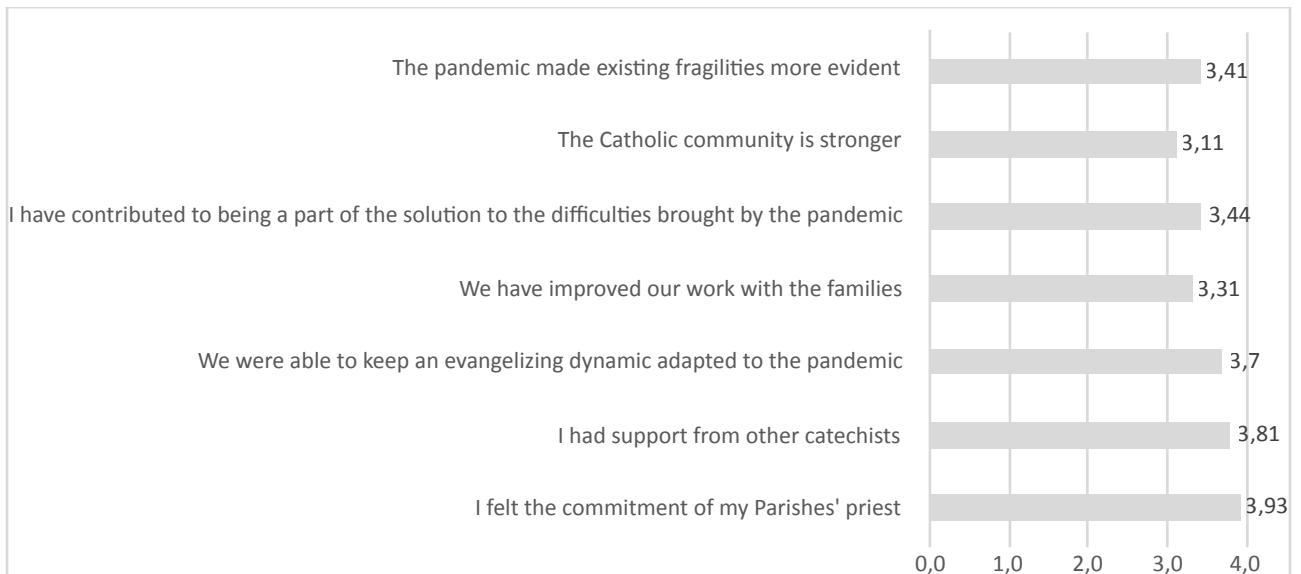
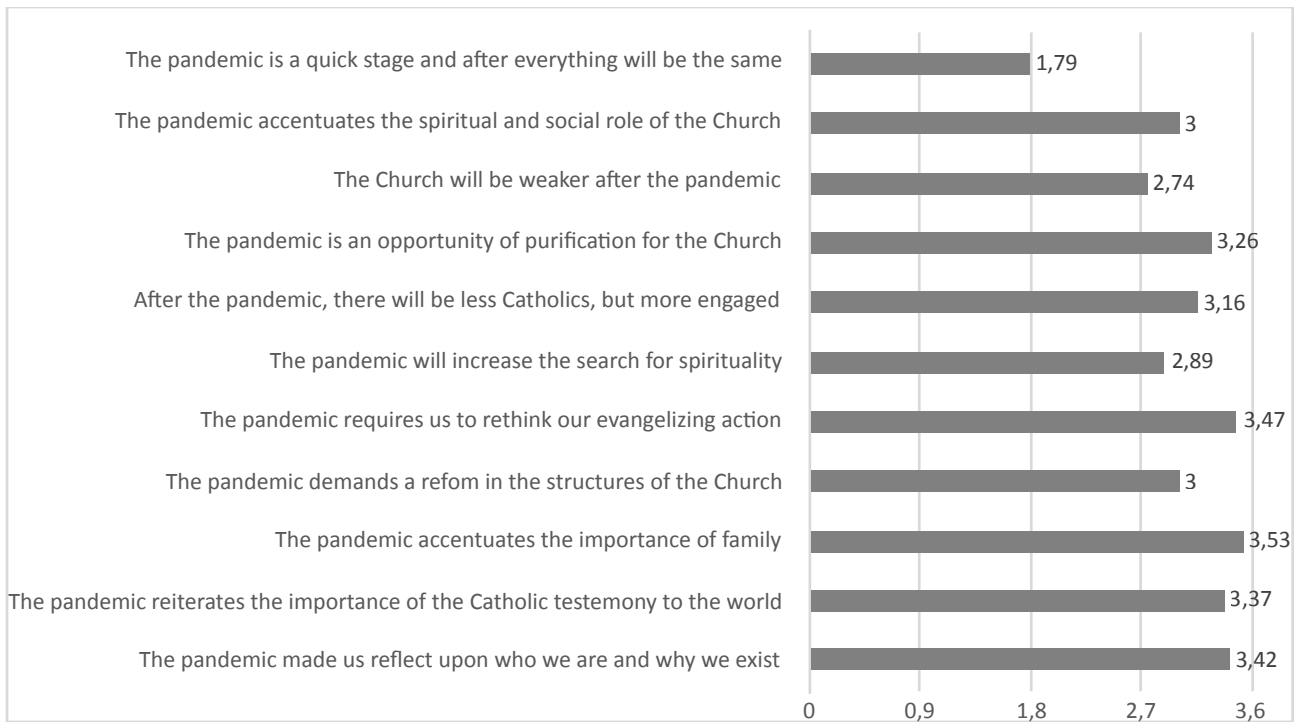


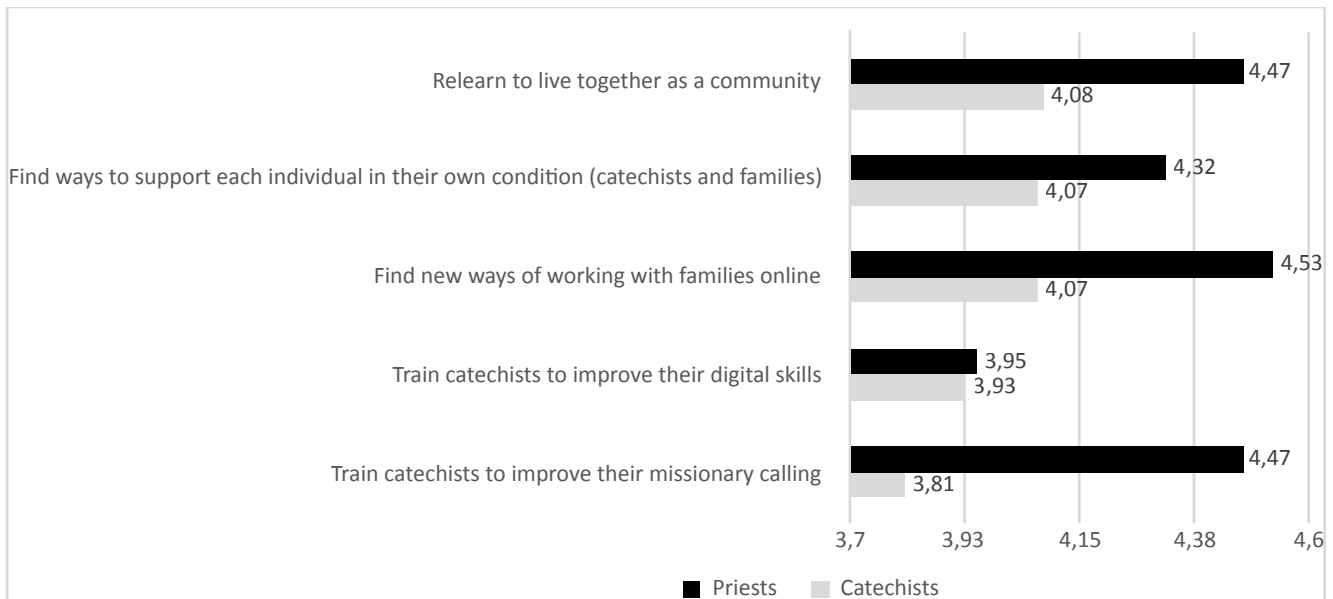
Figure 9 shows the level of agreement of priests with claims about the future. The higher level of agreement – 3,53 on a scale from 0 to 5 – is with the claim “The pandemic accentuates the importance of family”, as when deprived from practicing their faith communally, the family became the “heart” of religious practice. Next, they agree – 3,47 – with the need to rethink the processes of the Church, namely those related to evangelization. And priests also agree strongly that the pandemic reinforced or deepened faith, as it “made us reflect upon who we are and why we exist” (3,42) and “reiterates the importance of the Catholic testimony to the world” (3,37).

Figure 9. Agreement of priests, on a scale from 0 (total disagreement) to 5 (total agreement) about claims concerning the future.



On a more practical level, Figure 10 shows the perspectives of catechists and priests about different actions that could be implemented in the future. For priests, the most important actions are “finding new ways to work with the families online” (4,53), improve the “missionary calling” of catechists (4,47) and “relearn to live together as a community” (4,47). Catechists also express higher agreement with this claim (4,08), and with “finding new ways to work with the families online” (4,07) and also emphasize the need to “find ways to support each individual in their own condition (catechists and families)” (4,07). Developing digital skills is not a priority for both of them.

Figure 10. Agreement of catechists and priests, on a scale from 0 (total disagreement) to 5 (total agreement) about claims concerning concrete actions that could be implemented in the future.



## Discussion

In the 16 Parishes that participated in the study, and within the Religious Education section of the Lisbon Patriarchy, over 200 catechists and priests reflected upon the findings of this survey regarding spiritual experiences during the pandemic period and the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on the practices of religious transmission. This shows that faced with the needs of controlling the pandemic, governmental and ecclesial norms, these institutions have reactivated a potential for creativity and adaptation on the part of the various actors.

Second, they highlight some emerging dimensions that may help shape the process of Religious Education in the near future.

The first dimension refers to the consideration of the digital as the environment of catechesis. Compared to the period before the pandemic, we have witnessed an irreversible entry of the digital into the educational process, demanding ways to reach a digital transition that requires greater human, technical, and financial investment. The interactions made possible among the various actors have enabled a set of experiences of spiritual life in a digital environment, particularly in the dimension of knowing the faith, sharing life, and prayer. However, children and adolescents say they prefer face to face religious education because they consider contact with peers and with the catechist important. They find it more difficult to follow catechesis from home, namely due to technical issues and the family environment that does not always favor conditions conducive to privacy. The possibility of continuing to have online catechesis was valued by the adolescents and there is consensus among catechists that digital tools become useful, even in face to face catechesis, and can generate more interaction, dynamics and interest from the catechized.

The second dimension concerns the appreciation of the educational role of the family. Families showed greater commitment and were more active in catechesis, both in technical support and in responding to requests for interaction with the children. The vast majority of families have maintained or created prayer habits, either on their own initiative or by using the proposals provided by the parishes. Among the new habits acquired by families is the practice of family liturgy.

The third dimension emphasized a more personalized and flexible search for God, and therefore more shaped by personal initiative than by institutional regulation. The respondents reveal that the pandemic has not substantially affected their relationship with God. We can say that it has accentuated two movements already present in the characterization of the way individuals relate to God: the reinforcement of the individual dimension and the ability to fabricate their own religious universe adapted to individual and family circumstances. The pandemic has widened and strengthened a set of prayer practices both at the personal and family levels, which, counting on the proposals of the parishes, have gone beyond them. Both individuals and families were able to find in themselves and by themselves resources that satisfied their spiritual needs, beyond the institutional offers guaranteed by the communities.

The last dimension highlights the growing distance from the community experience of faith. A significant number of respondents do not consider celebrating the Eucharist as an indispensable ritual for their spiritual experience.

Particularly, catechists and Parish priests show that the pandemic has brought to the surface some already existing weaknesses regarding the community organization of Catholic communities. Difficulties in communication and pastoral coordination claim the imperative need to strengthen joint and team work that involves families, catechists and Parish priests. Still, the community dimension of faith, concretized in numerous initiatives, has shown itself to be an important factor of personal dynamism in responding to needs. This community action was clearly manifested in the charitable actions developed by the communities.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

Our findings highlight new challenges for the educational action of the Catholic Church, namely a reconfiguration of the identity of the catechist, the challenge of a Catechesis more linked to contemporary life, and the reconstruction of new orders of community life. As our concluding remarks, we present some recommendations for tackling each of these topics:

a) The challenge of reconfiguring the identity of the catechist



The acquisition of skills in the use of digital media by catechists is a factor that can enhance new pedagogical dynamics in Religious Education, particularly in a pedagogical transition to digital that the pandemic has accelerated. However, the rapid use of digital media has not given room for a reflection on the profile of the catechist in these conditions, nor an awareness of their role in the digital space. If, on the one hand, the image of the catechist as conductor and teacher is reinforced, his or her ability to network and to involve catechists and families as active subjects of catechesis emerges as a challenge. A passage from the presential to the digital is not enough, when this passage is not accompanied by an awareness of the spiritual transformation that being on a network demands. The formation of catechists needs to become more evident as an existential-spiritual journey that takes into account the situation of each person in his or her process of adhering to the faith, and enables him or her to transmit the Gospel message in an inculturated way. The incorporation of digital technology in the formation of catechists is an indispensable element for the future, not from a technical perspective, but rather from a pedagogical one. At the level of catechetical materials, the catechist will have to have access to digital pedagogical resources, as well as know how to adapt these resources to the catechetical proposal. However, we are aware that physical distance has cut off one of the essential dimensions of Catechesis, which is, precisely, the human encounter. Catechesis is not only instruction or activities, but a relationship between people who walk together. If this moment constitutes one of the features of our journey, it is urgent to resume the face to face as a regular way of catechizing. As the Directory for Catechesis states, "in the process of proclaiming the Gospel, the real question is not how to use the new technologies to evangelize, but how to become an evangelizing presence on the digital continent. Catechesis, which cannot simply go digital, certainly needs to know the power of these means and use all their potentialities and positive aspects, but with the awareness that catechesis is not done using only digital instruments, but offering spaces for faith experiences" (DC 371).

#### b) The Challenge of a Catechesis connected to life

The pandemic has allowed us to experience that the family is the natural place for the transmission of life and faith. If, on the one hand, the excess of school and catechetical activities have occupied the already under-occupied space of the families, their collaboration and availability show us that the articulation between Catechesis and family demands a more flexible intergenerational experience of faith that is more connected to life, more incarnate and humanizing. Although good catechetical materials are necessary, they have to be flexible, adjusted to the rhythm of life of the families, and more in accordance with their needs. One of the challenges is to propose educational paths for all families, without imposing on them a formative block that hinders the perception of the relationship between faith and daily life. The necessary articulation between the

family as “domestic Church” and Catechesis is a challenge not only related to the younger generations, but to all the situations of greater fragility that accompany adult life and old age. Parishes must make efforts to reach out to families, count on them, and get them to do things together.

In Catechesis with children and adolescents, one of the challenges that emerges from the pandemic is not only dealing with anthropological issues related to the limits of human life such as illness, frailty, and death, but how they think and verbalize their feelings about this time and how there is room for them to create their own narratives. The romantic “andrà tutto bene” no longer serves as a valid answer for the new generations. In this regard, Catechesis must emphasize the dimension of gratitude for living in a world full of beauty where everything is interconnected. The spiritual dimension appears as closely linked to people's lived situations, to which it is necessary to attend as a place of rereading and believing meaning.

#### c) The challenge of community living

The construction of the bonds of life and of community relations constitutes one of the challenges emerging from this pandemic. We are not yet in conditions to evaluate the community metamorphosis that we are experiencing. There are new irrenounceable places, such as the home, the domestic environment; there are new facilities for work and training in real time that allow shortening distances and rationalizing human and economic resources. There is a transfer of operative methods hitherto unused in our pastoral action, making teamwork accessible. Is it possible, however, to glimpse here a new basic synodality in which new spaces for community interaction open up? Our findings point to, on the contrary, an individual appropriation of religious practices and artifacts, that best fit each individuals' unique context. However, the practicality of praying alone or as a family, reading the Bible or meditating alone, or using religious apps, does not replace the urge to connect as a community.

Digital communication is an essential element to maintain the informal and permanent relationship between the different pastoral agents and those with whom they interact. In Catechesis, the difficulties of communication between catechists, catechetical coordinators and the priest continue to be evident as a factor for the dispersion of resources and information. It is necessary to invest strongly in the leadership and communication skills of the coordinators of pastoral action.

The reconstruction of the organization of catechesis requires that the various participants in the process of initiation to the faith walk and decide together, with an appreciation of the family as the primary place and recipient of evangelization and with networking on the part of catechists. Special attention is needed for the phase of global deconfinement, in which Catechesis can contribute, together with the religious movements, so as not to return to the sometimes fictitious environments of large celebrating communities, but without community ties.

Everything that favors community bonds, in the articulation of different levels, even the digital, will help to a new understanding of the Christian community as an expanded reality.

The service to others, in concrete projects, continues to be, even in times of pandemic, a concrete way of building Christian community, capable of uninstalling even those most accommodated to the screen.

The Covid-19 pandemic has heightened existing fragilities of the Catholic Church and posed new challenges, but it has also pointed to solutions and ways to move forward. We believe that our research contributes to make the path to building a better future more visible.

## **References**

Creswell, J. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. London: Sage Publications.

Francis, Pope. (2017). *Angelus, 5 February 2017*. Vatican.

McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding Media: The extensions of man*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

McLuhan, M. (1999). *The Medium and the Light: Reflections on religion*. Eugene: The McLuhan Estate.