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Joe Cardoso

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Doctor of Philosophy (Counselling)

Religious Change experiences  
of the participants of the Inner Healing Retreat  
at the English-speaking site of the Divine Retreat Centre, Kerala, India

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2014

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### Abstract

The Divine Retreat Centre, Muringoor, Kerala, India is internationally known for the changes it effects in the lives of its retreat participants. To date, over ten million participants have attended the retreats over a decade. However there is a dearth of empirical research on the change processes involved in this retreat experience. This study was formulated to investigate the following research question: how do the participants at the Divine Retreat Centre come to be what they come to be as a result of each day's experience of the six day Inner Healing Retreat? This study is a qualitative investigation and the research strategy of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was broadly adopted for collecting and analysing the data. Eight participants of the Inner Healing Retreat were interviewed at the end of each of the six days of this Retreat. The participants ranged between 19-55 years and included five men and three women who met the criteria for homogeneity: Goan-Catholic lineage, English-speaking, first-time Retreat participants. The findings reveal that the change process unfolded through seven super-ordinate themes: Crisis, Surrender, Opening up, Confession, Counselling, Inner Healing and Baptism in the Spirit. These themes contribute to an understanding of the nature of religious change or the change processes operating at the Divine Retreat Centre. The implications of these findings are discussed and recommendations for future research suggested.

**Keywords:** Religious Change, Conversion, Charismatic movement, Catholic, Crisis, Surrender, Confession, Counselling, Inner Healing and Baptism in the Spirit.

Declaration

I declare that this written document is my own work and does not include material from published sources used without proper acknowledgement

Signed :.....

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## Chapter 1: Issue of Interest

### 1.1. A portrayal of the scene

Many organisations give credit to DRC for the changes it effects in the lives of the participants of its programmes.

The word Potta<sup>1</sup> crops up in conversations among Christians. Mention illness or spiritual quest, and someone somewhere has either gone to Potta or has known someone who has. Today, Potta is a byword for miraculous healing, cure for addictions, strong spiritual experiences, and a way of life founded on the Bible.<sup>2</sup>

The Divine Retreat Centre is so popular world over...Hundreds of thousands of people of all races, religions, and ages, and from different countries, have attended the retreat programmes at DRCM...<sup>3</sup>

The retreats are conducted every week of the year with an average of 10,000 people per week and up to 20,000 during the summer holidays. It is believed that over 300,000 non-Christians and millions of Christians have attended these on-going week-long retreats....It is sheer faith and the desire to get rest from the trials and tribulations of everyday life that attracts people to this retreat centre.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Potta is the name of the village where the Divine Retreat Centre was originally located

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from: [www.lifepositive.com/spirit/new-age-path/faith-healing/miracle.asp](http://www.lifepositive.com/spirit/new-age-path/faith-healing/miracle.asp)

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from: [www.churchnewssite.com/portal/?p=9532](http://www.churchnewssite.com/portal/?p=9532)

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from: [www.navhindtimes.in/ilive/potta-divine-retreat-centre-then-and-now](http://www.navhindtimes.in/ilive/potta-divine-retreat-centre-then-and-now)

...the Indian Vincentian Fathers<sup>5</sup> have been conducting the Popular Mission Retreats in parishes in Kerala, India. The effect has been overwhelming – bringing about a dynamic spiritual transformation in the lives of the people.<sup>6</sup>

Hindu radicals have opposed the Catholic center since its beginning... The Hindu groups have banded under Hindu Aikya Vedi (HAV, Hindu united front)... "We have demanded (the centre's) closure," HAV organizing secretary Kummanam Rajasekharan told UCA News... "Our investigations have revealed that the divine center is involved in large-scale religious conversions," Rajasekharan added... He said his front would continue the campaign against the retreat center until it folds up.<sup>7</sup>

Around 3,000 Catholics are meeting every month for catechesis and prayer at a vast Pentecostal convention centre at West Bromwich, near Birmingham. . The gatherings were started by migrants from southern India... The meetings are a visible sign of how very devout Catholics are bringing new life and energy to parishes in the UK. Many of the newcomers feel a deep sense of calling to help restore the Christian faith...<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Indian Vincentian Fathers refers to the religious congregation that began DRC

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from:

[www.tradekerala.in/more\\_info.php?cid=26130&cat=Retreat+Centre&dist=Thrissur&city=Chalakkudy](http://www.tradekerala.in/more_info.php?cid=26130&cat=Retreat+Centre&dist=Thrissur&city=Chalakkudy)

<sup>7</sup> Quoted from: [www.nchro.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2943:thousands-back-catholic-center-targeted-by-hindu-radicals&catid=9:minorities&Itemid=19](http://www.nchro.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2943:thousands-back-catholic-center-targeted-by-hindu-radicals&catid=9:minorities&Itemid=19)

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from: [www.thetablet.co.uk/article/164189](http://www.thetablet.co.uk/article/164189)

The above quotes from secular publications (quotes 3 & 4) as well as Christian ones highlight the enormity of the Divine Retreat Centre Muringoor (DCRM) or Potta, the place where it originally began. The quotes draw attention to the popularity of the Divine Retreat Centre (hereafter referred to as DRC) in terms of the numbers attending its programmes and its widespread influence not just across India but even overseas. Implied in the quotes is the suggestion that people travel from far and wide for thousands of kilometers expending time and money to access the DRC programme when they could have very well attended a retreat in their own religious places. Hence one could ask the question: what draws people to DRC? Access to *'healings'* and quests for a resolution to their crises experienced as *'trials and tribulations of everyday life'* are a significant part of the agenda of the participants. It is known from hearsay that DRC is often perceived as the last resort for those who have "reached the end of their tether" or "hit the bottom rock". However, another significant factor that draws people to DRC is unmistakable in the quotes above, namely the relationship between DRC and religious change. It is alluded to in phrases such as *'dynamic spiritual transformation'*, *'strong spiritual experiences'*, *'way of life founded on the Bible'*, *'large-scale religious conversions'* and *'restore the Christian faith'*.

This unmistakable factor of religious change seems to occupy a significant place in the consciousness of a section of the Hindu religion who have opposed DRC as suggested by the quotes above. Although DRC caters predominantly to a Catholic enclave because it is a Catholic programme, people of other religions are also known to attend. While the opposition highlights the significance and the seriousness with which DRC is perceived on the Indian scene, it endorses the relationship between DRC and religious change. Allegations have been raised

against DRC in the effort to discredit it, including the filing of law suits. However, these allegations have been found to be unfounded by the legal system.

DRC also occupies a significant place in the consciousness of the Indian Catholic. Similar claims such as the one about United Kingdom (*'new life and energy to parishes in the UK'*) have been made about new life and energy found in Indian parishes following the advent of DRC. The website of DRC ([www.drcm.org](http://www.drcm.org)) claims, that since a decade and beyond, 10 million people have attended DRC and that it is the largest Catholic retreat centre in the world. It is a substantial claim given that the Christian population of India approximates twenty million people. However, this claim is very generic and does not isolate the difference in figures between first time attendees and repeaters. Consequently, it fails to illuminate the total percentage of Catholics who may have attended DRC to date. Yet, irrespective of the exact figures, the above quotes suggest that the impact of DRC has been huge and manifold on the Indian scenario. It is known for effecting changes not just at the individual level but also cumulatively at the social level.

The above presentation has highlighted the relationship between DRC and religious change which is the issue of interest for this study. However, before more can be said about the issue of interest it is fitting to continue the focus on DRC in the effort to introduce the reader to this site and to those of its facets that are pertinent to this study.

## **1.2. Introducing the Site for this study**

Figure 1 identifies the broad geographical location of DRC on the political map of India. Figure 2 provides a satellite view of the two campuses of DRC.

1.2.1. Geographical location of DRC in Kerala, India

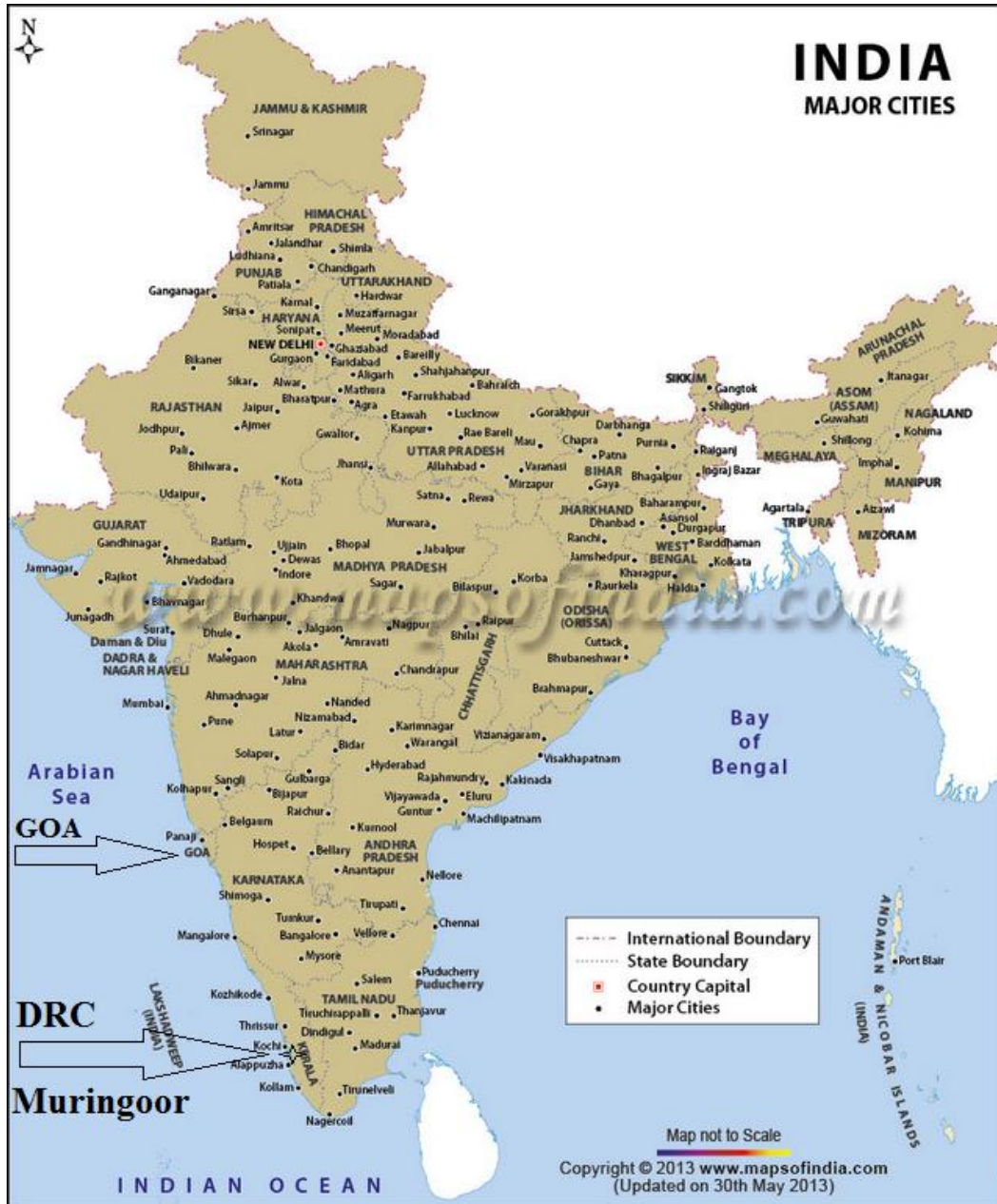


Figure 1: Geographical location of DRC in India (www.mapsofindia.com)

### 1.2.2. Location of DRC campuses

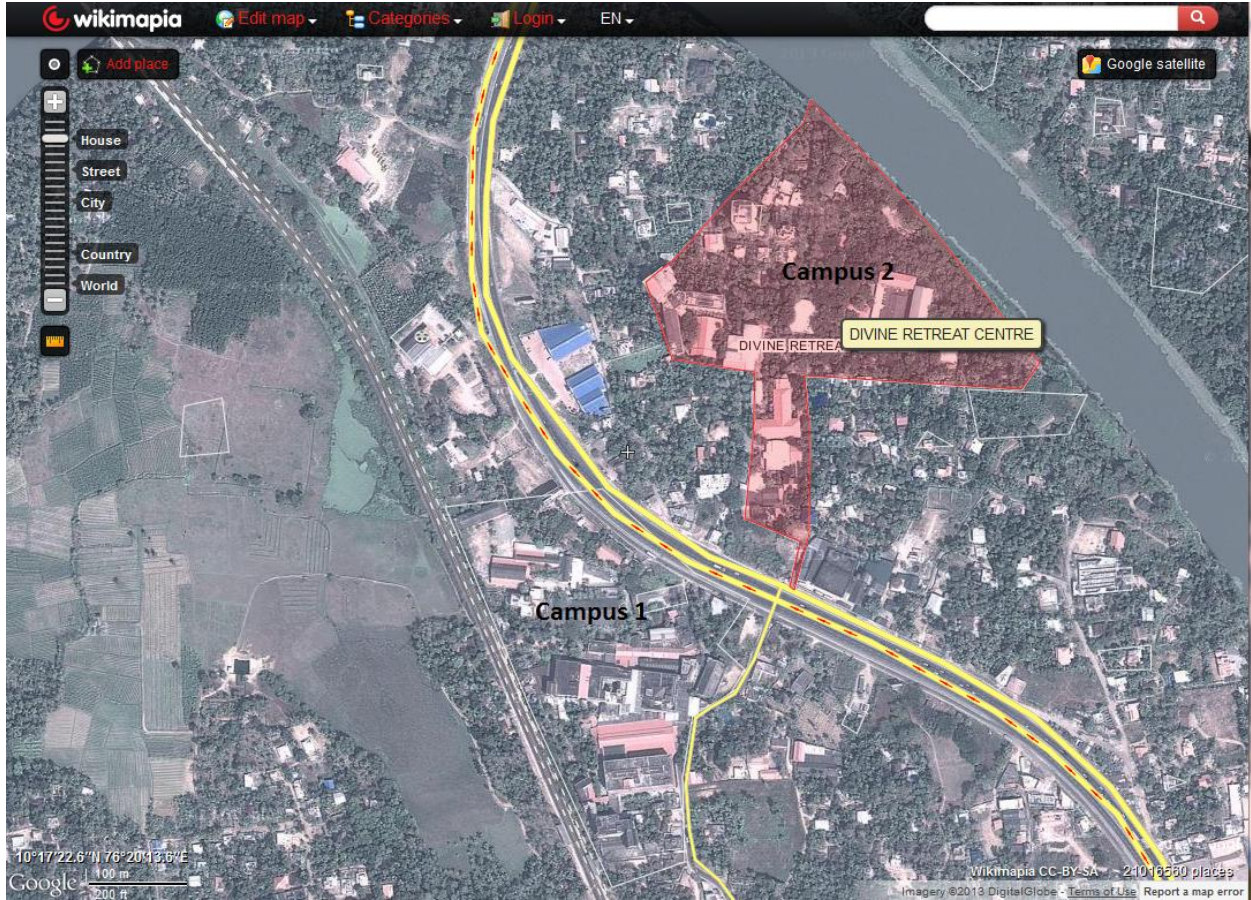


Figure 2: Satellite view of Campus 1 & 2 (www.wikimapia.org)



### **1.2.3. Brief history of DRC.**

According to Kaniyaraseril (2005), the history of DRC can be traced to the early 1970s. The Vincentian Congregation of Priests in India initiated the following antecedents that evolved into DRC. First, they conducted the 'Mission Retreats' in varied parishes in the State of Kerala, India. These missions facilitated Christian spiritual renewal and soon became popular. Later, in 1977, these priests established a religious house in a village called Potta, where they conducted one-day prayer fellowships and week-long residential retreats. Over the years, Potta became renowned for its claims of transformations experienced by the participants of its retreats. Fr Mathew Naickomparambil, whom the American Catholic Digest acclaimed as the Rev. Billy Graham of India was the popular healing priest (Kaniyaraseril, 2005). Hundreds came for healings and for the renewal of their commitment to their Christian faith. It was only years later in 1990 that these priests established the current centre, the site of this study known as the Divine Retreat Centre, to accommodate the steadily growing numbers. This centre lies in a village called Muringoor, in the state of Kerala; about six kilometres away from the original place, Potta (Kaniyaraseril, 2005).

### **1.2.4. Aim of the DRC retreat.**

According to Fr Panackal, the Director of the Malayalam speaking campus, the Divine Retreat Centre seeks to facilitate the renewal of participant's life of faith, with consequent impact on other areas of their life (Kaniyaraseril, 2005). The main web page of the Centre claims that the retreats were a "response of the Vincentian congregation" to the call of Pope John Paul II for a "new evangelisation..." intended for the "renewal of Christian commitment".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted from: [www.drcm.org/retreat/retreat-description](http://www.drcm.org/retreat/retreat-description)

Thus renewal of commitment to the Catholic faith appears to be the main aim of the DRC retreats. However this renewal may not be the sole motive that brings people to DRC. It appears that other agendas resonate with the participants together with the credibility of the preachers and contribute to the centre's popularity (Kaniyaraseril, 2005). These agendas include deriving personal benefits such as mending family bonds and relationships, resolving addictions and healing illnesses.

#### **1.2.5. Location and types of DRC retreats**

Today, retreats are conducted for approximately 48 weeks of the year on two different campuses at Muringoor, Kerala, India. One campus caters to the Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu language groups. The second campus caters to four other language groups on four different sites within this second campus: namely English, Konkani, Kannada, and Hindi languages.

1.2.5.1. A sketch of both the campuses

Layout of Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu campus



Figure 3: Campus 1 (www.drcm.org)

Layout of English, Kannada, Konkani, Hindi campus

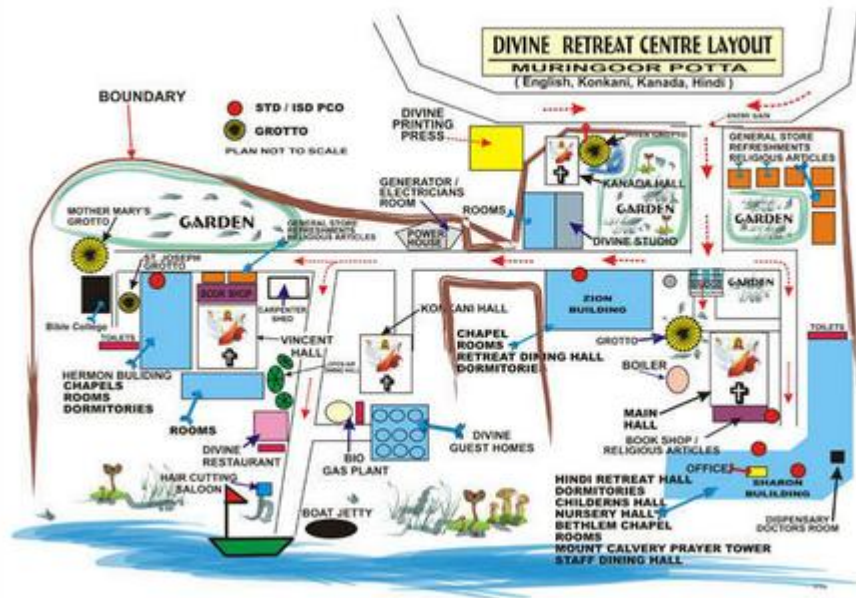


Figure 4: Campus 2 (www.drcm.org)

There are many different types of retreats that DRC conducts through the 48 weeks of the year. The most commonly held retreats are the Inner Healing Retreat and the Couples Retreat. The Children's Retreat, the Priests' Retreat and the Youth Retreat are some of the other retreats conducted only a few times annually.

It is important to note that this study is an investigation of the Inner Healing Retreat only. According to Fr Augustine, the director of the second campus, the other retreats do not vary greatly from the Inner Healing Retreat (Kaniyaraseril, 2005). The major difference is the shift in emphasis to suit the relevant demographics.

#### ***1.2.5.2. The Structure of the DRC retreat***

All DRC retreats including the Inner Healing Retreat, which is the focus of this study, span across six days of the week. It begins on a late Sunday evening, and ends on a Friday noon. In Appendix A is outlined the nature of a typical day, identifying the main activities of a DRC Inner Healing Retreat. In Appendix B, the main focuses across each day of the retreat are presented. The Retreat is led from the dais such that each participant's physical posture and attention is oriented towards the dais and to the varied speakers. The seating arrangement is gender ordered.

#### **1.2.6. Strategies of recruitment at DRC.**

The participants of the retreats arrive on a voluntary basis. On registration, the Centre expects the participants to participate in the scheduled activities for all the six days. However, that participation is not rigorously enforced as some of the participants of this study demonstrate. This element of participation at DRC is widely known and is generally expected in any religious program in the Indian culture (Kaniyaraseril, 2005). Silence is called for through constant

appeals and reminders. Participants' attention is directed towards self-examination, namely the impact of what transpires for them as participants, in the course of the Retreat.

### **1.2.7. The staff, services and facilities at DRC.**

Although DRC is managed by the Vincentian priests, the day to day operations are executed by specialist teams such as the preaching team, the witnessing team, the counsellors' team, the confessors' team, the kitchen team, the praying team and the administrative team.

The preachers' team for the second campus is headed by the Director, Fr Augustine Vallooran who holds a Doctorate in the Philosophy of Religion from the Gregorian University in Rome. The other personnel include the following: four priests who hold the pre-requisite Bachelor's degree in Theology, five Nuns and a few lay persons all of whom hold secular undergraduate qualifications but are trained in Biblical studies, including the Theology of the Catholic Church. Most of these personnel also bear professional training in counselling.

The Witnessing team members testify to their own experience of transformation arising from their prior attendance at DRC. These team members include a lawyer, a central government civil servant, a member of the Communist Party of India, two converts, one from Hinduism and one from Islam to the Catholic faith, and a NASA scientist.

The counselling team operates predominantly on Day 4 as indicated in Appendix B. Some of the members of this team live on campus. On request, these team members are available to the participants for counselling across each retreat.

The members of the Confessors' team operate predominantly on Day 3 of the retreat to provide for Confession. However, as with counselling, participants are free to access Confession across the retreat by request.

The remaining staff at DRC, fulfil other supporting roles. The Kitchen team does not interact directly with the participants. Similarly, the praying team members, who are involved in incessant prayers, do not interact directly with the retreatants. These team members are on a roster to pray incessantly during the course of each retreat, for the preachers and the participants and for the success of each retreat. The administrative team attends to the registration procedures and facilitates meeting the sundry needs of the participants.

A resident doctor and a nurse service those with medical needs. A nursery provides day care services for children, which facilitates their parents to participate fully in the retreat (Kaniyaraseril, 2005). Notably, none of the participants of this study had young children.

### **1.3. The Issue of interest - Religious change at DRC**

The above discussion has identified the issue of interest for this study, namely the experience of Religious change at DRC. This interest in studying religious change is my professional interest arising from the lack of adequate training that I have experienced as a trainee in psychology and psychotherapy and thereby an incompetence at dealing with the religious and the spiritual in the therapeutic context. Religion and spirituality are arguably "among the most important factors which structure human experience, beliefs, values, and behaviour..."(Rose, Westefeld, & Ansley, 2008, p. 18). Recognising and honouring the religious and the spiritual dynamics is critical to the field of counselling and psychotherapy (Miller, 2005). Yet, West (2001) laments:

Counselling and psychotherapy have a problem with spirituality; it does not easily fit in with the professional and secular image that many therapists seek to present to the world. Many follow Freud in being dismissive of religion and of spiritual experiences (p. 1).

Furthermore, Hayes and Cowie (2005) note that much of counselling and psychotherapeutic practice has disregarded, dismissed, or minimized the therapeutic value and influence of the spiritual and the religious. A related issue is the lack of training in religious and spiritual competencies in academic and professional training programs. This is despite the fact that authoritative establishments in this field such as the American Psychological Association and the American Counselor Association have recommended incorporating such competencies in training programs (Magaldi-Dopman & Park-Taylor, 2010). Even the few resources that are available are confined to individual interests (Griffith & Griffith, 2002; S. P. Richards & Bergin, 1997). Thus religion and spirituality have remained a neglected concern in counselling and psychotherapy.

However, in the midst of this reticence towards religion and spirituality, there has been a thrust for integration of counselling and psychotherapy into the interdisciplinary arena (McLeod, 2003a; Nuttal, 2002; Rambo, 2010; Worthington, Kurusu, McCullough, & Sanders, 1996). For example, Rambo (2010) called for counsellors to integrate religious change or conversion investigations into their counselling agenda because conversion supplies a “fascinating window through which to more fully understand the dynamics of religion, spirituality and culture in the 21st century” (Rambo, 2010, p. 434). The benefit of such an interdisciplinary enterprise hopefully will be that “the careful scholar may find new and often unexpected paths of interpretation when the authentic, complex reality of a person’s experience of conversion is taken fully into account” (Rambo, 2010, p. 436). Thus the domains of religious change or conversion and counselling and psychotherapy have much to share since they bear a resemblance of orientation in their pursuit of understanding human change processes.

Furthermore, in setting an agenda for the succeeding decade, Worthington et al. (1996) had called for incorporating the research on how religion helps people cope, heal and change into the counselling field. Moreover, with growing multiculturalism, researchers also call for examining varied human experiences, including religious conversion experiences in particular cultures (Lee, 2008; Rambo, 2010).

In addition, Csordas (1990) and Hurding (1995) indicate that it is characteristic of the Charismatic movement including the Inner Healing process to foster and facilitate conversion or change processes. Hence these processes are known, in Charismatic circles, to parallel therapeutic processes (Csordas, 1990; Hurding, 1995). Kaniyaraseril (2005) who conducted a previous doctoral level research on DRC from a communications perspective calls for multidisciplinary research on DRC including obtaining a psychological perspective.

Thus given the relevance of religious conversion to counselling and psychotherapy and the dearth of research on DRC, it is the researcher's interest at exploring the change processes occurring in the religious context of DRC or the nature of religious conversion operant at DRC.

#### **1.4. Aims and audience for the study**

The aims of a research project vary in terms of its goal, outcome and purpose (L. Richards, 2005). The goal of this research is to obtain participants' narratives of their change experiences at the Inner Healing Retreat at DRC, Kerala, India.

The intended outcome of this study is a PhD thesis. This thesis developed from participants' narratives seeks to understand the process of change that occurs with the participants and which DRC is popularly known to effect in its participants ([www.drc.org.in](http://www.drc.org.in)). It seeks to understand from participants' perspective, the processes surrounding religious conversion.



The research purpose of this project is to inform the domains of counselling and psychotherapy as well as the empirical literature on psychology of religion about the nature of change that occurs through participation in the Inner Healing Retreat at DRC. Hopefully, such an investigation will provide insights to the discerning psychologist, counsellor and psychotherapist as well as the empirical religious conversion investigator (Magaldi-Dopman & Park-Taylor, 2010).

The practical purpose of this study aims to give an ‘insider perspective’ to the Management of the Divine Retreat Centre (Maxwell, 2005). The researcher seeks participant’s version of their change experience so as to approximate as closely as possible, the experience of participation in the Retreat. Such a perspective may provide the management with insights into participants’ experiences thereby potentially influencing policy making. It might also interest the advocates, and equally well the critics, of the Charismatic movement both from within and those outside the Catholic Church.

This research is an attempt to address the gap in the training of counsellors and psychotherapists, namely that of a lack of training in religious and spiritual issues. The researcher was curious to learn the change processes that DRC is reputed for, in the interest of appropriating them for professional purposes. Thereby, this research will aid an understanding of the therapeutic in the spiritual and religious contexts and the spiritual and the religious in the therapeutic contexts.

The psychological research establishments, the management of DRC and the Catholic Church at large all form part of the audience of this research. However, since the participants also spoke about their experiences in theological language, and given that the Retreat was presented in theological language, this research might also interest the theological establishment.

### 1.5. Research question

Because research has not yet examined the DRC religious change experience, including from a psychological perspective, an exploratory study is a fitting research response. Hence this research adopted the research strategy of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (hereafter referred to as IPA) (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006; Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005; J. A. Smith, 1996, 2011; J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003, 2004, 2008) to facilitate such an exploration. Smith and Osborne (2004) point out that, "IPA is particularly suitable where the topic under investigation is novel or under-researched, where the issues are complex or ambiguous and where one is concerned to understand something about process and change" (p. 231).

Kaniyarseril (2005), who conducted a previous doctoral level research on DRC, adopted the phenomenological research strategy for his investigation. This approach restricts meaning-making to the level of the participant. In contrast, the researcher of this study has employed the research strategy of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to facilitate a psychological understanding of participants' experience of religious change or conversion. Thereby, this research brings a variation in methodology to the research on DRC. Inspired by the philosophy of Hermeneutic Phenomenology, IPA moves beyond the stage of description - as warranted in pure phenomenology - to the level of interpretation because it recognises that the researcher brings along a frame of reference or an interpretation when reporting an experience.<sup>10</sup>

The researcher of this study recognises the inevitability of interpretation when analysing the data and that the data is itself an interpretation, offered by the participants, of their

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<sup>10</sup> These philosophical underpinnings are explained in Chapter 3

experience. As Smith and Osborn (2008) indicate, “people struggle to express what they are thinking and feeling, there may be reasons why they do not wish to self-disclose, and the researcher has to interpret people’s mental and emotional state from what they say” (p. 54). In so doing, participants' voice is honoured while acknowledging the fact that the researcher brings along a framework or interpretations to bear on participants' voice.

The research question of this study therefore is:

*'How do the participants at the Divine Retreat Centre come to be what they come to be as a result of each day's experience of the Inner Healing Retreat?'*

This research question is broad enough to explore the process of change occurring with the participants at DRC. Importantly, the focus of the research question is the changes that occur each day or the religious conversion experience of each day of the retreat owing to the participation in the Inner Healing Retreat. It is a phenomenological research question and thereby addresses the phenomenological dimension of IPA, the research strategy of this study. Patton (2002) notes that a phenomenological study "focuses on descriptions of what a person or a group of people experience and how it is possible that they experience what they have experienced" (p. 104).

### **1.6. Participants of the study**

The participants to this study were selected from among the English-speaking participants of the English-speaking site on the second campus. All of them were of Goan lineage. Most of them lived in India, while a few came from overseas where they currently lived owing to their career pursuits. Given that the participants were of Goan lineage it is fitting here to provide a brief geography and history of Goa together with the religious assumptions that help understand the Goan religious lineage and thereby the participants of this study.

### 1.6.1. The location of Goa

The state of Goa, which is known for its beaches, enchanting landscapes of trees, fields and rivers, lies in the South Western part of India measuring an area of 3702 square kilometres.



Figure 5: Participants are of Goan lineage (www.mapsofindia.com)

### **1.6.2. A brief history and the religious demographics of Goa**

Apparently the first written reference to people living in Goa dates back to 2200 BCE in Sumerian writings. Presumably, the Aryans settled into Goa around 1000 BC following which varied political dynasties ruled Goa until the Portuguese conquered it in the 15th century (S. Abreu, 2009). Contrary to popular assumptions that the Portuguese brought Christianity to Goa, Dantas (1999) points out that the arrival of Christianity in Goa pre-dates the Portuguese and is linked to St Thomas the Apostle. However, it was only after the advent of the Portuguese that Christianity thrived in Goa and eventually became the ‘Rome of the East’, that is, the eastern headquarters of the Catholic Church (S. Abreu, 2009). The Portuguese ruled Goa for 450 years until internal resentment that began in 1918 culminated in the liberation of Goa from the Portuguese. This liberation occurred in 1961 when the Indian Government conquered Goa. It remained a union territory of India until 1987 when it attained the status of a state of India. Apart from the religious celebrations and ethos, the Portuguese legacy continues to prevail culturally in the form of food, dress and music and religiously through festivals and architecture (S. Abreu, 2009; Borges, 2000; Henn, 2008).

According to the 2011 census, Goa’s population was approximately 1.5 million, of whom 87.40 per cent were literate.<sup>11</sup>

The 2011 religious demographics were not available. However, unauthorised figures indicate that the Christian population in 2012 approximates thirty percent.<sup>12</sup> Given the Catholic

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<sup>11</sup> Data obtained from: <http://infopiper.com/2011/goa-population-2011-as-per-census-growth-rate-literacy-rate-sex-ratio/>

<sup>12</sup> Information obtained from: [www.navhindtimes.in/content/people-go](http://www.navhindtimes.in/content/people-go)

heritage of Goa, most of these Christians are predominantly Catholic. A much earlier census of 1991 cites the following figures for the different religions in Goa.<sup>13</sup>

State	Hindus	Christians	Muslims	Buddhists	Jains	Sikhs	Others
Goa	756,621	349,225	61,455	240	487	1,087	403

Figure 6: Religious demographics of Goa in the year 1991

### 1.6.3. The nature of Goan Catholicism and related assumptions

Castaldo (2009) provides a useful classification that highlights the varied assumptions that typify the variations of being a Catholic. He posits three types of Catholics: the Traditional Catholic, the Evangelical Catholic and the Cultural Catholic. Arguably, Goan Catholicism was very much Traditional Catholicism until the 1980s when the evangelical Christian set foot on Goan soil (Abreu, 2009). To a greater part, the Catholic Church of Goa to date is still a Traditional Catholic church. It portrays the following features. It ascribes a high regard to Catholic Clergy manifest in their regular church worship and in their relationship with the Clergy. It regards faith as a private affair that is confined to personal and familial efforts at sanctification. However, there are exceptions. For example, a public procession of the respective saint is carried out at feasts (Henn, 2008). Clapping and body swaying in religious worship is disdained. Most families probably own a copy of the Bible but it often remains unread. A personal relationship with the Church and its hierarchy is all that matters to satisfy the spiritual quest. Such an orientation however, is changing with the movement described below.

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<sup>13</sup> Obtained from:

[http://finance.indiamart.com/india\\_business\\_information/india\\_population\\_religion.html](http://finance.indiamart.com/india_business_information/india_population_religion.html)

In recent times, some researchers report a movement away from the traditional position which began with the Catholic hierarchy itself. Drawing on the insights of Vatican II, the post-colonial Catholic Church of Goa shed its emphasis on the Catholic hierarchy and became a Church of the laity. At such a time, particularly the 1980's, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal made inroads into Goa through lay people (Abreu, 2009).

Drawing on Castaldo's (2009) categorization, Goan Catholicism arguably adopted features proper to Evangelical Catholicism. It appears the advent of the Catholic Charismatic Movement into Goa influenced this change. It was the time when some Catholics became charismatic and learnt to prioritise their personal relationship with God over their relationship with the Catholic Church. It appears it was the time when the Catholic Church in Goa encountered the Cultural Revolution, in their understanding of God, a revolutions that had previously occurred in Europe. This revolution had led to a split in the Western Catholic Church and different Protestant sects had emerged because people disassociated from their Catholic roots in search of a more personal God. Some Catholics in Goa began to make public declarations of their faith and took to personal Bible reading. Apart from an amalgamation of traditional and evangelical features, current Catholicism in Goa also bears a mark of Indian-ness through its art forms as well as a mark of European-ness through the celebration of Christian feasts in churches and roadside shrines (S. Abreu, 2009; Henn, 2008).

From their narratives, it appears that the participants of this study exude characteristics of a Catholicism that lies somewhere between Traditional Catholicism and Evangelical Catholicism. Even though some of the participants of this study lived overseas at the time of the interview and may have assimilated into the local culture, it is well known that the Goans living overseas do not easily abandon their traditional practices but rather foster them. Such an

orientation was assumed of the participants of this study (Abreu, 2009; Borges, 2000; Henn, 2008).

### **1.7. Researcher's Assumptions**

Drawing on Elliot, Fischer and Rennie, (1999), I was guided by the need to be mindful of my assumptions and to bracket<sup>14</sup> them so that I move from "where I am the focus, to one where the participant is the focus as I attend closely to the participants story, facilitate the participant uncovering his/her experience" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 35). Hence I made them explicit to myself by writing them down so that I could hold them in my awareness and bracket them. Thus the assumptions enlisted below formed part of my self-reflexive engagement:

When collecting the data I assumed the following.

- I assumed that participants would create a narrative of their experience and thereby portray a reality in the interview context. This assumption endorses the view that the interview moment has its influence on the narratives that participants create for themselves.
- I also assumed that the closest and ethically appropriate way to obtain a narrative of the actual experience warranted that I interview the participants at the end of each day. Because IPA privileges participants' voice, I chose only a single data collection question to facilitate participants' sharing, in the effort to minimise my influence with regards to the direction of the interview.<sup>15</sup> I had also prepared some directives for interviewing (Appendix C). This was an effort at minimising my influence on participants' sharing. It was thus an effort to respect participants' choice of the reality that they chose to

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<sup>14</sup> The effort at bracketing is presented across the Chapters under the subtheme of Self-reflexivity.

<sup>15</sup> Further details about the data collection question are presented in Chapters 3 and 4



construct. I also stayed present to the participants with my eyes focused on them, particularly their body language rather than being preoccupied with taking notes. This strategy I assumed provided the participants with a sense of safety and noticed that it greatly facilitated disclosure.

- Related to the above is another assumption. I assumed that participants would have been influenced by my questions about how they felt emotionally and in their body (viscerally) and what they thought about what happened to them. This assumption was supported through the responses of some participants who seemed to notice these aspects in the course of the day and then reported on them.
- I assumed that when participants were not including enough personal material, they were having difficulty in engaging with the retreat. This view was supported in the case of Carmo and Seby for on two occasions I encountered them wandering outside the retreat hall instead of attending the talks that were in progress.
- I assumed that the intervention of my research would beneficially affect participants' performance at the retreat. This assumption appeared to be validated by Johnson who personally said to me before the interview on Day 2 that interviewing him contributed to his enhanced engagement in the retreat.
- When analysing the data I assumed that God would play an influence in the experience of the participants. Theology is at the core of what is occurring at DRC. Hence although this is not a theological thesis as such but a thesis that gives a voice to their experience of change, I assumed that I have to give a voice to their claims that God was involved with them. It is the considered opinion of the researcher that including theological references in this study is not necessarily at variance with the philosophy of the research strategy of

this study. Rather IPA warrants giving a voice to the participants and thereby respecting their experience for whatever it is. Hence, because theology is an essential part of participants' experience as reported by them, this thesis draws on the scant pertinent theological references to make meaning and thereby understand participants' experience.

- The researcher subscribes to the assumptions of a Traditional and Evangelical Catholic as enunciated above.
- It is a well-known fact that people attending the DRC retreats emerge transformed. There was no reason for me to think that participants of this study would be any different. Hence I assumed that there would be both an intense as well as varying levels of change. Given the religious context of DRC in which these change processes unfolded, the terms religious change and religious conversion or conversion are used interchangeably to refer to these changes processes occurring at DRC.
- Since the focus of this research is each day of the retreat, references to each day are mentioned in capital letters. For example, Day 1 refers to day one. It is assumed that such a presentation facilitates brevity and ease of communication.

### **1.8. Definition of terms**

The following terms are to be considered when perusing the thesis. They were referred to by the participants and reflect their Roman Catholic belief system except for the first four terms which were adopted by the researcher to encapsulate the experiences of the participants.

- '*Forestructure*' refers to the pre-understanding, pre-knowledge and assumptions that an individual or a group brings to bear on the interpretation of an experience (Leonard, 1994; Plager, 1994).

- '*Shadow*' refers to disowned, denied, unknown or repressed parts of oneself. Shadow work refers to the process of owning and transforming such aspects of self (Sherwood, 2007; Steere, 2009).
- '*Agency-thinking*' refers to the self-agency required for enacting an action while '*Pathways-thinking*' refers to the cognitive act of devising a modality for solving a problem (Hubble, Duncan, & Miller, 1999).
- '*Wounded-ness*' refers to participants' experience of psychological pain that impinges on their current functioning. It appears to have its origins in the past. Furthermore, it appears to be part of their procedural memory and seems to have an overbearing influence on their present functioning (Badenoch, 2008, 2011).

Apart from the Goan assumptions enlisted above which are an effort to understand the Goan 'forestructure' of the participants, the following terms form part of the Catholic world view that participants used in their narratives.

- '*Holy Spirit*' refers to the Third Person of the Divine Trinity or God in the Catholic belief system. Similarly the references to Jesus refer to the Second Person of the Divine Trinity as assumed in the Catholic faith.
- '*Charism*' refers to the New Testament understanding of the operations or manifestations of the Holy Spirit or gifts of the Spirit. According to McDonnell (1976), Charism refers to a specific human experience with a religious meaning.
- '*Sacraments*' refer to the seven main liturgical rites of the Catholic Church. The Eucharist or the Mass, the Anointing and the 'Confession' are examples of the Sacraments of the Catholic Church. The Confessional refers to the physical ambience that facilitates

the meeting between the Confessor and the penitent so that the 'Confession' can be made by the penitent to the priest.

- '*Anointing of the Holy Spirit*' refers to the Sacrament denoting the reception of the Holy Spirit.
- '*Host*' refers to a wafer that is ritually adopted during the Sacrament of Eucharist. The Catholic Church assumes the real presence of Christ in this wafer after it is ritually blessed.
- '*Sin*' refers to the offences committed against God and others.
- '*Vincentian*' or '*Vincentian Congregation*' refers to the Religious Congregation that owns and manages the Divine Retreat Centre.
- '*Participants*' of the study are those participants of the Inner Healing Retreats whose profession of faith is Roman Catholicism.
- '*Retreat*' refers to the Inner Healing Retreats from which the researcher collected data for this study. DRC also conducts other types of retreats as indicated above.

### **1.9. Delimitations of the study**

This research is a study of the change experiences of the participants and not the study of the Divine Retreat Centre per se.

Although this thesis adopts IPA as a research strategy in which "themes are usually expressed as phrases which speak to the psychological essence of the piece..." (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 92), the focus in the analysis of this thesis is not exclusively psychological.

Acknowledging the phenomenological experience of the participants warrants acknowledging the totality of their individuality including their 'forestructure', which again warrants an acknowledgement of their theological allusions. Hence this thesis seeks to honour participants'

theological experiences by acknowledging instances of a substantive focus, namely their allusions to the numinous dimensions of their experience and thus their allusions to God (Kahn, 2000). Because this experience is not some speculation but an embodied experience as manifested in the body, such allusions are significant from a phenomenological perspective as well as from the perspective of the Charismatic Movement (Csordas, 2007; Finlay, 2011). Furthermore, since such a focus is predominantly the concern of the domain of theology, this research draws on pertinent theological references as well as the scant references to the Charismatic movement to discuss the findings and thereby to understand the psychology of participants' religious response. Towards this end, this research adopts IPA broadly to investigate the psychological facet of the experience without omitting or minimising the accompanying religious facet. Such an orientation is the concern of the domain of psychology of religion (Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009).

### **1.10. An outline of the Thesis**

Outlined above is the issue of interest, which is the religious change experience or the conversion experience of the eight participants of the Inner Healing Retreat at Divine Retreat Centre, Kerala, India (Chapter 1).

Next follows a review and an evaluation of the pertinent literary contexts of Religious Conversion and Religious Experience. These are the literary domains in which this investigation of the change processes - occurring in the religious charismatic context of DRC - is situated. These reviews identify the gaps therein, which this study seeks to fulfil (Chapter 2).

The Theoretical/Epistemological Lens adopted for this study is presented next. To offer an appreciation of this lens, relevant problems within psychological research are identified and how IPA emerged to address these gaps is indicated. Furthermore, the philosophical notions that

have shaped IPA into a research strategy are presented followed by the epistemological position of IPA. The research question is then presented with an illustration of its philosophical underpinnings (Chapter 3).

Subsequent to the above is a discussion of the rationale for adopting the qualitative paradigm and IPA as the research strategy, including the procedures adopted for conducting this study. These procedures consist of the characteristics of the sample, the sampling procedure, data collection technique, data collection question, the data collection procedure and the procedures for recording, transcribing and analysing the data. The researcher has made a deliberate effort to align these procedures with IPA, in the interest of congruency between these procedures and the philosophical underpinnings of the research strategy adopted for this study (Chapter 4).

The findings of this study are then presented in Chapters Five to Eleven. These chapters represent the super-ordinate themes which are the research foci. These themes are then compared and contrasted with the literature. These themes evidence sensitivity to context, commitment, rigour, transparency, coherence, impact, importance, prevalence, representativeness, variability, clear focus and strong data (J. A. Smith, 2011; Yardley, 2000).

Following the themes above, is Chapter 12 which presents a comparison and a contrast of the findings with the literature on the issue of interest, namely Religious Conversion. It is a discussion on the points of similarity and difference between participants' experiences of change and this literature. A discussion with Rambo's Integrative Model is also presented to justify the rationale for locating the study primarily in the literary domain of religious conversion.

Chapter Thirteen represents a conclusion to the thesis which includes an assessment of the study, a self-reflexive presentation, an identification of the limitations of the study and a list of recommendations.

## **Chapter 2: Pertinent Literature Review**

### **2.1. Situating the study in the literary context**

In their attempt to emphasize the uniqueness of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, J. A. Smith et al. (2009), indicate that the engagement with literature both in the introduction and the discussion should be "selective not exhaustive" (p. 113). Furthermore they recommend the following:

As such this kind of literature review can be quite short, and maybe more evaluative than most. Your aim, as usual, is to introduce readers to the field, but you will also need to inform them about some of the strengths and weaknesses within the key contributions to that field - and to offer an argument which shows why your study can make a useful contribution (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 43).

In addition, they also state that the "literature review should help you to identify a gap which your research question can then address and it should also help you to learn something about your participants" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 42).

This study is situated primarily in the literary context of religious conversion. Hence, a rationale, which explains the reasons for such a stance, is presented first. To introduce the reader to the field, a brief historical account of the main movements in the empirical study of religious conversion is then presented. The key figures in these movements are identified together with the strengths and weaknesses of these movements. Presented next is an evaluation that highlights the problem of defining religious conversion given the diversity in emphasis of the movements. This evaluation provides the reader with a rationale for what follows next, namely the definition of religious conversion which is appropriated to the phenomenological context of the participants of this study. The key contributions underpinning the empirical study of the process of religious

conversion are then evaluated. The evaluation of the pertinent literature on religious experience, which follows, addresses the broader issue of situating this research in the related literary domain of the Catholic Charismatic Movement. Amidst all these reviews, the researcher identifies relevant research gaps towards which this research makes useful contributions.

It is important to note here, that the literature review is interspersed with observations about DRC and the participants of this study to identify the relevance of the literature that is reviewed.

## **2.2. The Domain of Religious Conversion**

### **2.2.1. Rationale for situating the study in the literary domain of religious conversion**

The rationale for adopting religious conversion as the primary literary domain for this study is as follows:

Firstly, participants endorsed experiencing profound changes in their lives. They came to the retreat experiencing crisis in their lives. By the end of Day 6, it was obvious that some of them had been transformed in manifold ways such that the phrase 'religious conversion' encapsulates that experience. It must be noted here that participants did not explicitly use the word 'religious conversion'. Such a lack is expected given the Indian prejudice against religious conversion. Stephens (2004) notes that conversion in India has been widely and popularly understood as a shift from one ism or reified religion, (for example, "Hinduism") to another (for example, "Buddhism" or "Christianity"). Having grown and lived in India, I am very familiar with this nuance accorded to the term 'religious conversion' in the Indian public discourse. Unmistakably, in the Indian context the usage of the phrase 'religious conversion' is confined to shifting religious affiliations. The reason for this confined nuance could be attributed to the recent developments in modern India which seem to have privileged this nuance. With the rise of



Hindu fanaticism, which seeks to prevent religious conversions away from Hinduism, religious conversion has become a legal issue in the Indian context. There are now legal penalties against those who convert. In some states of India a conversion 'permit', which has to be signed by the district magistrate, is required (Stephens, 2004). Furthermore, religious conversion invites social sanctions. Thus the term 'religious conversion' is a highly sensitive issue as the above arguments indicate. But these arguments also explain the lack of the use of the word 'religious conversion' in participants' narratives, even though their experiences resonate with religious change or religious conversion. Given the above background, expecting the participants to use the word conversion could be expecting them to appropriate a nuance that they would rather disassociate with.

Secondly, the term religious change has been used interchangeably with religious conversion in the empirical literature on religious conversion. Rambo (2010), for example, defines religious conversion as "a process of religious change that takes place in a dynamic force field of people, events, ideologies, institutions, expectations and experiences" (p. 441). D. Y. Kim (2011) endorses this interchange by noting that Rambo's model of religious conversion has become significant because "it helps us to examine the complicated and multi-dimensional elements of human religious change" (p. 4). Furthermore, Reese (1989) notes that the Conversion Motifs Model of Lofland and Skonovd reflects the diversity involved in religious change. Moreover, the term 'change' is an essential ingredient in most definitions of religious conversion (Ai-Banawi, 1994). For example, Gillespie (1991) refers to religious conversion as a way of change in the whole individual. The reports of the participants of this study were basically reports about change experienced in the religious context of DRC, the evidence for which is highlighted in Chapter 12 apart from Chapters 5 to 11.

Thirdly, religious conversion has been associated with the Catholic Charismatic Movement and is ritualised in the 'Baptism in the Spirit'. Some authors uphold that a change of personality is the character of revival experiences such as the Baptism experience. For example, Fichter (1975) conducted a study on Catholic Charismatic members across the US and found evidence of personal conversion in the context of the 'Baptism in the Spirit'. Hofmann (1975), who conducted a study on the Catholic Charismatic Movement, found the presence of change with each of the participants of his study. He reports that "a personal conversion experience which has been ritualised by receiving the 'baptism in the Spirit' is a very common, if not almost universal, experience of participants in the Catholic Charismatic Movement" (Hofmann, 1975, p. 39). Furthermore, Ranaghan (1969) and McDonnell (1970) elicit the presence of deep-seated personal change, experienced in the context of the Pentecostal or Charismatic experience. They report that members of the Catholic Charismatic Movement demonstrate better interpersonal relationships and are personally well integrated. In essence, these authors highlight an experience of change ensuing from the Catholic Charismatic experience. It is an experience which the participants of this study allude to as well.

Fourthly, IPA acknowledges that the researcher makes interpretations of the data. The double hermeneutic of IPA warrants the researcher to make interpretations of the interpretations offered by the participants of their experience. IPA recognises that participants interpret their experience couched in their local historical narratives and the researcher then interprets that interpretation of the participants. As stated above, participants reported experiencing changes in their lives, in the religious context of DRC, which were interpreted by the researcher as religious conversion. Stephens (2004) argues for a similar stance in relation to identifying religious conversion. He points out, that the scholar's role of critical assessment is warranted when

studying conversion experiences and that although "one should let converts speak for themselves; but perhaps one should not always give them the last word" (Stephens, 2004, p. 56). IPA acknowledges that in as much as the researcher would prefer to accord the last word to the participants, the reality in practice is a double hermeneutic, where "the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 3). Hence, "the researcher's beliefs are not seen as biases to be eliminated but rather as being necessary for making sense of the experiences of other individuals" (Fade, 2004, p. 648). Strauss (1979) seems to endorse such a position in the context of religious conversion for according to him, religious conversion is "an after-the-fact analytical label for a range of observed phenomena in which individuals affiliate with and commit themselves to groups approximating our notions of 'religious'" (as quoted in, Stephens, 2004, p. 36).

Fifthly, participants' experience resonates with Rambo's Integrative Model of religious conversion (Rambo, 1993, 1999, 2010; Rambo & Haar, 2011). Idiographic evidence for the stages underpinning this model is presented in Chapter 12.

### **2.2.2. Historical movements in the study of religious conversion**

The following is a historical account of the main movements in the modern empirical study of religious conversion. It seeks to introduce the reader to the empirical literary domain of religious conversion. The parallel conceptual research movement of theology is also introduced together with a consideration of the phenomenological studies on religious conversion. It is important to note here that while the conversion experiences of St Paul and later St Augustine remain as archetypes, the focus in this historical review is confined to the empirical research on religious conversion that began at the start of the 20th century.

### ***2.2.2.1. The first movement.***

The first movement in the empirical study of religious conversion is represented by the psychologists of the classical era of psychology. The pursuit of psychology occurred alongside the interest in the religious phenomena of conversion. This parallel emergence lasted until about the end of the first quarter of the 20th century. Most of these studies held that conversion is a normal process of religious growth, which is predominantly experienced in adolescent years. Two important focuses in the study of religious conversion, namely the focus on the duration of religious conversion and the focus on the agency in conversion, belong to this era. The former emphasizes that conversion could be gradual or sudden. The latter proposes that the convert could be a passive agent acted upon by external forces or an active seeker who seeks conversion (Reese, 1989; Stephens, 2004).

G. Stanley Hall (1904) provided the ground for the study of religious conversion. A psychologist and a philosopher, he held that conversion is a parallel occurrence at the individual level of what is basically an evolutionary process occurring at the global human level. He suggested that this process is mandatory and forms part of the maturation process occurring largely during the time of adolescence. This process involves a movement from self-centeredness to other-centeredness together with a growth in ethical practices. His work was taken forward by his students James M. Leuba and Edwin D. Starbuck (Reese, 1989; Stephens, 2004).

Leuba is credited with bringing the domain of psychology of religion into academia and thereby giving it legitimacy. Starbuck is credited with leading the empirical investigation of religious conversion. His empirical work is considered as the first psychological study of religious conversion. He employed the first data collection techniques in the study of religious conversion which included questionnaires and circulars to research some 237 individuals. He

found that the average age for conversion was 16.4 years. He was curious to uncover the mental and spiritual processes at work in conversion. He found that conversion was an adolescent adaptive response to alleviate emotional distress which arises from a sense of anxiety, fear, sin and helplessness. The converts in his study saw themselves as being acted upon by the Divine. This acknowledgement, which was then considered an external influence, gave rise to the idea of passive conversion. He wrote the first text on religious conversion, titled the 'Psychology of Religion'. His work was carried forward by William James (D. Y. Kim, 2011; Reese, 1989; Stephens, 2004).

James is considered the founder of the functionalist school of thought in the study of religious conversion. The functionalist approach examines how religion functions as a resource to deal with the problems of life. It has dominated the research in psychology of religion to date at the cost of a substantive focus, namely converts' experiences of the numinous (Kahn, 2000). James held that the function of religion was to unify the divided self. According to him, this is what occurs in conversion, a union of divided self, or of being twice born, namely psychologically or spiritually (James, 1902/1985).

James explained how this process of unification occurs. An individual may have a number of aims, ideals and objectives in life. However, when religious ideas begin to predominate over others, the former ones get relegated and the latter ones take a central place and become the pivot of one's focus. When this shift occurs, conversion takes place. At the intrapsychic level it involves an interaction between the conscious and the unconscious. The mind seeks equilibrium on a regular basis. However, when the unconscious - which according to him comprises of impulses, inhibitions, obsessions, fears and doubts and usually lies beyond the conscious - begins to intrude into consciousness and undermines the equilibrium. The individual

then experiences the self as wrong, inferior and unhappy. The mind seeks to restore equilibrium by making certain ideas and aims central to one's life. This internal transformation is thus a resolution of the internal struggle. Those individuals with a larger unconscious are prone to this upheaval and experience sudden conversion. In contrast, individuals who resist this intrusion of the unconscious experience gradual conversions (James, 1902/1985).

James was inspired by Starbuck's category of volitional conversion which represents conversion by self-surrender and is a rapid occurrence. He suggested that it is through Divine intervention that the divided self of the sick soul is integrated. Thus although a psychologist, he acknowledged the role of the Divine in the conversion process, including the use of theological language, as is evident in his adoption of the theological term, sin. For him, the goal of conversion was the union with the Divine where the real work of conversion is accomplished. However, he did not enunciate much of this dynamic between the human and the divine, probably because he was preoccupied with the more obvious beneficial psychological effects ensuing from the conversion experience (D. Y. Kim, 2011; Reese, 1989; Stephens, 2004).

Another significant aspect of religious change that emerged in this classical era relates to age. Adolescence was upheld as the most appropriate time for change with a few exceptions in adulthood. Richardson (1985) notes that this movement brought attention to the following factors that are now part of the discourse on religious conversion: namely the notion that the convert is a passive agent; the role of crisis; the sense of sin, helplessness or inadequacy in inducing sudden and intense conversion; and the possibility of a radical change in self. This movement contributed towards psychological research by providing methods and contents for research (Richard L Gorsuch, 1988). Some of these methods and interpretations however lacked rigour and competence. For example, Coe (1916) employed the interview technique to examine

causality between developmental physiological changes and religious conversion. This movement provided some rich descriptions and explanations for the phenomenon of religion, the most notable resource for which is the book of James: 'The varieties of Religious Experience'. Other personnel associated with this movement such as Hall, Starbuck and Wundt also had a reputation in academia and the psychological establishment (Beit-Hallahmi, 1989; D. Y. Kim, 2011; Reese, 1989; Stephens, 2004).

#### ***2.2.2.2. The second movement.***

Following James, the study of religious conversion underwent a decline. Psychologists sought to make psychology a natural science. Towards this end, they embraced causality and determinism, which together with the trust for ecumenicity and the rise of Christian Educational Movement, did not favour the study of religious conversion. Consequently, religious conversion and any association with the Divine were perceived with cynicism. In such an environment arose a countermovement towards religious conversion which was predominated by psychoanalysis. It sought to counter James' positive rendition of religious conversion.

Sigmund Freud considered religion as an illusion, a neurosis, an infantile wish-fulfilment and a regressive pathological tendency. During this era, conversion was studied together with other pathological behaviour. Freud reduced religious conversion to early sexual and familial conflicts particularly the Oedipus complex, where the young boy surrenders to the will of his father. Similarly in the face of helplessness, anxiety and guilt, the convert accepts the superior power of God. Following Freud, it was largely assumed in the second quarter of the 20th century that intra-individual motivational factors lead to conversion (D. Y. Kim, 2011; Reese, 1989; Stephens, 2004) .

Whilst most psychoanalysts pathologise religious conversion, there are some exceptions. For example, Leon Salzman did not fully agree with Freud. He tried to merge the ideas of James and Freud in his understanding of conversion. Drawing on Freud, he suggested that some conversion is a solution to the internal conflict that emerges from repressed hostility towards the authority. Such conversion, according to him, is often a sudden conversion (D. Y. Kim, 2011). Carl Jung was another psychoanalyst who differed from Freud and perceived conversion as a positive accomplishment. To him religious conversion was an effort to acquire interpersonal balance, a release of the libido through a movement towards the archetypes (Reese, 1989). Antoin Boisen, drawing on his experience, suggested that conversion is a thrust towards a re-organisation of one's personality. While he admitted to the possibility of psychosis in religious conversion, he suggested that the most significant contrast in religious conversion is between spiritual victory and spiritual defeat (Ai-Banawi, 1994; Reese, 1989).

Thus most of the psychoanalytical forces seemed to undermine religious conversion through an understanding of human nature bereft of religion (Fuller, 1988). It focused on the influence of early intra-psychic conflicts on religious conversion, especially repressed resentment towards parental authority. Rambo (1982) points out that though psychoanalysis has highlighted the significance of early intra-psychic conflicts and the role of the unconscious and the pathological route possible in religious conversion, most of these conclusions were based on deviant and mentally ill cases.

### ***2.2.2.3. The third movement.***

The study of religious conversion was abandoned in the beginning of the second half of the 20th century by the psychological establishment. However, there was a revival in the years following. The central idea behind this revival was the idea of brainwashing. The theory of



brainwashing held that extraordinary stress can change not merely the psychology but also the physiology of the individual leading to a conversion (D. Y. Kim, 2011; Reese, 1989; Stephens, 2004).

Drawing on Pavlov's ideas and contrasting them with his own Wesleyan Church context Sargant (1957) established a relationship between brainwashing and religious conversion in his work, "Battle for the Mind". He may have been influenced by stories about Chinese brainwashing techniques and the American prisoners of war returning from the Korean conflict. He suggested that overstimulation from external sources can actually make an individual emotionally fatigued and consequently gullible to conversion. He suggested that the Wesleyan fire and brimstone preaching techniques could induce states of intense emotional excitement (Stephens, 2004).

Lifton (1961) sought to understand the psychological climate in the totalitarian context of China and perceived similarities between the Chinese techniques and religious conversion. Windemiller (1960) also perceived similarities between Chinese strategies of brainwashing and the Wesleyan Church revivals.

#### ***2.2.2.4. The fourth movement.***

The fourth movement represents the sociologists and spans the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. These researchers were interested in the study of the New Religious Movements that emerged at this time. The most significant researcher of these New Religious Movements was Lofland (1966), whose work on cult conversion is still regarded.

While psychologists highlighted the intra-individual factors involved in conversion, sociologists turned their attention to the external factors that predispose the potential convert to conversion. Thus they accounted for the influence of the context in religious conversion. Gratton

(1983), for example, argued that it is the context that provides an understanding of the experience because it helps the convert interpret the conversion experience with the aid of cultural narratives. Three variants are noticeable among sociologists with regards to these influences (D. Y. Kim, 2011; Reese, 1989; Stephens, 2004).

The first position argues that conversion arises out of a felt sense of being deprived of belongingness to an aspired religious group. For example, Lofland and Stark (1965) posited that conversion is the result of deprivation of the ideal state of affairs or the frustration of feeling stuck in one's current state of affairs. Other sociologists such as Snow and Machalek (1984) and Heirich (1977) posited that such a state of affairs represents crisis or stress.

The second position holds that conversion is due to social exchange with members of a religious group. For example, Bainbridge (1992) and Kilbourne and Richardson (1988) posit that conversion is the result of a cultivated interpersonal attachment. The degree and intensity of the consequent change is proportionate to the intensity of attachment to the newfound religious community.

The third position claims that conversion is the result of effective recruitment drives by the members of a religious group. Snow and Machalek (1984) highlighted the significance of recruitment strategies through their notions of social networks and affective and intensive interaction between potential converts and members of a group.

The sociological studies emphasize factors external to the individual, particularly the social institutions that establish contacts and mobilize the potential convert towards conversion (Ammerman, 2003; Bainbridge, 1992; Kilbourne & Richardson, 1988; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998). These studies argue for a passive conversion suggesting that the convert is acted upon by these external social forces. This sociological position was however contested by Roger Straus

(1979) who suggested the idea of an active seeker, who seeks change that is meaningful and purposeful. All individual forces are then mobilised to facilitate that change.

Richardson (1985) notes the increasing prominence of the gradual view held by sociologists over the classical view of the psychologists who maintained that conversion is a sudden process. Hood et al. (2009) question this division and recommend an acknowledgement of the complexity of conversion. According to them the sudden and gradual paradigms may not be mutually exclusive in the actual experience of conversion, a stance that seems to be validated by the participants of this study.

#### ***2.2.2.5. The fifth movement.***

The fifth movement is represented by the anthropologists who became interested in the study of religious conversion since the 1970s. They focused on the interaction between the individual and the culture. Again, three major variants are visible in these anthropological studies (Stephens, 2004).

The first position argues that conversion is a rite of passage. Van Gennep examined the rites of passage prevalent in public ceremonies and identified three stages in operation. The convert at first lies in a state of social isolation following which there is a movement towards a transitional state before a full membership is accorded to the convert as a member of the new community. He extended his idea of passage to study the public conversion ceremonies of Hindus, Muslims and Christians (Stephens, 2004).

The second position holds that conversion is a process of rationality. Robert Horton proposed his intellectualist theory or the theory of rationality of conversion. According to this theory every religious system is a theoretical system which has its own modes of explanation, prediction and control in the interest of conversion. He suggested that conversion to bigger world

religions such as Christianity and Islam reflects a historical movement from the local microcosm of tribal thinking to a macrocosm of a world religion. He identified the following as causal factors of conversion, namely, colonialization, commercialization and conglomerations of political entities (Stephens, 2004).

The third position proposed by Anthony Wallace holds that conversion is a recurrent phenomenon of history that seeks the revitalization of a culture to make it more satisfying to particular times in history. Accordingly, members of a group seek a homeostasis by engaging in a purposive, ordered and conscious endeavour to innovate and create a new and rewarding culture. This revitalization process involves five stages. Christianity, Islam and Buddhism are instances of such a revitalization effort (Stephens, 2004).

Overall, the Anthropological focus has failed to account for the psychological influence on the convert and hence insufficient to explore issues at the individual level. It is also inadequate to account for divine influence in religious conversion. Nevertheless, this movement highlights the wider cultural dynamics that may impinge on religious conversion (Stephens, 2004).

#### ***2.2.2.6. A parallel movement.***

Almost parallel to the movements in empirical research on the study of religious conversion has been the conceptual research of the theological establishment. The prime concern of this movement has been to identify the religious factors that facilitate religious change. Three different variants are noticeable among the Christian theologians of the 20th century (D. Y. Kim, 2011; Reese, 1989; Stephens, 2004).

The first position is represented predominantly by theologians such as Paul Tillich (1963) and Emilie Griffin (1980). They suggest that religious conversion is the product of an encounter

with God. Therefore conversion is a passive act where the convert is acted upon by divine grace and is thereby transformed. Gordon T Smith (2001) and William J. Abraham (2001) agree that conversion is the result of divine grace. But they argue for the necessity of repentance and of turning to God in faith, suggesting that the initial part of the conversion process warrants an active seeker (D. Y. Kim, 2011).

The second theological position concerns itself with the relationship between the Sacrament of Baptism and religious conversion. Drawing on the baptismal experiences of the early Church as depicted in the New Testament, these theologians contend that the ritual act of Baptism is the visible means of God's grace through which the individual experiences regeneration or rebirth within a particular community. Although this movement is represented by theologians such as William Barclay, George E. Morris, Cedric Johnson and Newton Malony, of particular note are the Catholic theologians such as Donald L. Gelpi and Francis Sullivan given that this study investigates the conversion experiences of participants at a Catholic Charismatic centre. Their pertinent arguments are presented in the Discussion on the super-ordinate themes and in Chapter 12.

The third position contends that conversion is an ongoing process of being a Christian. It ensues from turning to God in prayer and to others in service. This position is represented by theologians such as Karl Rahner (1978), Gustavo Gutierrez (1978) and Ronald D. Witherup (D. Y. Kim, 2011; 1994).

#### ***2.2.2.7. The contemporary scenario of psychological studies on religious conversion.***

On the contemporary scenario, the study of religious conversion is pursued by both psychologists and sociologists. Consequently, social-psychological studies are the new trend in the field. The focus in these studies is both the psychological factors that predispose the potential

convert to conversion and the social contexts that facilitate religious conversion through group membership and participation.

Four variants are visible in the contemporary studies of religious conversion:

The first position holds that conversion is an integrative effort that seeks a relief from emotional upheavals. Pargament (1996), Stewart (1966), and Zinnbauer and Pargament (1998) suggest that conversion is an integrative effort wherein religiosity is adopted to counter stress and emotional crisis. Unlike the forces in the second and the third movements which dismiss the role of the divine, these researchers assume the influence of the divine. For example, Pargament (1997) defines religious conversion as "an effort to re-create life, the individual experiences a dramatic change of the self, a change in which the self becomes identified with the sacred..." (as quoted in, Kim, 2011, p. 36). In her study of 40 converts from different religious groups, Ullman (1989) found that converts experiencing emotional distress had acquired a positive sense of self through association with the sacred.

The second position argues for conversion as a result of intellectual arousal and thereby of cognitive dissatisfaction. Lofland and Skonovd (1981), for example, acknowledge the influence of intellectual exploration in religious conversion. They hold that the intellectually driven convert is an active seeker who seeks religious information and arrives at a conversion experience. This information may be obtained through intellectual resources such as books and talks. Often this pursuit is individually driven and is devoid of external pressure. Conversion may occur over a period of time with little emotional arousal. For some converts conversion might be a pursuit of truth. This intellectual position offers a difference to the argument that conversion emerges out of crisis.

The third position contends that conversion is part of human development. Gillespie (1991), Conn (1986) and Fowler (1981) suggest that conversion is part of the human developmental process. Gillespie (1991) suggests that conversion helps the individual establish an identity which is related to one's relationship with others, the environment and the divine. It has a deep integrating effect on the convert in terms of integrating attitudes, values and feelings about self. Conn (1986) perceives conversion as a human drive towards transcendence, which ensues in a profound change and a re-orientation in life. Whilst these authors acknowledge that the conversion process can begin in adolescence, they identify it as an adult experience. Thus this developmental position that conversion could occur even in later adulthood offers a difference to the position of the early psychologists that conversion is primarily an adolescent phenomenon.

The fourth position comprises of attempts to frame conversion research into models. Prominent among these models include Rambo's (1993; 1999; 2010) Integrative Model of Religious Conversion and Gooren's (2007) Conversion Career Model. It appears that Rambo's Integrative Model is the most comprehensive attempt to understand conversion. It is a process model that identifies conversion as a six-stage process. A comparative analysis of participants' experience with Rambo's Integrative model is presented in Chapter 12 because doing so endorses the rationale for situating this study primarily in the religious conversion literature.

#### ***2.2.2.8. Conclusion to the historical review.***

In conclusion, the historical review above portrays the complexity of researching the phenomenon of religious conversion. It demonstrates the lack of uniformity in the understanding of religious conversion and highlights the prevailing differences (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998).

Perhaps, each of these movements is a reflection of the prevailing worldview of their times which shaped their understanding of religious conversion.

Another notable research gap that is obvious in the classical era but remains pertinent even in contemporary times is the paucity of substantive approaches to the study of religious conversion. Kahn (2000) observes that the functionalist approach has dominated psychological research on religious conversion. The functionalist approach focuses on how religion is used to cope with life's problems. The lack of substantive approaches has meant that there has been a failure at acknowledging adequately the transcendent dimension in the psychological studies of religious conversion. Arguably, such a prejudice may be the result of the very focus of psychology which traditionally has been cognition, affect and behaviour and owing to which psychologists "often assume that when people talk about their experience of the transcendent they are really talking about an affective state within themselves" (Kahn, 2000, p. 2). Consequently, psychologists have been accused of excluding the transcendent dimension or of omitting the essence of religious experience. Theologians have duly acknowledged that converts allude to this transcendent reality in their reports of religious conversion.

Without dismissing the functionalist approach, this research seeks to highlight both the functional and the substantive aspects that are visible in the narratives of the participants. Thereby this research seeks to acknowledge the substantive focus by drawing attention to the religious content in participants' narratives. Rambo (2010) maintains that "it is imperative that conversion scholars devote time and energy to studying the religious content, including beliefs and practices of the group into which and out of which a person is converting" (p. 435). Such an endeavour will enable the researcher to:

...learn about the expectations, metaphors of change, patterns of relationships within the



group, and the group's norms for who is considered a "real" convert. Without learning about the group's theology and practices, the conversion scholar may be misled to think the convert's description of his or her conversion is idiosyncratic ( Rambo, 2010, p. 435).

Accordingly this research seeks a definition of conversion that accords with participants' experience of change which is implicitly the DRC experience of religious conversion that aligns with the Catholic Charismatic understanding of conversion. For, DRC seeks a process of change that is facilitated by the Catholic Sacramental practices and may yield in an encounter with the Divine. Furthermore, such a perspective has warranted that this thesis accounts for the experiences of the transcendent as interpreted by the participants. The super-ordinate theme 'Baptism in the Spirit' in Chapter 10, highlights this account (Del Colle, 2004; Martin, 2011).

Another limitation of the prevailing emphasis on the functionalist approach as highlighted above has been the neglect of the less intense conversion experiences (Ullman, 1982, 1989). These less intense experiences include *adhesion* (Nock, 1933), *alternation* (Travisano, 1970), *consolidation* (Gordon, 1974), *intensification* (Rambo, 1993) and *metamorphosis* (Reese, 1989). Kahn (2000) endorses this argument in his claim that researchers "tend to look at converts who make the most extreme shifts" (p. 11) thereby omitting a possible focus on less intense conversion experience. This research seeks to address this gap by identifying the range of intensity of religious change experienced by the participants of this study. Some of the participants can be located on the more intense end of the continuum of intensity while others can be located on the less intense end.

### **2.2.3. The problem of definition of religious conversion**

The history outlined above, highlights the absence of a universally accepted definition. Lee (2008) laments this lack of a universally accepted definition even after 100 years of

scholarship. Rambo (2010) recommends abandoning the pursuit of a universally accepted definition because it "is not only impossible, but is a distortion of the scientific study of religious change" (p. 440). But why could it be a distortion, one may ask?

Snow and Machalek (1984) seem to provide an answer:

Each prospective convert brings his or her own personal biography to the process, but this contribution is coloured by the group's universe of discourse. Thus, specific ideologies do not strictly determine the character of the converts' accounts; rather, they provide the basic algorithms upon which the convert constructs an 'appropriate' account of his or her conversion experience (p. 176).

Furthermore, Reese (1989) indicates that:

After examining almost 100 years of social scientific research into religious conversion, what one is left with is difficult to assess. Not only do the theoretical assumptions differ...but apparently the experiences being analyzed differ as well. It is increasingly becoming clear that religious change is not a single phenomenon. Rather it is a multiplicity of related but discrete phenomena. Therefore, the conclusions of one Investigator may have little bearing on the subject of another (pp. 36-37).

These authors seem to allude to the mediating influence of interpretation in the communication of religious experience whether this interpretation is accorded by the group to which the convert belongs or the researcher. They seem to suggest that even in the case of the convert, it is not the raw datum that is communicated as religious conversion but rather a construction that is shaped by the convert's biography and cultural narratives. Such a contention is understandable given that "religious and spiritual phenomena cannot be understood in isolation from cultural and social matrices" (Rambo & Haar, 2011, p. 714). Hence seeking a universal

definition would amount to a distortion because of the irreconcilable differences that might prevail across these cultural and social matrices.

The above arguments therefore suggest the need for adapting the definition of religious conversion to the particular context under investigation. Rambo (2010) rightly advised that researchers have to "explore the nature of the conversion experience of particular individuals" because "each person has distinctive issues that he or she must address during their journey of religious change" (p. 436). Merrill (1993), suggests that there is a need for relativistic thinking in the area of defining religious conversion because "a relativistic notion of conversion acknowledges that different religions define and evaluate conversion differently" (p. 154). Such a perspective thus ensures that the definition of religious conversion will be grounded into the particular phenomenological experience that is investigated.

All these arguments are implicitly a call for an idiographic focus on conversion. In adopting IPA as the research strategy, this study seeks to address this call for an idiographic study of religious conversion.

#### **2.2.4. The definition of religious conversion**

So what do the participants of this study attest to, in fulfilment of the research question: *How do the participants at the Divine Retreat Centre come to be what they come to be as a result of each day's experience of the Inner Healing Retreat?* Participants reported on how they were impacted by the events of each day and that this impact effected changes for them. They were thus talking about the '*what*' and the '*how*' of their phenomenological experience. The '*what*' seeks to understand the *degree* and the *content* of their religious change. The '*how*' seeks to understand the *context*, the *agency* and the *duration* of that experience. Patton (2002) notes that a phenomenological study "focuses on descriptions of what a person or a group of people

experience and how it is possible that they experience what they have experienced" (p. 104).

Thus, the research question of this study is a phenomenological question for it seeks a phenomenological answer of the experience of religious conversion from the data.

Accordingly, the definition of religious conversion adopted for this study is a phenomenological definition as well as an idiographic definition. Thus religious conversion is defined as *an event/process of regeneration of participant's Catholic faith and practice, facilitated by the DRC context to surrender, to open up, to confess and to be counselled ensuing in an encounter with the Divine with concomitant personal healings at varied levels.*

It is important to enunciate the nuances implied in this definition of conversion. At first, the *duration* of change experienced by the participants is both gradual and sudden which is implied by the use of the words '*event/process*'. There is evidence of gradual change that began prior to the retreat and also of intermittent sudden change in the course of the retreat. Although the initial 70 years of research on religious conversion was polarised between gradual and sudden conversion, more recent researchers are acknowledging the complexity of religious conversion with regards to the duration of conversion. The step model of Iyadurai (2011) for example views conversion as both an event and a process. It acknowledges that on one level the process of religious conversion occurs gradually but that there might also be events that occur intermittently across the gradual process. These events which are in fact religious events become the turning points in the conversion process. Iyadurai (2011) identifies these moments as the "spark" or the "religious experience in the conversion process" (p. 510). Furthermore this "spark is the meeting point of the divine and the human in the conversion process" (Iyadurai, 2011, p. 517). The participants of this study evidence a similar pattern in their experience of religious

conversion, hence the use of the terms '*event/process*'. Evidence for this combination of *event* and *process* as operationalized in the case of the participants is presented in Chapter 12.

The *degree* of religious change implied in participants' reports is that of '*regeneration*'. What is implied in the use of the word *regeneration*? Snow and Machalek (1984) noted that four progressive degrees of religious change had been identified in literature, namely *alternation*, *consolidation*, *regeneration* and *metamorphic change*. Reese (1989) noted that *adhesion* had been identified in literature and situates it prior to alternation. He proposed a continuum of religious conversion where adhesion, alternation, consolidation, regeneration and metamorphic change lie in an order of progressive intensity. The distinguishing feature of intensity is the level of commitment to one's faith and religious practice and the ensuing level of change in one's life. Thus religious change varies in intensity. On the lower and therefore less intense end of the continuum is adhesion while on the higher and more intense end is metamorphic change. In between these two poles and increasing in intensity lie alternation, consolidation and regeneration (Reese, 1989). This typology is adopted for this study because it helps specify the degree of change experienced by the participants.

Nock (1933) proposed adhesion. In *Adhesion* a person may engage in the practices of a religious group and may even identify with a group but without undergoing an intense life change. It is merely adding another religious practice to the ones already in place (Reese, 1989).

*Alternation* was discussed by Travisano (1970). It is comparatively more intense than Adhesion because it involves a more intense commitment in the form of religious beliefs, unlike the latter which involves a mere observance of religious practices. The change involved in alternation is contained within the broader religious domain that one already belongs to (Reese, 1989).

Gordon (1974) identified *Consolidation* as an instance where the convert may return to the religious practice that was temporarily abandoned. But that return involves an incorporation of the religious practices from other religions, which were assimilated in the intervening period. In consolidation, the person grew up with a religious faith but abandoned it for a while and then returned back to religious faith. This return might also include a different religious faith than the original one. The commitment to this faith however is not very intense (Reese, 1989).

Reese (1989) indicates that *Regeneration* is a return to a religious affiliation that was either not taken seriously or abandoned. This process of renewing the belief system may be emotionally dramatic or intense. But the person always remains within the confines of a single religious faith. This type is associated with St Augustine (Reese, 1989). William James used the term regeneration interchangeably with conversion when he stated: "to be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the gradual or sudden, by which a self...becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy (1902/1982, p. 189)" (as quoted in, D. Y. Kim, 2011, p. 21). Rambo's (1993) concept of 'Intensification' appears to resemble this notion of regeneration. Intensification refers to the "revitalized commitment to a faith with which the convert has had previous affiliation formal or informal" (p. 13). However, intensification does not entirely resemble regeneration because it examines the social and cultural distance achieved by the convert so as to be considered a convert (Kahn, 2000). Regeneration accounts for this distance but also incorporates the degree of commitment to the belief system of the particular religious faith.

*Metamorphic change* is a radical, personal change in identity. Snow and Machalek (1984) suggest that metamorphic change refers to a much more fundamental reality than mere practices

or beliefs. It is a complete change in the convert's universe of discourse. The experience of St Paul on the road to Damascus is considered an example (Reese, 1989).

Snow and Machalek (1984) suggest that consolidation and regeneration are closely linked to metamorphic change because the universe of discourse is shifted from the periphery to the centre of one's attention.

Most participants' experience resonated with the concept of regeneration typically expected of the Catholic Charismatic context. Hofmann (1975) posits that the Catholic Charismatic experience is one of 'renewal, release and continuation of baptismal initiation'. Martin (2011) endorses such a claim by claiming that the most prominent interpretation of the charismatic experience in Catholic circles "is a 'stirring up' or 'renewal' or 'actualization' of the gift of the Spirit given in the sacraments of Christian initiation, primarily of baptism and confirmation" (p. 21). Interestingly, Fichter (1975) substantiated this claim in his study of 744 Catholic participants. He found that his participants experienced "a change of heart, a religious metanoia, a conversion experience" which was "ritualized by receiving the 'Baptism in the Spirit'" (as quoted in Hofmann, 1975, p. 70).

The experience of the participants of this study resonates with this claim that the charismatic renewal is essentially an experience of regeneration. In the context of this study, it refers to the intense commitment of the participants to their Catholic faith. Battley (1986) suggests that at the centre of the charismatic experience "is a dramatic enlargement of all the various Christian doctrines of regeneration" (p. 50). This enlargement for the Catholic Charismatic involves a bringing back into prominence of what was originally given in Baptism.

The above background explains why the Catholic Charismatic experience has traditionally been labelled as the 'Renewal' thereby implicitly suggesting that it is an experience

of regeneration. In identifying participants' experience as an instance of regeneration the researcher argues that participants returned to their Catholic faith with a more intense commitment than they were familiar with.

The *encounter with the Divine* refers to the "religious experience in the conversion process" or the "spark" (Iyadurai, 2011, p. 510). It refers to participants' experience of a felt sense of encounter with the Divine. It refers to the passive *agency* involved in participants' experience of change. While such an experience occurred predominantly on Day 6, some of the participants had such encounters even on other days. These instances of encounter with the Divine are highlighted to provide a substantive focus that has allegedly been lacking in the psychological studies of religious conversion (Kahn, 2000). It is hoped that the participants of this study will notice that such a focus completes and acknowledges this important facet of their experience at DRC. As Fick (1998) indicates, "a challenge for psychology then is to gain an interpretative perspective which is satisfying, not only to the researcher, but to those who are subjectively experiencing religion" (p. 73). In contrast, the active agency refers to participants as the agents or initiators in their own change processes.

The *context* that contributed to facilitating the change process includes the call to surrender on Day 1, the call to open up to on Day 2, the call to confess on Day 3 and the call to be counselled on Day 4. The DRC context involves the Catholic Charismatic context of the Divine Retreat Centre.

The *contents* of change refer to the experience of 'Inner healing'. 'Inner healing' was obvious from Day 4 although aspects of it were evident even prior to it. However it came into prominence in participants' narratives on Day 5 and is highlighted as the super-ordinate theme for Day 5.



The phrase '*concomitant personal healings at varied levels*' refers to the varied levels of integration experienced by the participants. The healings refer to the healings of inner wounds, particularly participants' psychological wounds which are enunciated in the super-ordinate theme on 'Inner healing'.

Thus through highlighting the duration, degree or intensity, agency, context and content of religious change occurring with the participants, the definition seeks to account for the DRC paradigm of conversion. The definition accounts for DRC's "beliefs and practices" and "its expectations, metaphors of change, patterns of relationships within the group and the group's norms for who is considered a 'real' convert" (Rambo, 2010, p. 435).

### **2.2.5. Process of religious conversion**

Because this research investigates the process of change occurring with the participants in the religious context of DRC, the processes relating to conversion are discussed here. To reiterate, the thrust here, in keeping with IPA, is to evaluate the significant studies that investigate the varied elements of the process of conversion and to identify relevant gaps. These varied elements include the following: the duration of religious conversion, the degree of religious conversion, the agency in religious conversion, the context of religious conversion and the content of religious conversion. It must be noted here that these elements are the main facets of the empirical investigation on the religious conversion process.

#### ***2.2.5.1. Duration in religious conversion.***

Researchers have wondered whether religious conversion is a sudden event or a gradual process. Together with age, the issue of time was one of the first characteristic of religious conversion identified in the study of religious conversion (Reese, 1989). The assumption that conversion occurs as a sudden event belongs largely to the classical era of empirical research on

conversion. This classical understanding assumes that it may be induced by a context of stress emanating from external sources which facilitate feelings of guilt and personal inadequacy. Furthermore, drawing on Paul's conversion in the New Testament, most of the investigators of the classical era such as James and Hall assumed that it occurred as an event that was both dramatic and intense. In addition, an imposing external influence of the other was assumed and that there were perceptible moments of change (Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 1996; James, 1902/1985; Lee, 2008; Rambo, 1993; Reese, 1989; Snow & Machalek, 1983). Pratt was an exception to his times, for he held that a majority of conversion experiences were a gradual process (Hood, et al., 2009).

In contrast to the above, some researchers, most of whom are sociologists, posit conversion as a gradual process. This position assumes the following: that there is a lack of emotional crisis or feelings of guilt and inadequacy or even a sense of sin. Besides, there is a lack of concrete, perceptible moments of change. Rather, the individual gradually discovers the difference in self. Besides, this view upholds the lack of an imposing influence of the other. Thus this position assumes conversion as a less dramatic and a less intense process (James, 1902/1985; Lee, 2008; Reese, 1989; J. Robbins, 2007; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998).

Thus, most research on religious conversion appears to have been polarised on the continuum of time. Such a polarisation occurred, even though Starbuck had suggested an integrative position through his classification of conversion as both the volitional and self-surrender type. The former holds that religious change is gradual and the latter upholds rapid change which occurs when the will is surrendered. James had emphasized the latter which probably is the reason why the latter was relegated in the classical era (D. Y. Kim, 2011). In more recent times, Iyadurai (2011) reiterated the integrative approach that upholds conversion as

both an *event* and a *process*. This position incorporates both suddenness and gradualness. His step model identifies turning points that occur along the process of conversion. These turning points are the sudden *events* or "the meeting point(s) of the divine and the human" (Iyadurai, 2011, p. 517) that facilitate the overall gradual *process* of conversion.

#### ***2.2.5.2. Degree or intensity of religious conversion.***

The degree or intensity of Religious Conversion has already been discussed above.

On the question of depth of conversion, Paloutzian, Richardson, and Rambo (1999) found that conversion effects a deep change in the life functions of the convert (such as the purpose in life, meaning, and identity) and a significant change in one's attitudes, feelings and behaviour but none or minimal change in one's basic personality. McCrae (1992) too found little evidence of change on the Five-factor model of personality.

Snow and Machalek's (1983) Convert Role model represents the view that conversion involves a radical change. They propose that conversion is a radical change in the "universe of discourse" (Snow & Machalek, 1983, p. 265) of the convert. They identified four rhetorical indicators which lead to conversion: biographical reconstruction, master attribution scheme, suspension of analogical reasoning and master role. Staples and Mauss (1987), who tested this model rigorously, critique the rhetorical indicators and suggest that only biographical reconstruction holds true for the process of conversion. According to them, the other three indicators belong to the domain of religious commitment and not religious conversion.

#### ***2.2.5.3. Agency in religious conversion.***

Agency in conversion refers to the motivational experiences that trigger or add momentum and maintain participants' movement towards and during conversion. Some theories suggest that a convert actively searches for a different or a new faith (Dawson, 1999; Longer &

Hadden, 1983; Richardson, 1985). Other theories argue for a passive convert who is acted upon by external forces (Downton, 1980; Heirich, 1977; Richardson, 1985; Singer, 1979).

The 'Conversion Motifs' Model (Lofland & Skonovd, 1981) posits that conversion is a product of both objective or external conditions which influence the convert as well as the personal characteristics of the convert. According to Hood et al. (2009) the strength of this model is its ability to incorporate the psychological and the sociological aspects of conversion. It integrates the individual phenomenology of the convert with the objective conditions associated with conversion. Such a combination has yielded six patterns of conversion, namely the intellectual, the mystical, the experimental, the affectional, the coercive and the revivalist motifs. Hood et al. (1996) point to a lack of rigorous testing of the processes within each of these patterns and the difficulties with operationalising and verifying these motifs. Kose (1996) reports that, these patterns operate among Christian and Islamic converts. Lakhdar, Vinsonneau, Apter, and Mullet (2007) conducted an exploratory factor analysis which revealed the presence of these motifs among Islamic converts. However they also found three other motifs in their French sample. These motifs include the negativist motif (which is about converting to provoke or anger others), alloic mastery motif (where one converts to fight for the poor) and alloic sympathy motif (where the convert seeks to share possessions) (Lakhdar et al., 2007). This discovery endorses the fact that conversion is very much a phenomenological process that cannot be generalised across cultures and religions as sought by Lofland and Skonovd (1981).

Other researchers also emphasize a passive convert who is acted upon by supporting factors such as social networks or advocates of the new faith. These recruit and provide ongoing support to the convert. Researchers found a predominance of such supporting activities among Pentecostals, Evangelicals and Buddhists who were known to facilitate emotional bonding

between the members of their groups (Carrothers, 2007; Galanter, 1980; Hood, et al., 2009; Kahn, 2000; Snow & Machalek, 1983).

A landmark study in the area of social support is the widely studied Lofland and Stark's model of Social Networks (Downton, 1980). This process model assumes that converts go through a sequential funnel (Lofland & Stark, 1965). This funnel is a gradual process that moves from predisposing conditions (personality attributes that make an individual a potential convert) to situational contingencies (conditions that turn a potential convert into an actual convert). Frustrated seekers (active element) meet religious groups (passive element) who lead them to conversion. Thus this model acknowledges the active elements but emphasizes social networks as the key motivating factor for conversion. Although considered the most influential process model (Yang, 1998; Yang & Tamney, 2006), it has not been without its critics. Kox, Meeus, and Hart (1991), who tested this model in their study, claim that it portrays not the conversion process but rather a set of conditions associated with conversion. The discriminant analysis conducted by these researchers revealed that the conditions are independent of each other and hence not connected cumulatively to one another to form a process as assumed by Lofland and Stark (1965). Snow and Phillips (1980) tested this model on a Buddhist group in the US. These researchers and others like Snow and Machalek (1984) observe that this model has rarely been tested rigorously and that most researchers have utilised it, without examining it.

A survey of the literature revealed the predominance of the affectional motif over the other motifs. For example, a host of negative emotions are identified as being responsible for moving individuals into conversion. These emotions and feelings include awe [a mixture of fear and fascination], personal inadequacy, worthlessness, insecurity of survival, helplessness, depression, sadness, anxiety, wretchedness, awareness of personal evil and a sense of

estrangement from God (Cohen, Gruber, & Keltner, 2010; Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2004; Pirutinsky, 2009; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998). Situations inducing such emotions may include dysfunctional family backgrounds, disrupted relationships, abuse, exploitation, emotional stress, crises and confrontations to one's meaning system (Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2004; Lakhdar, et al., 2007; Pirutinsky, 2009). There are also positive situations that induce positive emotions such as love and joy. Such situations include marital prospects, geographical relocation, higher social class and other social and monetary benefits (Carrothers, 2007; L. A. Kirkpatrick, 1997; Lakhdar, et al., 2007; Mahoney & Pargament, 2004; Pirutinsky, 2009). A few other studies discovered that individuals moved into conversion through the intellectual route of being exposed to an intellectual exchange with members of other faiths. The remaining motifs were found in fewer instances (Hood, et al., 2009).

#### ***2.2.5.4. Context in religious conversion.***

Context refers to the religious, social, cultural, historical and interpersonal environments surrounding the potential convert. A number of researchers call for examining conversion in varied contexts (Hood, et al., 1996; Rambo, 1982, 1993; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998). Noticeably, not all contexts, particularly the religious, geographical, and racial contexts, have been adequately treated. There exists a religious and geographical bias. Religious bias refers to the Christian bias in conversion research (Hood, et al., 2009; Paloutzian, 2005; Richardson, 1985; Streib, 2008). Abu Raiya (2008) pointed out that conversion research "has focused almost exclusively on Christian samples; other traditional faiths have been largely neglected" (p. 292). The claim does not reflect the reality because the Christian samples investigated include mainly Evangelical Christian denominations. Lee (2008) confirms this limitation by asserting that conversion research has predominantly sampled unorthodox religious groups and that research

on mainstream traditions is found wanting. Rambo (2010) draws attention to this neglect of mainline churches such as Roman Catholics and the Anglican Communion and calls for research on these denominations. Even a recent study (MacDonald, 2006) that did involve Roman Catholicism focused on the movement from Catholicism to Pentecostal Protestantism. Similarly, Fick (1998) contends that this lack of denominational variation is a research gap. This thesis addresses this call for studies involving mainline denominations. The researcher and the researched are both Roman Catholic. Besides, the Retreat that this study investigates is the Catholic version of the Charismatic Movement.

Although comparatively small, the number of studies examining the Islamic context for conversion is increasing (Abu Raiya, 2008; Kose & Loewenthal, 2000; Lakhdar, et al., 2007). There are fewer studies though on conversion to other religions (Gooren, 2007; Hood, et al., 2009).

Geographical and racial biases refer to the large number of studies based in North America and Europe. These biases extend not merely to the convert but also to the researcher. Lee (2008) observes that most investigations of conversion involve males from either an American or European background. Owing to the geographical bias, the findings of conversion research cannot be generalized to people of other nations, including Indians.

Kaniyaseril (2005) who conducted the doctoral level research on DRC from a communications perspective calls for research on DRC from different perspectives including the psychological perspective. This research fulfils this call for studying the DRC phenomenon from the psychological perspective. More recently, Iyadurai (2011) notes a research gap in the psychological study of religious conversion in the Indian context and calls for such studies. With its focus on Indians, this thesis is a contribution to the field of conversion, thereby responding to

the call for studying varying contexts (Lee, 2008) and varying cultures (Rambo, 2010). Thus, this research focuses on an Eastern cultural context, namely India and is also a study of a mainstream religious tradition, namely Roman Catholicism. Furthermore, it is a version of Catholicism that is practised in the East. Empirical research on conversion has neglected these contextual features (Rambo, 2010).

#### ***2.2.5.5. Content in religious conversion.***

The Content in religious conversion refers its effects on the individual. Empirical literature reports on both positive and negative effects of conversion among a range of nationalities such as North Americans, Europeans, Latin Americans, Africans and some Asian converts. These effects were also noted among Islamic converts. The positive effects include emotional changes such as feelings of joy and comfort. Then there are changes in one's disposition to life, such as a new perspective on one's past and a decreased level of pessimism. There are also spiritual changes such as certainty of salvation, new knowledge about faith, a decreased level of estrangement from God and a newfound or new level of relationship with God. There is also a sense of a newfound self, an enhanced level of self-confidence, a new level of balance in life, higher level of functioning, unity where there was a divided self and decreased or no addictive behaviour. There are also changes reported in the convert's interpersonal relationships, such as an enhanced Other-focus, better gender and spousal relationships, increased care and concern for the welfare of family life (Cohen, et al., 2010; Hood, et al., 2009; Hood, et al., 1996; Lakhdar, et al., 2007; Magaldi-Dopman & Park-Taylor, 2010).

Some research identifies negative effects arising from conversion. James (1902/1997) for example, noted that these experiences may involve a "sense of incompleteness and imperfection;



brooding; depression; morbid introspection; sense of sin; anxiety about the hereafter; distress over doubts, and the like” (Cohen, et al., 2010, p. 167).

#### ***2.2.5.6. Other relevant issues in the study of religious conversion.***

##### *2.2.5.6.1. Age.*

Together with the speed of conversion, age is the most researched variable in conversion research. According to Hood, et al. (1996), conversion has traditionally been associated with adolescence and young adulthood. Starbuck (1915) had found mid-teenage as the stage for conversion. A more recent study involving 15,000 individuals reinforced this view. It found 15.2 years as the average age for conversion (Segal, 1990). All these age-specific figures have been derivatives from Western samples. Gooren (2007) observed that most studies on conversion have limited themselves to testing subjects below the age of 30. Fick (1998) noted that undergraduate students have been the testing subjects for most studies in this field. Consequently, there is a dearth of studies on conversion in midlife and old age. Fick (1998) calls for studies accounting for the different stages of life. This study seeks to address this gap by incorporating participants not just below the age of 30, but also between ages 30-55 years.

##### *2.2.5.6.2. Gender.*

Lee (2008) observes that fewer studies have investigated gender differences. Starbuck found a higher level of emotional display with women than with men (Nelson, 2009). Davidman & Greil (1993) also found similar emotional engagement with women and assumed a difference between women and men. Lee (2008) investigated women from the African context and calls for gender-based research in conversion. This research is an investigation of both men and women.

#### 2.2.5.6.3. *Methods.*

A variety of methods and techniques have been employed to study pertinent religious variables, some of which were developed in the early part of the 20th Century (R. L Gorsuch, 1984; Hunsberger, 1991). For example, some of the early techniques included questionnaires, personal documents such as private letters, autobiographical and biographical content, interviews and public confessions (Hood, et al., 2009; Malony, 1988). Other techniques included physiological instruments to measure variables such as prayer (Surwillow & Hobson, 1978). Some of these variables were spiritual well-being, Christian character and maturity and coping styles in a religious context (Alter, 1989; Basset et al., 1981; Ellison & Smith, 1991; Moberg, 1984).

Historically, questionnaire appears to be the commonly used technique. Some questionnaires have been statistically robust such that they evinced excellent reliability figures of .90 and above, but others demonstrated mediocre coefficient alphas (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1997; Caird, 1988; Fullerton & Hunsberger, 1982; Genia, 1995; R. L Gorsuch, 1984; Hunsberger, 1989; Lindsey, Sirotnik, & Heeren, 1986).

Gorsuch (1984) called into question the use of questionnaires for their failure to connect with the actual experience of the concerned individual and thereby with the richness of the religious phenomenon under investigation, particularly the spontaneous aspects of the experience. He observed a limitation with questionnaires, that the categories of the researcher were superimposed without being grounded in the experience of the participants. Consequently, what is important to the individual undergoing the religious experience may not be captured via questionnaires. To resolve the problem, Gorsuch (1990) recommended the use of open-ended questions whereas Farnsworth (1990) suggested phenomenology as the solution.

Another technique of note is the use of large scale surveys (Greer & Roof, 1992). These have provided global insights into trends and demographics of a particular place. But they have failed to provide information on the processes involved in the experience of a religious phenomenon or of individual-level analysis, a benefit derived largely from smaller samples (Fick, 1998).

Most empirical research in conversion has focused on a nomothetic perspective. As indicated above, there is a call for studying conversion from an idiographic perspective. Lee (2008) argues that conversion is an individual phenomenon unique to the person experiencing it. Rambo (2010) calls for research to investigate “the nature of the conversion experience of particular individuals” (p. 236). Hence, in adopting IPA, this study focuses on the idiographic while at the same time acknowledging the commonalities across the cases.

Snow and Machalek (1983) had noted that the researcher’s voice was privileged over the voice of the participant in conversion research. More recently, Robbins (2007) observed that scholars studying conversion were sceptical about participants’ claims. He calls for research honouring the voice of the participant which, through IPA, this study seeks to address. Hence, this research contributes a recent research strategy to the empirical study of religious conversion and thereby adds to the body of phenomenological studies on religious conversion.

Hood et al. (2009) note a lack of longitudinal studies in the field of religious conversion. In adopting a bolder design of interviewing each participant six times across six days, this study provides an extended perspective on participants' experience of change as experienced in the Retreat.

### **2.2.6. Phenomenology and religious conversion**

An exclusive database search for 'religious conversion,' 'religious experience' and 'phenomenology' revealed scant material. Quite possibly, the reason for such scant material is the disdain that prevailed towards phenomenological research in particular. For example, Post (1993) reports the prevalence of such a disdain among psychiatrists. Phenomenological research has not been alien to the empirical study of religious conversion. Some of the early work in the field was phenomenological in nature. For example, William James employed a phenomenological approach for his study of religious experience (C. Y. Kim, 2010). The more recent phenomenological strategies such as IPA, Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Giorgi's Phenomenology seem to have contributed towards changing such an attitude towards phenomenological research (Eatough & Smith, 2008).

On examining the existing phenomenological research in the study of religious conversion, Rambo (2010) reports the prevalence of phenomenological studies that have focused on uncovering universal structures or what appears to be in Husserlian terms, the 'essence' of various phenomena. He observes that phenomenological studies uncovering the distinct and unique aspects of a single individual experience are found wanting. Hence, he calls for studies exploring the 'nature of the conversion experience of particular individuals' (p. 436). This study seeks to fulfil this gap by examining the interpretations of the participants about their experience of change at DRC (Yamane, 2000). Such an endeavour is accomplished through adopting the strategy of IPA.

The database search revealed a few studies that have employed the strategy of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in relation to religious conversion. Branson (2010) conducted his study on fifteen Year 12 students from the Catholic schools across Perth, Western

Australia. His research examined their faith development and religious conversion and what facilitated these processes. The findings were compared and contrasted with theories to understand the behavioural aspects of the change. However, once again this study is situated in a non-Indian context. Yet, aspects of this research that resonate with participants' experience are identified in this research.

Mayers, Leavey, Vallianatu, and Barker (2007) report on a study conducted in the multicultural context of London, United Kingdom, examining the impact of religious or spiritual beliefs on seeking therapeutic help. The study of ten clients who had accessed therapy after they had experienced a crisis found that clients perceived both the crisis and the therapy as contributing factors towards their faith. This study reports on the perception of clients who were in therapy but fails to account for clients who might have dropped out of therapy. However, it notes the prevailing negative attitude towards religious beliefs among therapists and calls for clinicians to familiarize themselves with clients' religious beliefs.

Because the sample of this study is a mixed sample of both Goans living within Goa as well as overseas, it is hoped that this psychological study of religious change will contribute towards an understanding of the religious client from a multicultural context, such as those with an Indian lineage.

Another phenomenological study of note is the study of Devenish (2001) which investigated seven contemporary Christian converts in Western Australia. This research draws on Husserlian phenomenology in seeking eidetic structures and universal essences in participants' experiences, a position that differs philosophically from the research strategy of this study,

namely IPA.<sup>16</sup> However, despite this fundamental difference, this study highlights some substantive aspects of religious conversion that are pertinent to this study and are referenced below in Chapter 11.

### **2.2.7. Rambo's Integrative Model of Conversion**

The prominent Integrative Model of Rambo recognises conversion as a process (Hood, et al., 2009). Rambo identifies seven stages in conversion including the stages of participation and commitment which are either absent or not prominent in other models. These stages operate nonlinearly such that later stages do influence earlier stages. Kahn and Greene (2004) tested this model and found it difficult to operationalise some of the stages. However, they considered their study an empirical validation of this model and called for further research utilising this model.

The significance of Rambo's Integrative Model arises from the fact that, "change is explained by drawing upon the research and scholarship of psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and religionists, in conjunction with the contributions of theologians" (D. Y. Kim, 2011, p. x). Furthermore, Kahn (2000) notes that this model arose out of a phenomenological endeavour. It seeks "to capture as much as possible of the phenomenological richness of the conversion process" (Kahn, 2000, p. 5). Although this model has not been tested rigorously, yet D. Y. Kim (2011) highlights its credibility in the field when calling for researchers to the "use of Rambo's model in studies of other cases of religious change" (p. x). Hence this research utilises this model to substantiate the rationale for locating this study

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<sup>16</sup> The philosophical perspectives underpinning this thesis are highlighted in Chapter 3.

primarily in the literature on religious conversion. Thus in Chapter 12, participants' narratives are compared and contrasted with the stages of religious change identified in this model.

Rambo (1993) identifies seven sequential but recursive stages of conversion: *context*, *crisis*, *quest*, *encounter*, *interaction*, *commitment* and *consequences*.

The *context* accounts for the varied external factors that form the ambience and the remote influence for the movement towards conversion. These varied contexts may be social, cultural, political, familial and personal. *Crisis* refers to the catalyst that triggers the conversion process. It includes the problems, disruptions and upheavals experienced in life and the sense of inadequacy and incompetency experienced by the individual in countering these predicaments. The crisis may be of a long or a short duration, of a less or intense severity and may be confined to the individual or have wider ramifications. *Quest* refers to the potential converts' active search for a resolution to the crisis. Towards this end the individual may seek new experiences and new relationships. *Encounter* refers to the meeting with the advocate who recommends a particular pathway and attempts to convince the individual of its benefits. *Interaction* comprises of encapsulations that bring the individual into a proximate relationship with the proposed pathway. Two types of encapsulations, namely physical and social encapsulations, seek to create an environment where ideological encapsulation is actively imparted to the individual through rituals and rhetoric. Together with relationships and roles, these facets facilitate a narrative. The stage of *Commitment* is then established through a process that includes calls for surrender, rituals to embody the decision made about surrender and pre-emptive testimonies that seek to prevent backsliding. Although surrender appears to invoke the active agency of the seeker, it also incorporates the passive agency of God. Kahn (2000) noted, that "the essential element in the experience of surrender comes from outside the individual, that is, from God or the transcendent

dimension of experience" (p. 17). Finally the stage of *consequences* seeks to identify the immediate and long term effects of the conversion process (Kahn, 2000; C. Y. Kim, 2010; Rambo, 1993, 2010).

### **2.2.8. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the above review on the processes of religious conversion demonstrates the complexity of the conversion process. Greil and Rudy call for more "subjective approaches to understanding religious conversion", for "there is no one process-model that can accurately account for all cases of conversion" (as quoted in, Lee, 2008, p. 240). In qualitative terms, it is a call for an idiographic perspective in conversion research. Lee's (2008) study is an example of such a thrust, seeking out the subjective in individual experience. Rambo (2010) resonates with this call, asking researchers to "seek out the unique and distinctive aspect of a particular person's experience of conversion" (p. 436). In adopting IPA as the research strategy, this thesis seeks to fulfil such aspirations for an idiographic focus by identifying the distinctness and uniqueness of each participant's experience without losing the commonalities across the cases.

## **2.3. Domain of Religious Experience**

### **2.3.1. Introduction**

As with the empirical research on religious conversion, there is a proliferation of diverse psychological approaches that have empirically investigated religious experience. These include Freudian psychology, Jungian psychology, Object Relations psychology and Developmental Psychology to mention a few (Hood, et al., 2009). In addition, as with the religious conversion research, there is also the lack of uniformity in perspective. It is not the intention of this study to fully review these approaches. According to Hood et al. (2009) "whether an experience is religious or spiritual depends upon the interpretation of the experience" (p. 289). Sunden



suggests that this interpretation is provided by the religious traditions concerned (Hood, et al., 2009). Accordingly, this research identifies and reviews only that literature on religious experience which resonates with the data of this study and additionally with the traditional interpretation of the management at DRC.

In this study, Religious experience is defined as "*participants' reported experience of both the presence and the working of the Divine*".

The *presence of the Divine* in the Catholic Context of DRC is taken to mean the felt encounter or sense of presence of Jesus Christ whereas the *working of the Divine* is taken to mean the felt internal movement or change experienced by the participant. Thus after the felt encounter with Jesus, participants were moved to an experience of change.

Kaniyaseril (2005), identifies DRC as both Charismatic and Catholic. Both these dimensions are assumed to facilitate an experience of the *presence of the Divine* as well as the *working of the Divine*.

The Catholic dimension is visible in the religious practice of the Sacraments. These include participants' experience of their religious practices of the Sacrament of Eucharist, the Sacrament of Penance and the Sacrament of Anointing ensuing in the 'Inner healing'.

Surrender, 'Inner Healing' and 'Baptism in the Spirit' are religious practices or expressions of the Spirit which give visibility to the Charismatic dimension (Maurer, 2008). Martin (2011) noted that these expressions of the Spirit occur in the context of the Sacraments and are therefore linked to the Sacraments. According to M. Robbins, Hair, and Francis (1999) these expressions of the Spirit are "the more extravagant signs of religious experience" (p. 240).

Thus the rationale for considering these religious practices as religious experiences finds its basis in the DRC understanding of these practices as expressions of religious experience.

Notably, DRC aligns the Charismatic facets of 'Surrender', 'Inner healing' and 'Baptism in the Spirit' with the Catholic Sacramental economy of 'Confession', the 'Eucharist' and 'Anointing'. These religious experiences also constitute the peak moments facilitating the conversion experience of the participants (Granqvist, 2003).

Surrender was the predominant focus on Days 1 and 2 whereas Day 3 was about the Sacrament of Penance. The Sacrament of the Eucharist prevailed across all the six days. 'Inner healing' was noticeable from Day 4 to Day 5. However, it found prominence in participants' narratives only on Day 5. 'Baptism in the Spirit' associated with the Sacrament of Anointing was the focus of Day 6. All these religious experiences are discussed below.

### **2.3.2. History of the Catholic Charismatic Movement**

Before discussing the above mentioned religious experiences it is necessary to briefly introduce the reader to the domain of the Catholic Charismatic Movement. T. M. Johnson (2009) identifies three major waves in the Charismatic Movement, namely the Pentecostal wave, the Charismatic wave and the Neo-Charismatics or Independent Charismatics wave. A more pertinent historical categorisation seems to be that of Cheung (1996) who identifies three major variants of the Charismatic movement. These include the Pentecostal Charismatics, the Evangelical Charismatics and the Catholic Charismatics. Because this research is resonant with the Catholic Charismatic context of DRC, the following historical review is confined to the Catholic Charismatic Movement (Crowe, 1991; Del Colle, 2004; Hofmann, 1975; Maurer, 2008; Rogge, 1984). Hence it does not engage with religious experiences associated with either the Pentecostal Charismatics or the Evangelical Charismatics. Both these groups are hereafter referred to as non-Catholic Charismatics.

### ***2.3.2.1. The antecedents.***

Two major historical antecedents are noticeable in the period preceding the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Movement. Arguably these antecedents are the causes that precipitated the arrival of the Catholic Charismatic Movement. These antecedents are the Era of Upheavals and the Cursillo movement. The former was the context in which the latter emerged as a solution.

Following World War II, there were expectations for a peaceful world. There arose in post WW II America a generation which was familiar with prosperity but who felt a need for change and spiritual renewal. They were seeking to bring new meaning to their lives in a period that was characterized by cynicism as well as idealism. This spiritual dynamic operating on the secular plane led to the emergence of an Era of Upheavals represented by the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement. Together, there was the Cold War between the US and the former USSR and the imminent threat of a Nuclear War. The generation of the 1960s had become frustrated and disappointed with established institutional structures for their perceived failure at realizing the expectant peaceful world. Some of them rebelled against these structures eventuating in the 'hippie' generation. Others looked elsewhere, particularly the East, namely India and Hinduism for a resolution to their crisis.

Some others sought to find a resolution within the Roman Catholic Tradition. There arose a network of informal relationships among some Catholics of this time who felt disillusioned by their sense of spiritual powerlessness. The Full Gospel Fellowship and the Chi Rho Society which operated out of the Duquesne University Campus are examples of such networks.

At this time the Cursillo Movement which had emerged in Spain made inroads into the US. This Cursillo or Short spiritual course had originated in the Island of Mallorca as a week-

long retreat meant to provide deep spiritual renewal for Catholic pilgrims. These pilgrims were preparing for their pilgrimage to the Spanish basilica of Santiago de Compostella. By the time the Cursillo arrived into the US it had been shortened to a three-day programme. This Movement had inspired the idea of Spiritual Rebirth in the US. The Catholic networks which met on a weekly basis to pray as well as to mobilise social action were inspired by this idea of Spiritual Rebirth. They felt the need to deepen their own spiritual lives. They also felt that the Catholic Church needed renewal and empowerment to witness to the faith (Crowe, 1991; Del Colle, 2004; Hofmann, 1975; Maurer, 2008; Rogge, 1984).

#### ***2.3.2.2. The birth of Catholic Charismatic Movement.***

Some of the Roman Catholics from the Chi Rho society attended the Cursillo programme back in Spain. Drawing on this experience, they experimented with the strategies and practices of the Cursillo Movement at a weekend retreat at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh in 1967. Such an amalgamation was also attempted to by other Christian denominations such as the Methodist and the Episcopalian Churches. It was at one such weekend retreat in February 1967 that participants had a unique experience called the 'Baptism in the Spirit'. It is this weekend at Duquesne University which is hailed as the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Movement. Participants had experienced the Charism of speaking in tongues.

Following this experience, meetings were held at Notre Dame University after the professors of this University evidenced interest in such meetings. Meetings were then held across the Mid-western part of the US before they spread to the rest of the country. A notable feature of these meetings was its ecumenical spirit where people from varied backgrounds gathered together. In addition, well-educated lay Catholics together with well-acclaimed theologians from the University context were also involved. These sought to identify and associate the Movement

with more sublime expressions of spirituality. An important such expression included nurturing a relationship with God rather than a focus on the expression of speaking in tongues. This expression characterizes the Protestant versions of Charismatic Movement known as Pentecostalism.

A need was felt to stabilize the floating student population at these weekend meetings. Consequently there emerged the first Word of God Covenant Community at the University of Michigan which is historically significant for its Life in the Spirit seminars. These seminars characterize even modern-day charismatic gatherings across the globe. Similar Word of God Communities were formed across the US such that by 1968, there were about fourteen Catholic Charismatic Prayer centres. By 1970, the National Service Committee was formed. It coordinated the Catholic Movement from the Notre Dame and the Ann Arbor University centres (Crowe, 1991; Del Colle, 2004; Hofmann, 1975; Maurer, 2008; Rogge, 1984).

### ***2.3.2.3. The Legitimization.***

The rapid spread of this nascent movement drew the attention of the Official Catholic Church in the US. It called for a response which came in the form of a commission known as the Zaleski Commission. This commission however, did not have the significance of an official doctrinal position. The nascent movement seized on this opportunity as a sign of legitimacy within the Catholic Church. The Zaleski Commission was neutral and tolerant in its appraisal of the movement. It acknowledged the movement as being theologically balanced. But it cautioned against the possibility of attracting emotionally unstable individuals. It also recommended changing the name of the movement from Catholic Pentecostalism to the Catholic Charismatic Movement.

By 1974, the first International Conference on the Charismatic Movement was formed at Notre Dame University. About 25,000 Catholics attended, with the most formidable figure being Cardinal Suenens, Archbishop of Malines-Brussels. He was later responsible for providing the guiding principles and policies to the Movement. His intervention is considered significant because the Catholic Church does not have an official doctrinal teaching on the Charismatic Movement.

The Movement had come to represent an elite Christian lifestyle, a view that was fostered by ideological publications from its leaders. One of the leaders of the Movement, Kevin Ranaghan recognized the dangers of such elitist thinking and consequent self-absorption. He perceived the need to align the Movement to the Catholic Church as a remedy to contain this pride. His efforts to foster this alignment contributed to the 1975 International Conference held in Rome. This Conference became an avenue for the leaders of the Movement to publicly manifest their desire to remain affiliated to the Catholic Church (Crowe, 1991; Del Colle, 2004; Hofmann, 1975; Maurer, 2008; Rogge, 1984).

#### ***2.3.2.4. Recent times.***

In 1981, the Official Catholic Church allowed the establishment of an office for the International Catholic Charismatic Body, following which the Movement was named as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR). However, to reiterate, the Catholic hierarchy has never offered an official declaration on the Movement. Owing to such a lack, local bodies of CCR have drawn on varied interpretations by their local Bishop's Conferences as well as from theologians across the world. The Movement has also absorbed local Diocesan structures worldwide for its sustenance.

Kaniyaraseril (2005) reported that the Founders of the Divine Retreat Centre were initially associated with the CCR and that DRC amalgamates the techniques and strategies of CCR in its retreats. This amalgamation highlights the association between DRC and the Catholic Charismatic Movement. It is in this historical context that this study situates itself, namely within the theological context of the Catholic Charismatic Movement but also in the geographical context of the Divine Retreat Centre.

From the above it is obvious that the Catholic Charismatic Movement sought to align itself with the Catholic Church from its very beginnings. It found reciprocity from the Catholic hierarchy. The CCR had presented the Church with an opportunity to reclaim the New Testament Charismatic Spirituality after it had disappeared following St. Augustine's Theology of Grace. St. Augustine had discouraged an active search for the gifts of the Spirit for according to him, the gifts of the Spirit are a gift from God rather than the fruits of an active seeking. Consequently, Charismatic Spirituality had become alien to the West. Notably, such a favourable response towards the CCR on the part of the Catholic hierarchy was dissimilar to what the non-Catholic Pentecostal Movements had encountered with their authorities. They had to sever from their mainstream churches owing to hostility from their authorities. Perhaps the involvement of the educated lay Catholics and theologians teaching in Universities may have been a supportive factor. Inspired by these Catholics, CCR had established some criteria for scrutinizing claims of inspiration by the Spirit. Furthermore, although CCR had emerged out of Classical Pentecostalism, insights and practices from this Movement were critically assessed and only then absorbed. The openness evidenced by the Vatican II Council may have been another facilitator. The Council itself was referred to as the 'new Pentecost' or the manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit. Through its Constitutions, the Council had called for a renewal of every Catholic

which was to be accomplished through receiving the Holy Spirit. It was an experience that was already familiar to the members of the Catholic Charismatic Movement.

In addition, the Catholic Church has been traditionally known for its accommodation of diverse expressions of spirituality. Hence, the varied forms of spirituality that exist within the Catholic Tradition, namely: the hermit tradition, the monastic tradition, the mystical tradition, the contemplative tradition, the intellectualist tradition that seeks God through an intellectual understanding of God, the varied popular devotional traditions that cater to the affectively prone Catholic and the social-action traditions that provides an action-oriented expression of spirituality for similar minded Catholics. The Charismatic Spirituality was one such expression of Spirituality that had found an acceptance and was actively fostered and promoted although without an official doctrinal position. This absorption into the Catholic Church had however come at the cost of sacrificing its ecumenical orientation that had prevailed in the nascent stages of the Movement (Crowe, 1991; Del Colle, 2004; Hofmann, 1975; Maurer, 2008; Rogge, 1984).

### **2.3.3. Pertinent characteristics of the Catholic Charismatic spirituality**

The following are the main characteristics of the Catholic Charismatic spirituality. This Spirituality is basically a revival of two distinct spiritual traditions in the Catholic Church, namely the Mystical Spirituality which gained prominence in the medieval times and the Spirituality of the Charisms with its foundations in the New Testament (Crowe, 1991; Del Colle, 2004; Hofmann, 1975; Maurer, 2008; Rogge, 1984).

The Catholic Charismatic Movement seems to have privileged Mystical spirituality over the spirituality of the Charisms, a contrast to other Christian denominations which privilege the Spirituality of the Charisms. Hence it is a distinguishing feature of CCR.



The Mystical aspect of the Catholic Charismatic Spirituality emphasizes a personal transcendent experience of the Triune God, namely the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity as professed by the Roman Catholic Church. This aspect also connects with the more innate facet of the charismatic experience. It assumes a more passive role for the individual because the transcendent experience is considered a grace of God. The Spirituality of the Charisms which refers to the work of the Spirit of God implies the breathing of God into the individual resulting in the experience of Charisms by the concerned individual. This spirituality assumes that the Spirit of God is conferred on those who actively seek the Charisms through the act of surrender. Baumert (2004), in an analysis of the Charisms, highlights this assumption that "the manner and the intensity of each particular gift of the Spirit is God's business" (p. 173). This assumption is a reference to the passive agency alluded to in the Spirituality of the Charism. It argues that while the seeker can actively make efforts to obtain the Charisms, what and which Charisms are provided to whom is an initiative ascribed to God. Thus the Catholic Charismatic Spirituality appears to acknowledge both passive and active agencies in the charismatic experience (Crowe, 1991; Del Colle, 2004; Hofmann, 1975; Maurer, 2008; Rogge, 1984).

In the context of DRC, this active agency is evident on the first four days when participants actively make efforts towards surrendering and opening themselves to aspects of themselves. The Mystical aspect is visible with only some of the participants who experienced a felt sense of the presence of Jesus or the *presence of the Divine*.

Notably, empirical research on the Charismatic Movement, particularly the scant research on the Catholic Charismatic movement, has failed to acknowledge the mystical aspect of the experience. Instead it has focused on the visible aspect of the experience, namely the experience of the Charisms. Yung (2003) noted that this scant focus is true with the Pentecostal Charismatic

movement owing to its preoccupation with the visible aspect of the Charisms. Consequently, it has surpassed the more sublime concern for the relational aspect of the experience with the Divine.

The discussion below presents an evaluative review of the religious practices that are considered as religious experiences in the context of DRC.

### ***2.3.3.1. The religious Act of Surrender.***

Surrender is both a religious as well as a therapeutic construct. Some psychological literature treats the construct of surrender with disdain. For example, Freud pathologised surrender as an oedipal response (Ullman, 1982). This disdain might explain the observation of psychoanalyst Ghent who noted that the construct is alien to Western psychotherapy where providing insight and information are privileged (Dueck & Goodman, 2007). However, more recent psychological literature perceives surrender as a positive experience, as being related to the therapeutic relational process or to a higher entity, or value or purpose (Crystal, 2005; McCormick, 2009). In addition, Dyslin (2008) notes, that surrender is "the key agent of change in recovery from substance and addiction" (p. 49). Barsness (2006) bemoaned the fact that despite these benefits surrender was rarely taught in psychotherapy.

Unlike the psychological context, surrender has been used interchangeably with submission in the religious context where both surrender and submission bear positive connotations (McMahan, 2002). For example in the Catholic context, surrender has traditionally belonged and is privileged in the contemplative tradition (Dyslin, 2008). It is also found across most of the eastern religions such as Sufism (Doja, 2006), Buddhism (L. E. Jones, 2007) and Hinduism (Clooney, 2008).

In the charismatic context, surrender is "an essential prerequisite" (Maurer, 2008, p. 82). Hocken (2006) noted that the Catholic Charismatic Movement was founded on the premise of a personal surrender to Jesus Christ. In the Charismatic context, surrender is concretized through the posture of raising arms with palms facing outwards while singing the hymn of invocation to the Holy Spirit. It involves both active and passive aspects (Crowe, 1991). The active aspect involves the act of prayer uttered through the bodily posture indicated above whereas the passive element involves yielding to the initiatives of the Spirit in one's life (Crowe, 1991).

Surrender has an important place in the context of conversion. Mahoney and Pargament (2004) highlighted that surrender facilitates conversion. It facilitates conversion by becoming the solution to the preceding unease that brings converts to conversion (Granqvist, 2003; Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2004) or the antidote to the preceding emotional distress or suffering (Glik, 1986). Most models of conversion identify surrender as a phase or stage in the process of conversion. For example, Gillespie's Model and the Model of Batson, Schoenrade and Ventis (1993) place it second in their stages of conversion, whereas, Rambo enlists it as part of the fourth stage of conversion (Regnerus & Uecker, 2006).

### ***2.3.3.2. The Sacrament of Penance.***

No empirical studies involving the Catholic 'Confession' as a variable were identified in the literature. Of significance in the literature is the argument highlighting the relationship of 'Confession' to Psychotherapy. Highlighting the relevance of 'Confession' in the context of de-addiction treatments, Dyslin (2008) points out that an effective treatment warrants a spiritual surrender and that 'Confession' of sin is both an active ingredient of that surrender and a passive avenue for the work of the Holy Spirit. Steere (2009) hints at psychotherapy as being a modern secularisation of the traditional practice of 'Confession'. According to him, most confessions,

including the Catholic Confession, engage the personal unconscious which Jung named as the Shadow. The Shadow refers to the unrecognised facet of a personality and Shadow Work involves the process of owning and integrating this dark side into one's consciousness (Nelson, 2009). Steere (2009) observes that, "the Shadow contains all the hidden or unconscious aspects of ourselves, both good and bad, either repressed or unrecognized" (p. 175).

Although a psychotherapeutic concept popularised by Jung, the Shadow is pragmatically a sacred practice minus the divine attributions otherwise associated with the religious practice of Confession. According to Nelson (2009), accepting the Shadow is a "healing process and can be associated with religious experiences" (p. 153). Steere (2009) points out that the work accomplished in a Confessional experience is this work of integrating the unwanted, the denied and the disowned into our consciousness. Religious traditions particularly Christianity and more precisely the Catholic Church have recognised this pervasive influence of the Shadow. It appears that the Sacrament of Penance was an attempt to reign in the Shadow. Steere (2009) recommends extending the "confessional practices into the realm of the unconscious" (p. 206) to more actively facilitate Shadow work, so that denial is countered by exposure and that acceptance is provided to the unacceptable. The penitent, consequently, is freed from shame and guilt.

#### ***2.3.3.3. Sacrament of the Eucharist.***

There is a dearth of empirical research on this domain except for the limited literature discussing the Eucharist in the Charismatic context. Gelpi (2002) observes that non-Catholic Pentecostal movements have devised their own rituals for the experience of the Spirit and an important one among them is Glossolalia. The Catholic Charismatics in contrast perceived the Sacraments of the Catholic Church as an avenue for an experience of the Spirit (Gelpi, 2002). Eliciting the Catholic teaching on the Eucharist, the Catholic Encyclopaedia, suggests that in

Catholic understanding, the Eucharist has theological significance as both a sacrament and a sacrifice. The Catholic teaching holds that as a sacrament, “the body and blood of Jesus Christ are really and substantially present under the consecrated Species of bread and wine as the spiritual food of Christians” (Dewan, 1967, p. 599). It has the effect of “joining us first to Christ, then to the Church and our fellow men, and bringing us finally to our last end since the Eucharist is the pledge of future glory” (Dewan, 1967, p. 603). As a sacrifice it has a fourfold purpose of adoration, thanksgiving, intercession, and expiation (Kilmartin, 1967).

#### ***2.3.3.4. 'Inner healing'.***

Most probably 'Inner healing' is an ancient practice that dates back to unrecorded history. However in recent times 'Inner healing' as practised in the Christian context has become a recognised approach in its own right and has gained some scientific attention (Garzon, 2005). Agnes Sanford (Sanford, 1950) is credited to have been instrumental towards this recognition (Garzon, Worthington, & Tan, 2009). The Catholic ministry has sought to appropriate the healing ministry of Jesus into its varied ministries.

According to Hurding (1995), ‘Inner Healing’ is one among five spiritual pathways to wholeness found among Christians in recent times. The Charismatic Movement adopted this pathway of 'Inner Healing' in its search for providing wholeness. This ‘Inner Healing’ pathway in the Charismatic Movement employs a “range of ‘journey back’ methodologies that seek, under the Holy Spirit’s leading, to uncover personal, familial and ancestral experiences that are thought to contribute to the troubled present” (Hurding, 1995, p. 297). At a concrete level, most of this work involves an emotional reconstruction of self by going back into one’s past, because the Charismatic movement assumes that the past is, “the uncharted field of early traumata” (Hurding, 1995, p. 297). Csordas (1990) endorses such an orientation in his claim. According to

him, Charismatics hold that “everyone is in some way ‘wounded’ as a result of traumatic events in earlier life” (p. 83). However, Monroe and Schwab (2009) appear to differ. They see it as a “divine work bringing growth or positive spiritual change to painful or distorted perceptions, experiences, habits or emotions of a person” (Monroe & Schwab, 2009, p. 121).

The journey back methodologies are found to bring a healing of the mind, emotions and memories, including benevolent health effects (Hurding, 1995). Jones' (1998) reports correlations between frequency of prayer, happiness, purpose in life and an affective expression for an Inner Healing group.

#### ***2.3.3.5. 'Baptism in the Spirit'.***

‘Baptism in the Spirit’ refers to the “experience of infilling/empowerment of the Holy Spirit” (Hocken, 2004, p. 205). It is the “hallmark” (M. Robbins, et al., 1999, p. 240) of the Charismatic Movement, or the “unifying thread” (Rey, 2010, p. 81) of all the variants of the Charismatic Movement. It is expressed or referred to in Charismatic literature through varied other phrases such as 'receiving the Holy Spirit', 'outpouring of the Spirit', 'release of the Spirit', 'renewal of the Holy Spirit', 'Baptism with the Holy Spirit', 'Baptism by the Holy Spirit', 'Pentecostal experience', 'Spirit-filling' and being 'filled with the Holy Spirit' (Canales, 2002; Cheung, 1996; Colic, 2003; Coulter, 2009; Del Colle, 2004; Stronstad, 2010). Martin (2011) notes, that 'Baptism of the Spirit' is a term used in the North American context to refer to this experience. Baumert (2004) observes that Pentecostals refer to this experience through the term 'Spirit-Baptism'.

'Baptism in the Spirit' appears to be the predominant expression adopted by Catholics to refer to this experience (Canales, 2002; Lee, 2008; Prior, 2007). However there have been calls and counter calls for a different expression. For example, Cardinal Joseph Suenens (1975)

prescribes avoiding this expression but without providing an alternative. In contrast, the authoritative document on the Catholic Charismatic scene, namely the Malines 1 document which was formulated by a group of Catholic Charismatic leaders who were also theologians, calls for retaining the phrase (Del Colle, 2004).

What then is this experience implied by the above phrases or by the expression 'Baptism in the Spirit'? Martin (2011) noted that there are variations ascribed to this experience referred to by the term 'Baptism in the Spirit'. For example, the Pentecostals seem to lie on one end of the continuum for they refer to this experience as a 'Second Blessing' which is the fulfilment of a promise to all Christians following their initiation at Baptism. Thereby the individual has a charismatic and experiential sense of the Divine Spirit and is empowered for ministry (Bruner, 1970; Hollenweger, 1986). In contrast, most Evangelicals seem to hold the view that this experience is not a 'Second Blessing'. Rather, it forms part of the initiation that occurs at Baptism and the purpose of which is regeneration, salvation and inclusion into the Body of Christ, the Church (Stronstad, 2010).

Cheung (1996) suggests that the Catholic position lies between the Pentecostal and Evangelical positions for it seems to accommodate the two extremes. He indicates that the Spirit which was initially given at Baptism with potential Charisms and power is activated through this experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit' for regeneration and for a mission. Prior (2007) seems to endorse this view by pointing out that the Catholic Charismatics, particularly those in the Asian context have absorbed Evangelical and Pentecostal concepts and experiences. Del Colle (2004) also appears to support the above position that the Catholic position is a middle path between the two extremes. He identifies three elements as being critical for a Catholic position on 'Baptism in the Spirit'. These include a sense of spiritual hunger, a search for a personal relationship with

Jesus Christ and the experience of Charisms (Del Colle, 2004). Such a middle position seems to resonate with the participants of this study and is evidenced in Chapter 11.

It must be noted that DRC is a Catholic Charismatic movement and not a Pentecostal-Charismatic movement or a Evangelical-Charismatic movement. Hence it does not seem to emphasize speaking in tongues or Glossolalia which is necessary external evidence of the infilling or empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement (McMahan, 2002; Yung, 2003). Rather DRC emphasizes the reception of the Sacraments as the channels for the infilling or empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Kaniyaraseril, 2005). Fr Augustine claims that this emphasis on the Sacraments is a distinctive Vincentian feature (Kaniyaraseril, 2005). However this claim is questionable since this emphasis seems to prevail among the Catholic Charismatic Movement. Gelpi (2002) indicates, that Catholic Theology interprets 'Baptism in the Spirit', "in the light of the Catholic Sacramental tradition" (p. 30).

#### **2.4. Conclusion**

The above literature review has introduced the reader to the two pertinent domains of Religious conversion and Religious experience. The relevant elements in both these domains are evaluated. Together, this review has also identified the research gaps which this research seeks to address.



## **Chapter 3: The Theoretical and Epistemological Lens**

### **3.1. Introduction**

A problem with many qualitative studies is the absence of linkage between the method used and a clear statement of the philosophical underpinnings that should guide the method (Stubblefield & Murray, 2002). Implementing a method without an examination of its philosophical basis can result in research that is ambiguous in its purpose, structure, and findings (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 726).

In titling this chapter as ‘The Theoretical and Epistemological Lens’, this research draws attention to the thinking behind its research strategy. As the above quote implies, every research strategy has a philosophy that supplies its worldview, including its epistemology. This chapter explicates the philosophical underpinnings of the research strategy adopted for this study, namely Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) because they have “drive (n) methodological decisions” (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 726) of this project. Furthermore, a consideration of the "values and claims associated" with IPA was made prior to a commitment to this "choice of method” (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 726).

Presented below is a brief historical review of the relationship between psychology and qualitative psychology. IPA is then situated in this context to highlight what it seeks to redress in research. Then follows a short introduction to IPA together with the philosophical notions that have shaped it as a research strategy, followed by its epistemological foundations and how these underpin the research question of this study.

### **3.2. A rupture in the relationship: Psychology's claim for a natural science status.**

The relationship between qualitative research and psychology is much older than previously thought (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). A development in the history of thought brought about a rupture in this relationship between psychology and qualitative research. Impressed by the advances in physical sciences, psychologists, beginning from the late 19th century, wanted to turn psychology into a physical science. For example, Freud's declared desire was to "furnish a psychology that shall be a natural science" (as cited in, Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008, p. 5). In their attempts to make psychology a physical science, early psychologists, particularly behaviourists like Watson, Thorndike and Skinner, borrowed the assumptions of Newtonian and Darwinian sciences according to which reality was held to be realistic, positivistic (objective), deterministic, mechanistic, linear and reductionist. Thus there was a thrust for positivist thinking, or the so called scientific thinking (Paloutzian, et al., 1999; S. P. Richards & Bergin, 1997).

### **3.3. Consequent favoured positions in psychological research.**

Underpinning this positivist thinking was Cartesian dualism: namely the distinction between the subject and the object. Influenced by this dualistic perspective, psychology sought to privilege objectivity and minimised the subjective and the personal. Furthermore, psychology went into exploring psychological issues through quantitative methods and controlled experimental designs because these met the criteria of the observable and the measurable or testable (Ashworth, 2008; Corbetta, 2003; Denscombe, 2003).

### **3.4. Consequent deprivations in psychological research.**

Owing to the above background, psychology relegated all other methods except the quantitative method, treating them as unscientific (Danziger, 1990). Such a development, “had serious consequences for the development of the qualitative research tradition” such that it resulted in “neglecting/obscuring its [i.e. psychology’s] social/human science heritage” (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008, p. 5). Silverman (2001) argues that psychology’s dependence on the purely quantitative methods overlooked the social and cultural contexts of the variables. In addition, adopting the positivist scientific method deprived psychological research of some significant research variables. One of the first victims of this thrust for the scientific was the investigation of mental processes and inner experiences such as consciousness, perception, and valuing experience for its own sake. The first person view, participants’ view and the idiographic perspective in research were abandoned, resulting in a neglect of individual uniqueness and difference (Ashworth, 2008; Eatough & Smith, 2008; J. A. Smith, et al., 2009; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008).

### **3.5. A challenge to psychology’s claim as a natural science.**

The 1970s saw the dawn of a challenge to psychology's claim as a natural science (Willig, 2008). Feminist psychologists together with Social Constructionists began to question psychological knowledge obtained through quantitative psychological research. They argued against the scientific method. Some of these arguments are presented in Appendix D. Langdrige (2007) points to this mismatch between psychology and the positivist paradigm. “Although a positivist/post-positivist paradigm may be appropriate for the natural sciences (although even this has been questioned in recent years), this seems an inappropriate paradigm for psychology, and the study of human nature” (Langdrige, 2007, p. 3).

### **3.6. Reclaiming what psychology lost.**

It is in this context of reclaiming what psychology lost that IPA finds its place. Like the feminist psychologists, IPA seeks to connect with the long neglected concerns in psychology. A significant such concern is the absence of a qualitative methodology in psychology. “Indeed a key motivation for the development of IPA was the articulation of a qualitative approach to psychology which was grounded in psychology” (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p. 180).

Second, IPA seeks to reclaim the idiographic in psychology. Eatough and Smith (2008) report on Allport’s observation in the 1940s that psychology was losing its attention on the particular by focusing only on the nomothetic. IPA seeks to salvage the idiographic perspective and restore the voices of those researched (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

Furthermore, IPA retrieves the focus on experience and meaning making. Psychology, particularly cognitive psychology, had deviated from its original intent of investigating meaning making and instead explored information processing. J. A. Smith et al. (2009) therefore wanted to restore to psychology its original research focus on meaning making.

Finally, IPA asks for the recognition of the role and influence of the researcher because it assumes that objectivity is difficult for particular questions that require a subjective focus (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

### **3.7. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

IPA has been associated with the work of Jonathan Smith and his associates (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Larkin, et al., 2006; J. A. Smith, 1995, 1996; J. A. Smith, et al., 2009; J. A. Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003, 2004, 2008). It originated as a research methodology in psychology although most of the early studies were conducted in the area of health psychology seeking to understand the predicament of illness and associated aspects (J. A.

Smith et al., 2009). As a research strategy, IPA remains an attractive research method for psychologists given its detailed and systematic procedures for data collection and data analysis. It is employed in cognitive, clinical, counselling and social psychologies as well as other varied fields including religion and spirituality (J. A. Smith, 2011). As a qualitative method, IPA has a short history but theoretically it has links with philosophies that have a long history.

IPA has its own distinctive measures for selecting participants who are likely to provide the relevant data and for doing analysis of that data. The theoretical underpinnings of IPA include phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. IPA is phenomenological in its attention to a detailed investigation of experience (Larkin, et al., 2006) and enquires into how individuals make sense of that experience. At the same time its hermeneutic facet recognises that such an investigation requires interpretation on the part of the researcher. Hence it suggests a "double hermeneutic, where the researcher is trying to make sense (layer 4) of the participant trying to make sense (layers 3 and 4) of what is happening to her/him" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 190) or "something is (very deliberately) revealed 'as something else' (Dreyfus, 1995)" (Larkin, et al., 2006, p. 116). Thus it acknowledges the influence of the researcher's beliefs and perspectives on the research process (Eatough & Smith, 2008). The idiographic dimension of IPA seeks to research how a "particular experiential phenomena (an event process or relationship) have been understood from the perspective of a particular people in a particular context" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 29).

### **3.7.1. Sources of influence on IPA**

The following discussion identifies the assumptions underlying IPA and the implications of its varied sources of influence.

Husserl (1859-1939) found philosophy to be too speculative and unproductive (MacLeod, 1968). He wanted to make it a rigorous empirical science. Towards this end, he adopted the phenomenological method. It involves scrutinizing one's own experience or going back to things themselves by describing what is in one's immediate consciousness without any interpretation so as to disclose the 'whatness' ('noesis' in Greek) of the particular phenomenon. He emphasised description and considered interpretation as a form of description. Heidegger (1889-1976) in contrast emphasized the primacy of interpretation. He considered description as a form of interpretation because every description presupposes assumptions and expectations. This Heideggerian position that only interpretations are possible and therefore all that we attempt to understand is the particular position or perspective of the interpreter is also attested to by Merleau-Ponty and Sartre (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). This perspective seems to have influenced IPA's preference for acknowledging the role of the researcher in the research process. Heidegger's philosophy was a departure from Husserl's descriptive phenomenology at a fundamental level. His philosophy includes hermeneutics because human beings constantly interpret what it means to be. That seems to be the reason IPA acknowledges the researcher's meaning making of the participants' meaning making of their experience (Koch, 1995; Langdridge, 2007; Larkin, et al., 2006; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Mackey, 2005; Willig, 2008).

As with Heidegger, IPA recognises the inevitability of interpretation in the attempt to understand the experience of the participant. Hence in IPA, "the researcher's beliefs are not seen as biases to be eliminated but rather as being necessary for making sense of the experiences of other individuals" (Fade, 2004, p. 648).

Furthermore, IPA accepts that a person is:

...a cognitive, linguistic, affective and a physical being and assumes a chain of connection between people's talk and their thinking and emotional state. At the same time IPA researchers realize that this chain of connection is complicated – people struggle to express what they are thinking and feeling, there may be reasons why they do not wish to self-disclose, and the researcher has to interpret people's mental and emotional state from what they say (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 54).

Therefore the researcher needs to interpret the experience of the participants as they may fail to disclose the link between their thought, affect and action (Larkin, et al., 2006; J. A. Smith, 2007; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003; Willig, 2008).

Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Jean Paul Sartre subscribe to the view that a human being is embedded and immersed in this world or a being-in-the-world (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). It implies that a human being is apriori in the world; already and always part of the world and not pieced together (Heidegger, 1962). IPA seems to owe its idiographic orientation to this notion of being-in-the-world. Epistemologically, it seeks to understand the subjective experience of an embodied, socio-culturally and historically situated participant (Eatough & Smith, 2008). For its data analysis, it does not dismiss general claims altogether but respects the universal. It emphasizes that the logical way to the universal is through the particular. Hence it prioritises the individual and the particular. Researching the particular can “illuminate and affirm”, “the centrality of certain general themes in the lives of all particular individuals (Evans, 1993: 8), bringing the researcher closer to noteworthy aspects of the general by connecting the individual unique life with a common humanity” (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p. 183).

Thus IPA focuses on the particular to do full justice to what gets disclosed in the particular during data collection. Then during data analysis, it seeks to reveal what is kept hidden

in individual emotion, thought and action so as to arrive at each participant's way of being-in-the-world. It is only then that IPA engages in a cross case analysis identifying the convergent and divergent textures and nuances of the experience across individual cases. Such a cross case analysis is most convincing when it is drawn out of single case analyses. This idiographic orientation of IPA, given its emphasis on detail and depth has implications for sample size (Eatough & Smith, 2008; J. A. Smith et al., 2009; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2004). Smith highlights that "the intensity of activity for each case means that IPA studies are usually conducted on relatively small sample sizes which are sufficient for the potential of IPA to be realised" (2011, p. 10). Thus IPA samples are small that is, "one, four, nine and fifteen" (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 54). They are also homogenous to allow for claims to be made about the particular.

Furthermore, the Heideggerian notion of '*facticity*' also validates the researcher's phenomenology in data analysis. Facticity refers to the reality that the human being is already in the world, as part of the world and not as distinct from the world as implied in the subject-object dichotomy of Descartes. Hence what Heidegger terms '*disclosure*' or '*showing forth*' or '*presencing of the being*' in the moment is important (Sequeira, J<sup>17</sup>, personal communication, January 30, 2009). Even the disclosure emanating from the body is important, for Merleau-Ponty identified "the body as the central element in experience" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 19). Psychology has focused largely on cognition, emotion and behaviour. It is only recently with the proliferation of body therapies that the body is increasingly incorporated into therapy.

In this study the body is acknowledged as a fundamental source of information even for participants' bodily experiences. Drawing on Heidegger's notion of '*everyday experience*,' IPA

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is interested in everyday experiences, everyday skills and practices, everyday interactions, relationships and experiences of the body without distorting or trivialising such experiences (Mackey, 2005; Plager, 1994). Leonard (1994) points out that such an everyday focus has been missing from traditional empirical research. The implication of this everyday focus for this research involves seeking an epistemology of participants' experience of each day. Hence to retain this everyday focus, participants' narratives were analysed focusing on each day's experience.

IPA seems to account for the '*historicity*' (another Heideggerian term) of the participant in the process of data collection as well as data analysis (Harvey, 1986). '*Historicity*' refers to the fact that the human being is always historically situated in a particular context. So it refers to the historical background of an individual, which impinges on the functioning of the individual. Therefore objective, impartial, impersonal, unbiased knowledge espoused by the scientific model is not possible because being (human being) always discloses itself in its '*historicity*' (Heidegger, 1962). '*Historicity*' is also the inspiration for IPA's inductive approach to data collection. IPA chooses to remain a bottom up approach to allow for the '*historicity*' of the participant to be duly appraised. In addition, IPA seems to draw on the Heideggerian notion of '*forestructure*' in its assumption that "when people tell stories of their lives, they are drawing on the culturally available stock of meanings" (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p. 185). Through the use of this term, '*forestructure*', Heidegger acknowledged that our previous knowledge and understandings influenced by our culture have a bearing on our communication, particularly for the researcher who interprets. Hence, IPA warrants a homogenous sample that the researcher has familiarity with, in most respects. These include factors such as culture, language, skills and activities. The reason for selecting participants similar to the background of the researcher was in fulfilment of

this IPA driven assumption that familiarity with the Goan Catholic lineage would assist in the interpretation of the data.

Sartre spoke about the influence of the presence and absence of others on experience (Sequeira, J, personal communication, January 30, 2009). That seems to be the reason IPA encourages not a rigid interaction between the researcher and the participant, in the form of structured interviews. Rather it seeks a semi-structured or an unstructured format for interviewing where due respect is accorded to the interaction and to its emerging influence on the narrative of the participant. The researcher does not merely acquire an account of the experience from the participant but facilitates the making of an account through a participative empathic stance in data collection. Hence IPA departs from mainstream psychology and emphasizes that objectivity is impossible because it warrants a position outside of history. It recognises that both the researcher and the participants are very much beings-in-the-world. There is no once-for-all-knowledge because different meanings arise at different times and places. Furthermore, the practice of the hermeneutic circle is pertinent here (J. A. Smith et al., 1999). It means that data analysis has to be conducted nonlinearly in an iterative manner. Accordingly, the data in this research was constantly revisited and re-interpreted as insights and ideas emerged. Such an iterative process occurred through the charts, employed to identify themes, which were developed to higher levels after insights and new links emerged progressively (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Reynolds, 2003; J. A. Smith, et al., 2009).

In concluding this section on the links between philosophy and IPA, it is important to note that IPA does not dismiss Husserlian phenomenology entirely. Along Husserlian thought, IPA seeks the quality and texture of experience and hence the emphasis on rich and detailed data. At the same time “it is not a 'simply descriptive' methodology” (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 102). It

goes beyond mere descriptions to draw out informed meanings of participants' descriptions of their experience. IPA is also interested in essences. However its understanding of arriving at the essences is different to Husserlian thought. Husserl sought to arrive at essences intuitively, pre-reflectively, whereas for Heidegger essence refers to the commonalities arrived at after attending to the particular. Accordingly, to arrive at the commonalities, an initial tentative proposition was developed, which was then checked and revised to fit the experience of the participants for relevance and for points of convergence and divergence (J. A. Smith, et al., 1999).

### **3.7.2. Epistemological Perspective of this Research**

Epistemology is about the kind of knowledge a paradigm seeks to produce (Willig, 2008). According to Willig (2008), IPA "aims to gain an understanding of how participants view and experience their world...It aims to produce knowledge of what and how people think about the phenomenon under investigation" (p. 69). So IPA's epistemology is about knowing participants' phenomenological material, their understanding of their experience or importantly their hermeneutic or meaning making of their experience. Accordingly, this research takes participants' statements of their experience at DRC as statements of their knowledge of their world.

However IPA recognises that such knowledge is impossible without an interpretation on the part of the researcher. Hence IPA seeks a double hermeneutic where "the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 3). Accordingly, this research takes the phenomenological position that participants' experience is real to them and therefore the accounts are real and must be valued in their own right. The researcher recognises that there is no direct access to the 'raw datum' of participants' experience because the participants, in narrating their experience, actually interpret

their own experience. As Willig (2008) points out, “experience is always a product of interpretation and (is) therefore constructed (and flexible) rather than determined (and fixed), it is nevertheless ‘real’ to the person who is having the experience” (p. 13). Participants' socio-cultural, historico-contextual and linguistic processes influence their interpretation of their experience. But participants also actively and creatively construct their experience and may even revise those constructions in the interview moment. That is why this research remains open to the possibility that participants could report on a host of other issues of ongoing importance to them apart from the experiences of the day (Fade, 2004; J. A. Smith, et al., 1999).

### **3.8. The Research Question**

Following the recommendations of the research committee towards the research proposal to include the 'How,' the research question was re-stated. The compatibility of integrating the ‘How’ with IPA was ensured and subsequently incorporated. The qualitative approach permits such an adaptation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Patton, 2002). Thus the research question is:

*How do the participants come to be what they come to be as a result of each day's experience of the Inner Healing Retreat?*

The philosophical rationale for such a question that integrates the ‘how’ is thus expounded. This research question taps into the concept of ‘*noema*’, of Hermeneutic Phenomenology, the philosophy underpinning IPA. Husserl had focused on ‘*noesis*’ or ‘*whatness*’ of being. Heidegger argued that *noesis* has no meaning in the absence of ‘*noema*’. *Noema* refers to the ‘*how*’ of the being or man, that is, “how it (meaning being or man) is to be” (N, 1982, p. 739) or rather how a human being came to be what the human being is at a given moment. The ‘*how*’ takes into account the contextual influences on the phenomenon because it is the context which contributes to the *disclosure* of being (Sequeira, J, personal communication,

January 30, 2009). This disclosure has implications for this research for it implies that the 'showing forth' is a process. Hence the claim of J. A. Smith et al. (2009) that the aim of IPA is to understand experience and thus with "exploring persons' relatedness, or involvement in, a particular event or process (phenomenon)" (p. 40). An assumption underlying experience is that experience fundamentally amounts to change because experience unfolds in time (Patton, 1990). The nature of participants' experience across the six days of the retreat bore this mark of a process of change. Thus the adapted research question is open, exploratory and seeks to focus on "process" that is, "on the meaning or rather the concrete causes or consequences of events" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 47).

So the research question is aligned with the epistemology underpinning IPA. It identifies the phenomenon under investigation, suggests a process-oriented approach and seeks to produce knowledge about how participants view their experience in the retreat. It must be noted that this research question does not leave knowledge production to the level of a participant's description where the experience is described "as it is in itself" (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 116). Rather it enriches that description by integrating the researcher's in-depth interpretation where "something is (very deliberately) revealed 'as something else' (Dreyfus, 1995)" (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 116).

## **Chapter 4: Data Collection and Data Analysis procedures**

While the previous chapter enunciated the philosophical underpinnings of IPA, this chapter elaborates on how the IPA paradigm was appropriated for data collection and data analysis.

### **4.1. Rationale for a qualitative study**

Creswell (1994) suggests the following criteria for choosing a paradigm. He asks for a fit between the research paradigm and the researcher's worldview and professional training. The paradigm has also to fit the nature of the problem under consideration. In this case the problem is the lack of a study examining the psychological aspects of the change processes or conversion experience at the Inner Healing Retreat at DRC, Kerala, India.

Accordingly, IPA permitted the researcher to incorporate past training and experience in the field of psychology, counselling and psychotherapy together with his Goan Catholic 'forestructure' in the interpretation of the data. Importantly, given that no prior psychological study has been conducted on DRC, this study had to be qualitative in nature (Patton, 2002).

### **4.2. Rationale for adopting IPA as the research strategy**

IPA was adopted as the research strategy because it enabled the fulfilment of the research aims of this study (Richards, 2005).

IPA assisted in fulfilling the goal of this study, namely obtaining participants' narratives of their experiences of the Inner Healing Retreat at the Divine Retreat Centre, Kerala, India. Smith and Osborn (2004) claim that "IPA is particularly suitable where the topic under investigation is novel or under-researched, where the issues are complex or ambiguous and where one is concerned to understand something about process and change" (p. 231). Such a

psychological investigation into participants' experiences is the first of its kind at DRC and hence a topic that is novel and under-researched.

IPA also assisted with meeting the practical purpose of this study, which is, obtaining an 'insider perspective' of the retreat. IPA helped obtain a perspective of what the therapy (in this instance, the Inner Healing retreat) is like from the participant's perspective (McLeod, 2003b). Fick (1998) notes that most research on religion has focused on the cognitive aspects of religion and that the antidote to such a trend lies in capturing the experiential aspects of religion. IPA facilitated the capture of emotions and bodily felt experiences of the participants. Such a perspective revealed the individual dynamics of participation in the retreat. It is hoped that this information will become a resource for the judicious personnel at DRC providing them with insights and perspectives on participation in the retreat.

IPA is participant friendly. It respects the participants in their own right without forcing coherence in their narratives. The researcher gave the participants the space to freely recall, contemplate and share their experience without having to feel manipulated. Some participants of this study went to great lengths to share their personal struggles as evidenced under the findings (L. E. Jones, 2007; Watts, 2006). Thus IPA facilitated obtaining participants' narratives of the Inner Healing Retreat.

Smith and Osborn (2003) indicate that IPA is, "a suitable approach when one is trying to find out how individuals are perceiving the particular situations they are facing, how they are making sense of their personal and social world" (p. 53). This sensitivity of IPA was helpful for this study because it facilitated an acknowledgement of participants' perspectives as they described their experiences. Participants' experiences resonated with the language of religious conversion. IPA allowed participants' voice to be honoured in its own right particularly their

theological voice without pathologising it (Coates, 2011; Drinnan & Lavender, 2006; Hammond & Kinloch, 2001).

IPA's idiographic focus with its emphasis on small sample size was particularly helpful for an in-depth investigation of the process occurring with the participants (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

Fick (1998) observes that "psychological approaches to religion have often ignored the more corporate expressions of faith; that is; they have failed to recognize or explore how well-established traditions and teachings influence the beliefs and behaviours of individuals" (p. 72). IPA assisted with accounting for the uniqueness of DRC establishment's expressions of faith, namely its Catholic and Charismatic faith. This uniqueness includes respecting the Charismatic understanding of what constitutes a person. Csordas (1990) notes that the charismatic movement perceives the person as a "tripartite composite of body, mind and spirit....whereas conventional Western thought tends to collapse the domain of spirit into that of mind" (p. 82). As Muhlen (1975) highlights, the charismatic movement has perceived the three facets as a unity and that the spirit is manifest through the body:

Experience of the spirit is neither completely immediate nor is it purely horizontal. It never ceases to have something to do with "seeing and hearing" for it is also an experience of the senses and it always takes hold of the whole man right down to deepest emotional experiences (p. 111).

What Muhlen seems to allude to, is the integrative perspective of the charismatic paradigm on the relationship between the body and the soul. Phenomenologically, it is one type of embodied experience. Merleau-Ponty acknowledged this close relationship between the soul and the body when he declared that, "it is through his body that the other person's soul is soul in



my eyes" (as quoted in Finlay, 2011, p. 38). Thus through its phenomenological facet, IPA facilitated the acknowledgement of the Spirit and thus the transcendent in participants' experience. These are highlighted in this study through drawing attention to the body. For Csordas (2007) observes that, "Charismatics place a premium on bodily events and practices ranging from revelatory sensory imagery and the sacred swoon of being overcome by the Holy Spirit, to ritual gestures such as the laying on of hands and prostration in prayer..." (p. 310). At the same time, the Spirit and the transcendent are also acknowledged in their own right as and when alluded to by the participants of this study.

Another reason for adopting IPA is its facility at focussing on everyday experience as highlighted in Chapter 3. The charismatic movement is also concerned with everyday experience as Cartledge (2008) notes, "The Spirit's work is to be God here and now in the eventfulness of everyday life through his people" (p. 91).

### **4.3. Characteristics of the sample**

In accordance with IPA, a small, purposive and homogenous sample to obtain an insider's perspective was chosen (Larkin et al., 2006; J. A. Smith, et al., 2009; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003).

J. A. Smith et al. (2009) observe that "there is no right answer to the question of sample size" (p. 51). They also note that sample sizes in qualitative research are becoming increasingly small and that the "issue is quality, not quantity, and given the complexity of most human phenomena, IPA studies usually benefit from a concentrated focus on a small number of cases" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 51). Furthermore, Smith and Osborne (2003) note that IPA studies have been conducted on samples of "one, four, nine and fifteen" (p. 54). Such small sizes are the norm in IPA practice because the focus of the study is idiographic, namely the perspective of a

particular person in a particular context (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). J. A. Smith and Osborne (2008) indicate that “a distinctive feature of IPA is its commitment to a detailed interpretative account of the cases included, and many researchers are recognising that this can only realistically be done on a very small sample - thus in simple terms, one of sacrificing breadth for depth” (p. 56).

J. A. Smith and Osborne (2003) suggest that the sample size should facilitate an examination of the similarities and differences.

While DRC conducts other retreats, this study was restricted to the frequently conducted Inner Healing Retreat in the interest of homogeneity. Homogeneity (linked to the Heideggerian notion of 'forestructure') warrants that the researcher is familiar with the 'forestructure' of the participant. Leonard (1994) suggests that “an appropriate interpretation requires understanding the relational and configurational context of the person” (p. 52). Accordingly, participants selected for this study were those who had a similar cultural background as the researcher, namely a Goan Catholic lineage (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003). Participants' detailed individual profiles are not provided in the interest of anonymity because this thesis is aimed for publication. The Charismatic Fraternity from Goa is close knit and providing details risks violating issues of confidentiality. However some characteristics of the sample that can be disclosed are appended (see Appendix E).

In addition, only first time participants were selected, to prioritise the experience of the Retreat under investigation. It was hypothesized that first timers would stay true to their experience of the Retreat given that they had only one experience of the Retreat. Whereas it was assumed that repeaters would not possibly have this benefit for they could be susceptible to drawing on their previous experiences at DRC.

A final criterion was participants' ability to communicate in English. Such ability was considered important because the reader would have direct access to the voice of the participant, through retaining their articulation of their experience, which IPA seeks to privilege. It was assumed that a translation however accurate would always remain a second rate version of the participants' narrative.

Furthermore in all these eight cases the interviews were participant driven. While the territory to be covered was indicated to them through the opening data collection question, participants chose to navigate this territory at their choice, in terms of what they chose to disclose.

#### **4.4. Data collection - design, technique, question and procedure**

This study adopted a bolder design of interviewing each participant more than once (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Each of the participants was interviewed six times across the six days of the Retreat. Thus the total number of interviews aggregated to 48 interviews which averaged about twenty minutes per day. This study adopted the bolder design to address the gap of longitudinal studies in religious conversion research (Hood et al., 2009).

The data collection technique adopted for this study was unstructured in-depth interviewing. Conducting unstructured interviews is one of the best techniques for IPA research because they facilitate a dialogue that explores the life world of the participant (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). The in-depth interviewing allowed for flexibility in dialogue with the participants such that probes and questions could be generated based on participants' replies and wherever an intensity of experience was evident. Probing participants' experience of the Retreat warranted such a technique and it yielded rich dividends in terms of generating quality data from the

participants (Reid, et al., 2005; J. A. Smith, 1995; J. A. Smith, et al., 2009; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003).

The solitary core data collection question was: ‘Tell me about your experience of the Retreat today?’ This question is broad, open and neutral. The question is broad enough to let the participants know the area of interest. It is also open enough to let the participant choose to disclose aspects of interest about the day. The question is also neutral for it guides the participant to share about their experiences of the day without forcing them. Beginning with the first participant, it was noticed that the participants felt free to recall their experiences of each day (J. A. Smith, et al., 2009; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003).

The data collection procedure began with the field trip by the researcher to DRC, Kerala, India. The researcher at first had a meeting with the Director of the second campus, namely Fr. Augustine Vallooran to familiarise the Director with the protocols of research. A copy of the agenda of the meeting with the Director is appended (see Appendix F). The researcher publicly invited the participants from the dais at the end of the last event of Day 1, namely the Eucharist. A copy of this public request for volunteers to this research is appended (see Appendix G). Indications were given to them that those interested would meet the researcher behind the dais. Following this invitation, the researcher met the volunteers behind the dais. Some of these had initial queries about what was involved. They were informed that the interest of the researcher was their experiences of each day. Volunteers who met the following sorting criteria were isolated, namely bearing a Goan Catholic lineage, being first time participants at DRC and an ability to communicate in English. These volunteers were then invited for the first interview that occurred immediately after this first encounter with them.

After the first interview, volunteers who were less forthcoming and therefore required the researcher to influence the course of the interview with questions were eliminated. Thus only those participants who were forthcoming and charted the course of the interview without much input from the researcher were retained including those that manifested ability for self-awareness during the day. Such an effort yielded eight participants who form the sample of this study. Overall in keeping with IPA, the goal was to obtain participants who navigated the course of the interview without much input from the researcher.

In setting the scene for the interviews, attempts were made to establish rapport and thereby enter the world-view of the participant. These attempts include the following. The researcher introduced himself and also provided the rationale for the study. It was phrased in simple language as an interest in their experience, in what happens to them in the course of the six days of the retreat. Boundary issues particularly with regards to the time span of the interview were explained. Permission to digitally record the interview was obtained. It was only after the participant had acknowledged a level of comfort and readiness to go ahead with the interview that the researcher began the interview process. Participants were assured of confidentiality of the material shared.

Interviews were conducted at a venue conducive to the participants ensuring minimal noise pollution and providing for adequate lighting, a comfortable temperature (including mosquito repellents) and privacy. Efforts were made to manage possible intrusions in the course of the interviews through posting a signpost on the door, 'Please keep silent, interview in progress'.

#### **4.5. Ethical protocols**

The ethical protocols were taken care of through the information sheet (see Appendix H) and the consent form (See Appendix I), which were handed over to the participants and their signatures obtained. Permission for data collection at DRC was requested and granted by the Director of the Second Campus, Fr Augustine Vallooran.

The unstructured interview facilitated the voice of the participants and thereby ensured that the participants received respect and had power over the content of the interview material. Verbal and non-verbal prompts were introduced to facilitate the flow of the interviews without interfering with participants' thoughts. The researcher used prompts such as, 'Uh huh', 'Okay', 'Tell me more', 'What do you mean?' 'Can you say more?' The purpose of these prompts was to hone deeper into the nuances of the words used and to access the underlying emotional content of the experience. The minimal prompts provided space for the participants to follow their own leads and direction. The broad, open and neutral solitary core data collection question was designed to empower the participant to choose the specific content of the interview. IPA seeks to privilege the voice of the participant because the participant is considered as an expert on their experience (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

Furthermore, as a pre-emptive strategy to keep the researcher's interference to a minimum, the researcher did not attend any of the sessions for it was assumed that doing so would impinge on the data collection. The researcher thus chose to discover the retreat through the eyes of the participants and thereby privilege the perspective of the participant. Consequently, the researcher found the participants filling in with information about the day to day procedures at the Retreat. J. A. Smith and Osborn (2003) indicate that a naive openness on the part of the researcher encourages the respondent to state the obvious.

To protect for possible vulnerability on the part of the participants, they were offered the availability of a counsellor on campus. However none of the participants requested for a counsellor. The credentials of the provisional counsellor are appended (see Appendix J).

#### **4.6. Data recording and transcription**

All the interviews were digitally audio-recorded on an efficient gadget from Zoom ([www.zoom.co.jp](http://www.zoom.co.jp)) labelled H2 Handy Recorder. It complemented the lack of note-taking during the interview and enabled the researcher to stay focused on what transpired in the moment. It assisted the researcher in giving full attention to the participant, with eyes trained on the participant. It also facilitated a monitoring of body posture, bodily expressions through the eyes, hands and feet and related non-verbal communication including the inflection of the tone and verbal slurring.

To manage the transcription, a transcriber was engaged for the length of the data collection. The transcription involved a semantic record of the interview that included notable non-verbal communication which was immediately noted following the interview and then inserted into the transcripts. Following the interviews, copies of the transcripts were given to the participants to ensure authenticity (J. A. Smith, 1995; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003).

#### **4.7. Analysis of data**

J. A. Smith and Osborn (2003) advise that “there is no single, definitive way to do IPA...as you proceed you may find yourself adapting the method to your own particular way of working and the particular topic you are investigating” (pp. 52-53). J. A. Smith et al. (2009), “encourage IPA researchers to be innovative in the ways that they approach” (p. 80) the analysis. Accordingly, the following procedure was adopted for the analysis of the data drawing on the

main text of IPA (J. A. Smith, et al., 2009). It is a procedure that confines itself to the analysis of a larger sample and a larger corpus of data.

#### **4.7.1. Preliminary case level analysis**

The data analysis began with a free textual analysis which involved a reading and a re-reading of the transcripts of all the participants. Together the researcher listened to the voice of the participants which facilitated a recall of aspects of the interviews and enabled an observation of pauses, tones and inflections. The purpose of this effort was to engage in exploratory work and to cultivate a familiarity with the data, thereby assisting with an immersion into the life world of the participant. The researcher was interested in knowing "what is it like to be experiencing this or that for this particular person" (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p. 181). Coding strategies were employed which included wide-ranging comments in the form of paraphrases, summaries, comparisons, similarities, echoes, amplifications, contradictions, associations, metaphors, looking at emotions, position of the narrative, drawing on personal experience and the use of language which were noted in a column (J. A. Smith, 1995; J. A. Smith, et al., 2009; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2004, 2008). Larkin et al. (2006) advise the researcher to "draw from a wide repertoire of analytic strategies, and that these may be informed by prior experience and knowledge, psychological theory, or previous research – provided that they can be related back to a phenomenological account..." (p. 116).

This initial coding began to yield themes per participant for each of the days. All this preliminary case analysis is evidenced in the Appendices. At first I employed NVivo 8 for this task of familiarising with the each of the participants (see Appendices, K, L and M). The Models were helpful but I found that I could work comparatively easier on Word and paper (see Appendices N and O).



#### **4.7.2. Group level analysis**

After the above coding activity, relationships across participants' narratives became obvious through recurrent themes and points of convergence and divergence which led to the consideration of a "group level" analysis (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 106). It is important to note here that given the research question of this study - How do the participants at the Divine Retreat Centre come to be what they came to be as a result of each day's experience of the Inner Healing Retreat?' - the focus of the analysis had to be on each day of the retreat. Each day's experience was therefore considered as the research focus. Hence a super-ordinate theme representative of each day's experience of the participants was developed. Each super-ordinate theme therefore represents a 'group level analysis' which captures the richness of a cross case analysis. This cross case analysis across the days is evidenced in the appendices (See Appendices P and Q).

There were also other factors that influenced the consideration of a group level analysis, for example, the issue of sample size. Drawing on J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the sample of this study is considered a large sample for they indicate that a sample size of eight participants is a "larger sample" (p. 52). They also leak out such an assumption when discussing the "steps to analysis" (p. 81). Besides, samples "up to six participants" are considered small samples (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 114).

In addition, the transcribed material of this research amounted to 700-odd pages which prompted the consideration of participants' accounts as a "larger corpus" where the "emphasis may shift more to assessing what were the key emergent themes for the whole group (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 106).

Thus, given the richness of a cross case analysis that could be obtained from the data, together with the consideration of the sample size as a larger sample and the large corpus of data

obtained from the participants, the directives outlined by J. A. Smith et al. (2009) for such an analysis were employed. J. A. Smith et al. (2009) offer a sequence for "writing up studies with larger samples" (p. 114) that has a larger corpus of data and is also a group level analysis. They suggest four steps for this sequence.

***4.7.2.1. Step 1: Generating a generic text.***

The initial coding referred to above which yielded themes per participant as well as across participants was revisited iteratively to generate a generic text. This generic text is written at the group level rather than at the individual level so as to capture the core of participants' experience of each day. This generic text represents a summary of the key elements of participants' experience of each day.

***4.7.2.2. Step 2: Moving into idiography.***

At this stage, J. A. Smith et al. (2009) recommend moving into the idiographic level of analysis; a familiarity with the particular which had already been accomplished with the preliminary case analysis indicated above. It involves selecting extracts that typify the main theme or the super-ordinate theme. From among these extracts, the core extract was then identified together with other extracts that served either of the following functions: a portrayal of rich emotions, metaphorical expressions, extracts that evoke empathy or provoke imaginative thinking, extracts that demonstrate links across the super-ordinate themes and atypical extracts that highlight contradictions and complexity (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

Thus at this stage the researcher identified the core extract that typified the generic text. This core extract is presented after the generic text. For super-ordinate themes 1-3, singular core extracts are presented, for such a presentation honours participants' experience as reported by

them. The subthemes in these instances reflect the variations to the super-ordinate themes of these three days.

However, beginning with Day 4, such a presentation had to be altered to suit the phenomenological experience of the participants. Participants reported not a singular experience but a singular experience that occurred in phases. Hence, from Day 4 to Day 6 the super-ordinate themes are presented with core extracts that represent each of these phases. The phases are identified as subthemes. Thus in accordance with participants' reports, the presentation of the subthemes reveals the different phases of the super-ordinate theme.

#### ***4.7.2.3. Step 3: Linking material generated from stages 1 and 2.***

The third step seeks a connection between the first step and the second step, namely providing idiographic evidence to the generic text. The researcher had to cogitate over the relationships between the different extracts. It involved moving back and forth between the global perspective of the generic text and the localised context of the particular extract thereby seeking an idiographic enunciation of this extract. The effort here was to add depth and thereby provide evidence to the generic text by drawing on quotes from the participants which were weaved into an interpretative narrative. Here the idiographic focus was trained on the extract and further relevant material from across the narratives of the participants was incorporated.

Thus, in fulfilment of this step, an idiographic narrative enunciating the core extract is presented. This narrative is the researcher's interpretation of the typifying core extract for the theme under consideration.

#### ***4.7.2.4. Step 4: Back into idiographic perspective again.***

The fourth step demands another idiographic focus. This focus is concerned with identifying and declaring aspects of the person of the participant that further illuminate the

presented extract. To facilitate this step, J. A. Smith et al. (2009) advise asking the following questions, "What were the particularities of this participant? What does a reader need to know about this participant to appreciate the extract? What biographical information was important? Is this extract typical or atypical?" (p. 116). Furthermore, the researcher has to engage in "...micro-analysis of personal meanings, language use and metaphor" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 116).

In fulfilment of this step, relevant biographical details were added to the idiographic narrative enunciating the pertinent extract from the participant.

#### ***4.7.2.5. Developing an initial tentative hypothesis.***

Inspired by J. A. Smith et al. (2009):

The cross case analysis involved a form of micro theory development drawing on ideas from analytic induction (Robson, 1993; Smith et al., 1995) whereby provisional hypotheses are modified in the light of checking each case. This means the theory development is itself idiographic as each case is used to refine it. The aim is to produce theoretical statements which are true for all cases in the data set, or every case with clearly articulated exceptions... (p. 166).

With regards to analytic induction, J. A. Smith et al. (2009) suggest that:

It involves proposing an initial tentative hypothesis which is then tested against each of one's cases in turn. With each case, one revises the hypothesis to fit the case. Thus analytic induction is an iterative procedure allowing one to reflect on and modify one's thinking in the light of the next piece of evidence assessed.

Whilst the ideal of analytic induction would be to produce a final theoretical statement which was true of all cases, usually it is not possible to be so definitive, and a successful outcome will be a revised hypothesis which accounts for most of

the data, for most of the cases examined (p. 31).

Accordingly, an initial tentative hypothesis was generated from the generic text which was tested across the participants and modified to fit the evidence available in the data. This search for evidence and the consequent modifications were facilitated by the remaining steps of the sequence identified below. A super-ordinate theme which could have been derived inductively from the generic text was derived from this initial tentative hypothesis because the latter is an abstraction of the former. These initial tentative hypotheses are presented at the beginning of each super-ordinate theme.

It is important to note here that the super-ordinate themes are presented individually as the research foci because the research question focused on each day's experience of the participants. However, these initial tentative hypotheses were then brought together into "theoretical statements which (arguably) are true for all cases in the data set, or every case with clearly articulated exceptions" (J. A. Smith, et al., 2009, p. 166). This theoretical statement is presented in Chapter 12 as a proposition for further exploration in future research. This theoretical statement was not the goal of this research. However the cross cases analysis and the richness of the data facilitated the development of such a theoretical statement. It is presented only as an option for further verification. Having been derived inductively, it does however answer the research question of this study: 'How do the participants at the Divine Retreat Centre come to be what they come to be as a result of each day's experience of the Inner Healing Retreat?'

#### **4.8. Discussion on the super-ordinate themes**

It is important to note here that for the benefit of immediacy in reading, the discussion on each super-ordinate theme is presented following the presentation of its analysis. J. A. Smith et al. (2009) advise that:

And with a qualitative write-up, it is fine to introduce some literature for the first time in the discussion. As with the introduction, this engagement with the literature should be selective not exhaustive. There will be a large number of literatures, and then texts within each literature, that you could connect your work to. You need to select some of that which is particularly resonant (p. 113).

Accordingly, the discussion on each super-ordinate theme presents selective and resonant literatures, some of which is new and not considered in the Literature Review but which connects with the findings of each of these themes.

#### **4.9. Introducing the Findings - Chapters 5 - 11**

The following seven chapters are the findings of this study, namely the seven super-ordinate themes: 'Crisis', Surrender, 'Opening up', 'Confession', Counselling, 'Inner Healing' and 'Baptism in the Spirit'. These super-ordinate themes represent the stages of change operating at DRC rather than as isolated elements. They form the answer to the research question, *How do the participants at the Divine Retreat Centre come to be what they come to be as a result of each day's experience of the Inner Healing Retreat?*

They also reflect the fact that the DRC process of conversion is a combination of factors. They represent participants' reactions to the DRC structure and the growth that ensues across the days resulting in an experience of change on each day of the retreat and cumulatively across the Retreat. Although these findings are the experiences of the participants of this study who have

been through that process and cannot therefore be generalized, yet it could be argued that this process represented by the sequence of super-ordinate themes is at the core of the massive changes reported about DRC and alluded to by the popular quotes in Chapter 1.

It is important to note here that these findings emerged from participants' narratives owing to the analytic procedure indicated above. Thus all the super-ordinate themes emerged from the data, including those that resonate with the structure of the retreat: 'Confession', Counselling, 'Inner Healing' and 'Baptism in the Spirit'.

Furthermore, all the references to the "initial tentative hypothesis" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 31) presented at the beginning of each of the super-ordinate themes were generated iteratively after reading and re-reading the transcripts of each participant and were evident in most cases.<sup>18</sup>

In conclusion to this chapter, Fick's (1998) observation remains pertinent, that "the design of a study should involve careful consideration of the group of people to whom it is intended to apply, the type of question being asked, and the types of subjects needed for the goals of the study" (p. 56). The procedures for data collection and data analysis outlined above address these realities.

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<sup>18</sup> This was the procedure adopted for each of the super-ordinate themes to generate the initial tentative hypothesis drawing on (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 31)

## Chapter 5: Theme 1 - 'Crisis'

### 5.1. The analysis on 'Crisis'

It is crisis that draws people to the DRC. This was the "initial tentative hypothesis" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 31) that was generated iteratively as indicated above.

The following is a generic text derived inductively from the accounts of the participants. Participants reported experiencing a crisis in their life. Crisis refers to a personal situation that the participants of this study felt that they could not manage. It was unmanageable because they felt a sense of personal inadequacy at handling this situation and in most cases external support was lacking.

It must be noted here that even though Brennan, Lyn and Rosanna attended the retreat on Day 1, they became available for interviewing only on Day 2. However, since Brennan and Rosanna referred to Day 1 retrospectively, their comments, wherever pertinent, are included.

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies participants' experience of crisis: namely their sense of unmanageability or inadequacy and lack of support. It is stated simply and then elaborated below. The following quote highlights Nadine's experience of crisis:

*...my mother is like a best friend to me so I don't have any close friend so something happens to her I panic a lot no doubt I have a sister but then being the eldest I feel that responsibility is on me so you know all these things they get to me plus if I was married maybe I would have my husband, I'm not married also, so no support, relatives forget, they all are, they say they are there but they are never there for me so it's like I'm handling these, all these things all by myself so it's becoming more fear kind of thing*  
*Interviewer: you feel burdened*



*Nadine: ya, I feel burdened, no support there's no one to like turn to, whom do I run to, something happens like, I have to handle...it's becoming difficult for me, it's like being a girl, I feel a lady always needs some support you know it's like...*

Nadine felt inadequate with the adverse events in her family. At first it was her father's heart attack followed by the death of her grandmother three years prior to the interview. It appears that these sudden events had threatened her world-view and dependence on others. Until then she was a *'carefree person'* who did not worry about life and the day-to-day responsibilities because it appears she was shielded from those burdens by the family environment.

Then two months prior to the interview, her mother suffered a kidney related illness which seems to have given those threats a currency and immediacy. She qualified the threats as a feeling of *'panic,'* uttered with deep breaths. Subsequently, she had *'changed a lot'*. The panic appears to have had an encompassing effect on her for it consumed the whole of her person as suggested by the word *'lot'*. Besides, she referred to *'fear'* about nine times in the first interview suggesting a pervasiveness of fear and an absence of confidence in her ability to handle her personal situation as evidenced in the statement, *'so something happens to her I panic a lot'...*

Seemingly, these events challenged her capacity for adaptability and thrust her into the unfamiliar territory of shouldering responsibility. She expressed her sense of feeling overwhelmed in her new-found situation. She declared, *'you know all these things they get to me'*. It was a sense of inability at meeting the demands of her family situation.

As for external support such as *'relatives forget, they all are, they say they are there but they are never there for me'* and *'there's no one to like turn to'*. This reference further endorses her sense of personal inadequacy and thus her recourse to the external support system. She begrudged the lack of it and generalised the absence of it by claiming that it is *'never'* available.

She seems to have had a very limited external support system probably owing to her emotional dependency on her mother as revealed in the following sentence that links the two phrases with a causal 'so'. She disclosed, '*my mother is like a best friend to me so I don't have any close friend*'. Arguably, this dependence may have restricted her social engagements even in the neighbourhood, for she claimed that there is '*no support*' and '*there's no one like to turn to*', and '*whom do I run to, something happens like, I have to handle*'. Such claims discount the presence of others such as neighbours even in the case of '*something happens like*' an emergency. Furthermore it leaks out her family's limited circle of resources. Quite often in the Goan context, neighbours eventuate as an invaluable resource in emergencies.

She seemed eager to indicate that there was a rationale for her state of affairs which included factors such as her birth order, her gender and the lack of marital status. All these had apparently disadvantaged her.

The phrase '*being the eldest*' has revealing power, for it leaks out a sense of being reluctantly forced, owing to her birth order, into a responsibility. It appears to be an example of an internalised cultural script about the oldest born in the Goan context. The oldest in the Goan context is expected to make personal sacrifices in the greater interest of the family. This might mean tending to sick parents as in her case. It might also mean shouldering the burdens of the family such as day-to-day household tasks. Such role expectations of the eldest in the family are very strong in the Goan context and are enforced through shaming procedures. Her claim that the '*responsibility is on me*' although she has a '*sister*', whom she could request for assistance suggests that she had appropriated this cultural script comprehensively and to such an extent that she had ruled out any possible contribution from others, including her sister.

Her gender apparently was another contributing factor to her sense of inadequacy. In her own words, *'it's becoming difficult for me, it's like being a girl, I feel a lady always needs some support you know (breathing deeply)'*. The lack of a male sibling may have warranted an engagement with tasks that were beyond culturally prescribed gender roles.

The lack of her marital status further compounded her sense of inadequacy. She claimed, *'plus if I was married maybe I would have my husband, I'm not married also, so no support'*. The use of *'if'* implies a wishful state of affairs which would have given her the benefit of being married and thereby of a male support system. It is another allusion to her unease with engaging beyond culturally prescribed gender roles.

#### **5.1.1. Variations in 'Crisis' experience**

The following cases are instances of variations in the crisis experience evident with the rest of the participants.

Johnson reported a personal inadequacy at managing his anger. He arrived at DRC from an overseas country with his confidence shattered by disempowering workforce experiences and imprisonment. On Day 2, he disclosed that he had been deported from *'the country (overseas) I was born in'*. He was accused of *'false allegations'* and suffered *'lots of torture'* in prison. This whole experience of *'wrong allegations'* and of being in *'prison'* and consequently of *'deportation'* lasted over a two-year period. He indicated that *'throughout the last two years'* he was *'angry'* and that *'the word deport, would actually send me into a frenzy'*. The anger seems to have become unmanageable. He claimed that *'I have a very short temper and an anger problem, it becomes very difficult to control, it's not like I get aggressive...but then I scream, I don't know what to do'*. Apparently he had sought to regulate his anger but he felt helpless because it was beyond his control, indicated by the use of the phrase, *'it becomes'*. It was as if he was saying

that he had lost his self-agency in emotional self-management and did not know any other solution.

Remo expressed his sense of personal inadequacy at motivating himself to work. He declared, *'I don't take action, I don't know what is holding me so I think it's a bondage or a block in my life or a curse'*. He had been very effective as a salesman of books and was on *'cloud nine'* because he had managed to own two flats in the expensive suburbs of Mumbai. But all that changed after marriage, when he *'experienced heavy financial losses'*. Eventually his family of four had to live *'from rental to rental'*. In his estimation, there were two contributing factors to his sense of inadequacy. At first it was his physical ailment with his ears, owing to which he was terminated from work. He revealed that, *'when I speak my own words, my own voice echoes back, and I get confused... I lost my job, in a call centre because of my ear problems'*. Secondly, he struggled with establishing a trusting and honest relationship with his wife. Instead, there was fear and deception in the relationship on his part. He had come to the retreat to *'improve his relationship'* with his wife whom he *'hate(s) for all that she differs from'* him. He wanted to *'open out my heart'* to her and tell her the truth that the flat they owned is under an imminent loss. He had been deceiving her for over a year by religiously wearing the work badge and pretending to leave for work on weekday mornings. He blamed her for his lack of motivation to work because according to him, all that she provided him was *'discouragement everywhere even in my financial planning & decisions she discourages me and therefore with the past experience I'm not able to move'*.

Carmo was explicit about his inability at managing his finances responsibly but did not provide enough details about his more personal issue of feeling inadequate implied in his expression, *'brokenness'*. He had migrated overseas to work as a draftsman but for the past 12

years had not been home to Goa. He had lost his father a few months prior to the interview but had not attended the funeral which was held in Goa. However, he eventually flew into Goa which was probably the time when the grief consumed him. To make matters worse, what he discovered on arrival into Goa was that he had lost not merely his father but also his relatives. None of them were as close and supportive as he had expected them to be, prior to his arrival into Goa. He discovered that there was a '*drifting apart of everybody*' which had only intensified his prevailing sense of '*brokenness*' and '*depression*'. He was given into unhealthy engagements which leaked out in the words, '*crazy things*' and '*doing things to the extreme*'. Although he had come to DRC, he was not prepared to give up on any of '*my vice*'. All that he came for was the '*soothing of his soul*'.

Lyn, the youngest of five girls, had felt inadequate at managing her feeling of being unwanted at home. This feeling had intensified more recently in the face of allegations of '*theft*' by her family members. Born overseas in an East Asian country of Goan parents, the family migrated to Goa when she was still a child. She appears to be a case of an unwanted girl child. Her parents may have wanted a boy after four girls and so her arrival may have been a disappointment. She disclosed that she had felt unwanted at home, '*since the time I was seven so it was quite a young age and I have been going through it*' and '*I have been going through enough for the past twelve years and it's not an easy thing to go through*'. Consequently, she wanted to eliminate herself and had attempted '*suicide six times*' over the years. She had been '*going to different priests, different people counselling*' but those resources had not been as adequate as she had expected.

More recently, the 19-year-old was falsely accused of theft at home when in fact it was one of her older sisters who had the '*habit of stealing*'. She was made the scapegoat. Her '*dad*

*was planning of filing a police case against me, getting me jailed'*. Not knowing how to contain herself amidst these allegations she had escaped from the family home for it was *'another reason I just could not bear'*. So when she was eventually captured through a network of friends, her father, who owns a starred hotel, *'caught her head banged it to the wall'* resulting in her *'unconsciousness'* and *'two blood clots'* in her head. Her father *'locked me up in a room'* at home with no access to the *'bathroom'*. When she regained consciousness on her own, she realised that she was *'fighting death'* but then *'no one cared'*. Following her recovery she had wanted to escape again from her home. A male friend, who had helped her escape the first time, had reassured her that in going to DRC, she would *'find everything solved each and everything'*. Hence she had come to DRC hoping for a solution to manage herself.

Seby disclosed that, *'I have too many additions, problems...drugs, alcohol, cigarettes you know, probably gambling'*. He had grown tired of his inability to manage the path of discipline that he had finally decided *'enough is enough'*. He hoped to do something different in life by coming to DRC.

#### ***5.1.1.1. Lack of reference to 'Crisis'.***

While all the above participants were explicit in their reference to crisis, Rosanna and Brennan appeared to portray that there was no crisis in their life.

Rosanna projected an impression both in her demeanour and in her articulate style that everything was *'ok'* with her and that others needed help. Apparently, she had come because her friend had invited her. However, she leaked out a reference to crisis, when she declared, *'I started involuntarily thinking about my past and about certain things and about how I thought maybe I had resolved them but maybe they needed to be you know brought out one final time for a final resolution'*. As she uttered this, she moved in her chair suggesting a level of hesitation at

providing details about it. She also paused for a moment looking upwards suggesting that she was trying to connect with the experience. Although a part of me wanted to probe for details I exercised refrain, thinking this was only the first meeting and that I needed to let her feel safe. It was only by Day 3, that she became comfortable with disclosing the details of her crisis. She admitted to a crisis of unmanageability of self arising from protracted early childhood sexual abuse. Perhaps the '*alcohol*' and the '*rock music*' were her numbing strategies. Her rationale for coming to DRC was that her friend had invited her. Arguably, given the nature of her crisis, and the fact that she got in touch with it as quickly as she did on Day 1, might suggest that at some level she may have been self-propelled to find a resolution. Thus in Rosanna's case it was an inability to manage the persistent effects of childhood sexual abuse.

Brennan came to DRC to fulfil his wife's '*vow*'. It was only by Day 3 that he admitted to an inadequacy at relationships both in his workplace and also with his wife. However, the intensity of his unmanageability is comparatively lesser than the other participants.

### **5.1.2. 'Raw and overwhelming emotions'**

This subtheme reflects the emotional component of the unmanageability. What struck me in the case of some participants was the absence of reticence at disclosing their raw and intense emotions. These included feelings of fear, panic, grief, helplessness, despair, humiliation and shame. In claiming, '*don't know how we went through*' Nadine admitted that she had managed to survive an overwhelming emotional experience without being fully cognizant of how she regulated herself during such an experience. Her disclosure that, '*so it's like I'm handling these, all these things all by myself so it's becoming more fear kind of thing*' implies emotions of helplessness and fear. The emotional intensity seemed present in the interview for her voice sank as if on the brink of crying when she narrated the incident of her father's heart attack. The

emotions were raw for Carmo as well. While reporting his experience of losing his father, he choked on the words, '*basically I came this here this time (choked) because I lost my dad recently*'. From the smiling face that he tried to portray and the choking that was visible, I had a sense that he did not want to mentally revisit the experience. He chose to label his emotional experience as '*depression*'.

### **5.1.3. Abnegating responsibility**

Some participants externalized responsibility for their crisis. For example, Nadine blamed her relatives for not being available. Similarly, Carmo blamed his relatives saying '*everybody been away from you*' when in fact he had distanced from them for 12 long years, in the first instance. Remo attributed the cause of his crisis to his wife and in-laws. When I named the emotion underlying his narrative as a feeling of '*failure*', he made a surprising disclosure leaking out an awareness of abdication of responsibility, '*I am looking for someone to blame*'. However, he immediately deflected back to his previous narrative about holding others responsible for his state of affairs. Seby is an exception to this act of shifting responsibility. He admitted that he had not managed his life and demonstrated an ownership of responsibility when he claimed that he has '*not been a good person*'.

### **5.1.4. 'Build-up of 'Crisis'**

This subtheme captures the allusions of some participants that their crisis evolved over a long period of time owing to factors such as childhood trauma (for example, Rossana), parenting styles (for example, Nadine and Lyn) and experiences of failure (for example, Johnson). Nadine revealed that, '*there are I mean events in my life that have made me more weaker than making me, you know a stronger person*'. Her usage of '*more*' highlights her growing sense of vulnerability towards the felt sense of inadequacy. It was as if there was an increasing gradient to



the vulnerability. The '*weakness*' is probably a reference to the loss of confidence in her ability to manage her situation.

## 5.2. Self-Reflexivity on 'Crisis'

Nadine came across as a cultured woman. My initial sense of her was that she was presenting her cognitive self. It was probably the persona she was accustomed to presenting in her workplace as an accountant. She sat with a straight back initially while her voice sounded confident. She was quite forthcoming when she narrated the scheduled events of the day. However that scenario changed after she moved to reporting on the reason for her coming. Her speech slowed in pace. There was a sense of helplessness evident in her cracking voice as it gradually dropped in pitch with intermittent deep sighs. It provided an angle of understanding into the visceral impact of her claim that she '*had a lot of failures in (my) life*'. She also slumped in the chair when she began talking about her crisis experience apparently indicating the continuing impact of this development in her life.

When I looked back at the interview, I had an image of a woman who was confident and portrayed a very formal posture at the start of the interview. But by the end of the interview she seemed to have turned into a little girl who had lost her confidence and sounded uncertain. What enabled me to arrive at this contrast was a post reflection on the interview. She was sitting straight at the beginning of the interview and had sunk into the chair by the end of the interview. The tone had also changed from a loud tone to a softer tone.

She referred to failures in her life but did not provide any details. Although inclined to probe I chose to keep quiet. Reminding myself that the interview was her territory and not mine, I restrained myself. Finlay (2011) indicates that the interview is a negotiation between disclosure as well as restraint. I also bore a sense of responsibility towards protecting her from too much

exposure too early on, before the foundations of trust and safety were well established. Here was a woman talking to a man and she needed to feel safe with a man. I was conscious of not wanting to appear intimidating. I came to the interview with the attitude that the interviewee always has ownership over the content of self-revelation and that I had to negotiate participants' collaboration with the process of disclosure. It includes what and how much the participant chooses to disclose or withhold, including how much emotion is allowed to surface in the interview context. In the case of Nadine, when her narration became personal as she spoke about her failures, she choked, which alerted me to the emotional intensity surrounding the issue. I chose to exercise restraint and let her take ownership of the process as well as the content of the interview. To me she had already disclosed quite a lot as highlighted above in the core extract and this was only her first interview.

My interpretation therefore was that I was witnessing an instance of the sense of inadequacy in the case of this woman. It was her inadequacy at managing her familial situations, which were challenging her to grow up and shoulder responsibilities. She met her changing situation with a sense of apprehension that pervaded her current functioning.

Notably, crisis seemed written on participants' faces via the creases on their faces while they looked downcast and presented themselves with drooping postures.

### **5.3. Discussion on 'Crisis'**

Almost all of the participants of this study indicated experiencing a crisis which subsequently brought them to DRC as indicated in the theme Crisis. Different authors have referred to the reality of crisis in the context of religious conversion through varied terminology such as stress (Heirich, 1977; Ratcliffe, 2008), tension (Gooren, 2007), crunch (Wolff, 1962) and a pre-conversion phase of emotional distress (Granqvist, 2003). Although Rambo's Integrative

Model appears to have given prominence to the reality of crisis in the context of conversion, Gooren (2007) reminisces, "...crisis owes a huge debt to both William James and Lofland and Stark..." (p. 345).

### **5.3.1. Nature of 'Crisis'**

The nature of the crisis experienced by the participants was the unmanageability of their personal situation. It appears participants had exhausted available options on how to manage their situations of difficulty. For example, the expression, *'I don't know what was happening'* implicitly suggests that Carmo had searched for solutions and had failed at finding it. Similarly, Johnson admitted that he did not *'know what to do'* with managing his anger. Iyadurai (2011) noted that a significant part of inadequacy in crisis is the lack of cognitive knowing. In the case of the participants it appears that the unmanageability was mainly an outcome of their lack of cognitive knowing. Participants could not literally perceive a solution because they had exhausted available cognitive options. Snyder, Michael, and Cheavens (1999) point out that people go to therapy either because of the lack of pathways-thinking or the lack of agency-thinking or both. Pathway-thinking is the ability to cognitively find a workable pathway or solution to the problem. Whereas agency-thinking is the belief in oneself required to initiate action along an identified pathway. The most obvious deficit implied in the participants' experience of inadequacy was the lack of pathways-thinking. Most participants reported that they came to DRC out of compliance because pathway thinking was provided to them by either a parent or a spouse or a friend or a relative who had proposed DRC as the pathway for resolution. For example, Lyn was inspired by her friend who advised her to go to DRC because *'you will find everything solved each and everything'*.

The participants of this study experienced a sense of unmanageability of their personal

situation which seems to have occurred mainly due to a lack of resources. In the words of Devenish (2001) participants had realised that "...the resources they thought they possessed for coping with the exigencies of life did not measure up to the demands of human existence" (p. 208). Most participants reported a lack of cognitive knowing as discussed above, implying that they had either exhausted available resources or were ignorant of other possible resources. People may take to alcohol to cope with the lack of resources as Monteith (2011) discovered with her sample of women or they may take to gambling (Barsness, 2006) or seek other addictive behaviours. Seby, Carmo and Remo reported such addictive behaviours. Seby revealed the following about his addictive strategy for coping, *'I have too many addictions, problems...drugs, alcohol, cigarettes you know, probably gambling'*. Lyn was a contrast, for she revealed accessing positive avenues to manage her crisis. She had been *'going to different priest, different people'* and *'counselling'*. Thus participants revealed that, in their effort to find a resolution to their experience of crisis, they had availed other quests before they came to DRC (Rambo, 1993). Granqvist and Hagekull (2001) posited the idea of compensation and suggested that religion fills the gap of support for those in crisis. According to Crystal (2005), turning to the larger institutions may be such an act of compensation. Arguably, participants' arrival at DRC, a religious institution, may have been a compensatory quest. For example, Seby stated that he had turned to DRC, with the hope that, *'the centre is going to help me'*. Some participants also spoke about coming to DRC because as Devenish (2001) contends, participants may have been seeking the adequacy of God owing to their own inadequacy. For example, Remo indicated seeking a fulfilment of his inadequacies with the help of God when he declared, *'I'm praying to God that I should be able to get my flat back and that's one of the purpose I came and I wish I could put through, the truth before my wife'*.

Another facet to the crisis is the existential component. According to Fowler (1987) crisis is to arrive at a "*point where things must change*" (as quoted in Branson, 2010, p. 190). Some of the participants had come to a stage in their life when they began questioning the meaning and purpose of their existence. Some of them had the sense of having exhausted their purpose for living and were consequently seeking a new *raison d'être*. They seriously wanted their life to change. For example, Seby expressed his weariness about his life in the words, '*enough is enough*'. His remark bore the sense that his life had come to a point where it had to change. Following her crisis and inspired by the retreat, Nadine questioned the meaning of her life, '*I mean, where is the meaning of life?*' Although she did not declare it, it is possible that Lyn, who had made six suicide attempts, was also making a desperate attempt to find a purpose for living. She probably hoped that the promise of her friend that she would '*find everything solved*' would come true. In Erikson's (1968) terminology, it was the turning point in their life when they experienced vulnerability but also a sense of hope in the potential for growth.

### **5.3.2. Raw and overwhelming emotions**

Although the cognitive aspect is highlighted in the nature of crisis, it does not imply that the experience was merely cognitive. A phenomenological perspective does acknowledge the affective aspect of the experience which in this case was the accompanying raw and overwhelming emotions. Varied emotions are associated with the experience of crisis. A majority of them are negative emotions such as the feeling of inadequacy, frustration, anxiety, upset, anger, despair, fear and helplessness (S. Abreu, 2009; Granqvist, 1998; Hood, et al., 1996; L A Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990). Although Smith & A. C. T. Stewart (2011) contend that religious experience will most probably begin not with a positive emotion such as happiness, Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997) note research that identified the presence of positive emotional

states of mind. All the participants of this study referred to an experience of negative emotions as indicated under the subtheme, '*Raw and overwhelming emotions*'. The experience was so overwhelming for some of them that they experienced a disruption of their worldview (Paloutzian, et al., 1999). Participants' existence was predicated on a lifestyle supported by their culture. Following their experience of crisis, participants discovered that this assumptive world no longer sustained them because it had changed. For example, Nadine's taken for granted ambience of support had eroded. Carmo felt broken and disclosed that he '*just cannot*' go back to his old routine of work. Remo felt that his '*life is in shatters*'.

Two participants revealed that they experienced depression. They did not say whether the depression was clinically established. What stands out is that both a male and a female, namely Carmo and Nadine, mentioned the unmentionable by associating their state of affairs with the mental illness category of depression. Mental illness still remains a taboo in India as it is in the West (Reszke, 2011). Probably what participants were alluding to as depression may be what Ratcliffe (2008) refers to as an existential feeling. This feeling unlike an emotion is not aimed at an object. Rather it pervades one's existence by encompassing the perception and embodying such a disposition. Moskos, Olson, Halbern, and Gray (2007) reported that only young women seek help with mental illness. Carmo is an instance of a young male who used a mental health label without hesitation and in coming to DRC had accessed help.

### **5.3.3. Abnegating responsibility**

Ullman (1988) compared conversions in traditional religions such as Catholicism and Judaism with non-traditional religions such as the Baha'i movement and the Hare Krishna movement. He found that converts to traditional religions usually hold external stress factors responsible for their crisis. Arguably, it is the relational emphasis in these religions, which

warrants that converts seek external recourse rather than rely on the self alone, which may be held accountable for such an orientation. Rambo and Farhadian (1999) point out that the external factors associated with crisis in the context of religious conversion could be people or events at a personal level and social and political upheavals at the wider level. Some participants of this study blamed external factors such as events and people for their state of affairs as highlighted under the subtheme, '*Looking for someone to blame*'.

Relating the attribution theory to the context of mental illness, Ogden (2007) suggests that people attribute external responsibility for their illness to make it acceptable. Kelley (1971) points out that attribution often occurs as a result of the search for control. Stoltz (1997) suggests that in countering adversity, it is important to perceive some level of control to stay integral. Participants of this study appear to have engaged in such an effort of seeking control as well as acceptability before themselves and before me. For these participants, their crisis probably involved a social devaluation and hence a shaming exercise too distressing to disclose. They could not undo what happened. But they still possessed the control to soften the impact of this devaluation and maybe even the culpability. Thus, externalising responsibility may have helped them to remove the negative connotations associated with it in their minds, an effort towards remaining integral in the face of the disintegration of their social image. For example, following his arrival in Goa, Carmo was expecting others to reach out to him. To his surprise, he encountered social devaluation when he discovered that his relations were keeping '*away from*' him. It was possibly an outcome of the distance he had maintained from them, by staying overseas for twelve long years. He leaked out such an awareness when he admitted, '*you know you can change*'. Yet, he followed it with blaming them for '*drifting apart*' probably because the awareness of this social devaluation was too overwhelming to integrate it into his consciousness.

He rocked in his chair as he presented this part of the narrative thereby manifesting some level of agitation. Shifting responsibility may have helped him to achieve some level of acceptability of this new found reality of being devalued. It was possibly an attempt to retain some sense of self, an image control exercise before me.

Greil (1977) points out that religious seekers with a spoiled identity seek a new meaning for themselves. With his experience of imprisonment in a country overseas, Johnson is another instance of spoiled identity. Shifting responsibility was possibly his way of accommodating the social devaluation that ensued for him. He argued that he was a victim of unfair treatment by the particular country's legal system. Remo is another participant who appeared to feel devalued. He seemed to engage in an image control exercise before me by blaming his family members for his crisis. However, Seby appeared to be an exception to this act of shifting responsibility. He seemed to portray a level of ownership when he declared that he had *'not been a good person'*.

#### **5.3.4. Build-up of 'Crisis'**

Some conversion researchers, particularly those associated with the classical paradigm, uphold what Gooren (2007) refers to as "crisis determinism" (p. 337). According to this view conversion is precipitated by crisis. For example, according to William James, religious change can be called conversion "especially if it be by crisis" (as quoted in, Bakken, 2006/2007, p. 109). Such a view linking crisis with religious conversion was also held by the other early classical psychologists like Leuba, Starbuck and Coe (Richardson, 1985). More recently, there are other researchers who also uphold this view (Granqvist, 1998; L A Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990; Rambo, 1993; Snow & Machalek, 1983; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998). Even a more recent researcher, who analysed the interview data from adolescents notes that conversion, occurred with most of his sample after a crisis (Taylor, 2012).



The above view of determinism has however been challenged by more rigorous studies that included control group strategies to test for the influence of crisis in religious conversion (Gooren, 2007; Heirich, 1977; Kox, et al., 1991).

The participants of this study however suggest the presence of crisis in their life. It seems to have been a precipitating factor that led them to DRC and thus to the religious change that they experienced at DRC. Almost all of them began talking about their crisis on Day 1 of the interview. It was as if they felt mandated to disclose it even though the interview question inquired about their experience of the Day. Thus most participants appear to endorse the claim in psychological literature that crisis is a precipitating and a predisposing factor towards conversion (Coates, 2011; Kahn, 2000; Taylor, 2012). The above argument that crisis is a precipitating factor in conversion suggests that it is a trigger in conversion.

The subtheme 'Build-up of Crisis' highlights participants' allusion to a progressive build-up of the crisis that may have occurred over the years. This subtheme suggests the presence of the stage of Context according to Rambo's Integrative Model (Rambo, 1993). Lofland and Stark (1965), who use the word tension to describe the reality of crisis, highlighted the presence of the "predisposing conditions" (p. 864). These conditions refer to the background that disposes the convert's movement towards conversion. Paloutzian et al. (1999) observed that the predisposition may incubate from early childhood owing to early attachment ruptures. According to Kirkpatrick (2005), a high number of converts have insecure attachment histories. Although attachment theory was not tested on the participants, some of the statements of the participants leak out the nature of the relationship with their parents. For example, Lyn revealed ambivalence in her relationship with her mother. She was disappointed because she had thought her *'mother was close to me but then eventually I found out that she wasn't'*. Remo had lost his mother when

he was two years old and had a physically absent father, which may have sensitised him for feelings of rejection, which he confessed to on Day 5.

### **5.3.5. Crisis and age**

Literature identifies adolescence as the age for crisis and the consequent conversion experience (Bannister & Fransella, 1980; Doja, 2006; Paloutzian, et al., 1999). Kose (1996) examined the literature to investigate whether conversion was an adolescent phenomenon. He found such a bias between conversion and crisis occurring in adolescence in most studies between 1899 and the 1950s. However, in his sample of converts to Islam, he found evidence to the contrary. He noted that conversion is not confined to the crisis of adolescence. All the participants of this study were beyond the stage of adolescence.

Two of the participants of this study who reported an intense amount of change, namely Lyn and Rosanna, were at the end of their teenage years. The rest of the sample was well beyond the adolescent period. Their experience of crisis and the consequent change, for example in the case of Remo, counters the claim that conversion is confined to adolescent crisis.

## Chapter 6: Theme 2 - Surrender

### 6.1. Analysis on Surrender

The "initial tentative hypothesis" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 31) generated iteratively for Day 1 is as follows: On Day 1 of the retreat, participants reported a struggle with the call to surrender which was experienced in varied forms.

The following generic text was derived inductively from the narratives. Participants reported a struggle with the call to surrender which was experienced in varied forms. One form of surrender involved ritually surrendering their wounded-ness in the form of hurts and resentments to God following the call of the preachers. Another form of surrender involved feeling called to surrender their inhibitions at singing, clapping and raising of hands in the effort to immerse into the Retreat. Still another form of surrender involved feeling called to surrender their familiarity with time, space and bodily comforts. Participants reported a struggle with all these calls to surrender, which probably added to their sense of inadequacy.

#### 6.1.1. Struggle with the preachers' call to Surrender

On Day 1, the preachers invited the participants to surrender aspects of their lives to God in the form of a ritual. The ritual warranted enlisting these aspects of surrender which each individual had to engage in. They had to place this list of surrender in a basket which was then offered to God in prayer. Notably, this ritual which is re-enacted at the start of every retreat is then placed in the intercessory chapel where incessant intercessory prayers are held throughout the course of each retreat seeking God's intervention in the lives of the participants. Some of the participants reported on the content of their list of surrender. For example, Nadine surrendered *'all the things that are keeping us away from God'*. Johnson surrendered his addictive behaviours *'like cigarettes or any of the bad things associated'*. Rosanna encountered a dilemma because

according to her, *'in God it is supposed to be all or nothing'*. She was reluctant to surrender her inclinations for drinking and rock music.

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies participants' experience of struggle with surrender. The following quote highlights Remo's experience of struggle with the preacher's call to surrender:

*...we were asked to put place a slip in the basket, our intention what we are surrendering, the first is to, one of the weakness that I want to over-come is my non-working habits and the second thing is I'm suffering from a ear problem...*

*...I came here to ask God for two things, favour, the first thing is forgetting my past, forgiving what has happened...*

*...and today when the Father told to surrender all I have today is confusion and anxiety...*

Following the call to surrender by the preachers, Remo chose to enlist his *'non-working habits'* and his *'ear problem'*. It appears these were easier for him to enlist. He reported these first rather than the more personal issue of resentment which he referred to only later. He claimed later that this resentment was the prime reason for his coming to DRC, *'I came here to ask God for two things, favour, first thing is forgetting my past, forgiving what has happened'*. This issue of resentment was probably personally affronting which might explain his delay at surrendering it. The delay could also be attributed to the preachers who may have reiterated the need for forgiveness. These repeated calls may have forced him to stay connected with the issue and consequently act on it.

He was resentful against his family members. Foremost in the list was his wife whom he *'hate(s)'* but is also *'frightened of'*. When I named the emotion underlying his marital

relationship as one of *'feeling frightened'*, he qualified it as *'feeling very frightened'*. However, he quickly corrected himself with a disjointed expression of denial, *'I'm very frightened, I'm not, I say, that I'm not frightened of my wife'*. Perhaps through this denial of the prevailing emotion of fear in his marital relationship, he was negotiating his masculinity before me. Second on his list were his children, who had withdrawn from coming to the Retreat at the last minute. His reference to *'family'* also included his in-laws to whom he attributed his financial *'downfall'*. It led to him feeling that his life was now in a *'total mess'*. There was such hatred between him and his in-laws that his father-in-law had asked him to leave his wife and *'go to the monastery'*.

It appears that after recognising his resentment, he wanted to fix it as quickly as he could, which explains his claim that he began praying for his *'wife, children'* and *'in-laws'*. He probably hoped that the resentment would disappear. However letting go of the resentment was a struggle arising from the incongruence between his cognition and his feeling. He knew *'it was not coming from my heart'*. He chose to disclose the emotional impact of that incongruence: *'and today when the Father told to surrender all I have today is confusion and anxiety'*. There seems to have been a dissonance between his desire to forgive and his reluctance to act on it. Perhaps following the preacher's call to surrender, there arose an internal conflict. A part of him probably wanted to forgive while another part of him was reluctant and rationalised, as suggested by the claim *'at the back of my mind what's the use of forgiving them because my life was in tatters'*.

#### ***6.1.1.1. Variations in the struggle with the preachers' call to Surrender.***

In contrast to Remo, two participants reported a lesser struggle with the preacher's call to surrender. Nadine reported *'feeling light'* following the ritual of enlisting aspects to surrender. Arguably, this feeling implies a preceding level of struggle which may have occurred during her act of enlisting her surrender. Johnson leaked out his struggle when he declared, *'even I first*

*sometime wasn't ready to accept the fact'*. However he eventually surrendered his *'anger'*.

Although he used the word *'we'* the following statement suggests a personal movement towards surrender after an initial struggle for he declared that, *'we should be ready enough and like ready to accept that he can do things for us'*.

Carmo and Seby represent yet another variation in the struggle with surrender. They demonstrated a protective strategy of avoiding a struggle. They seem to have forestalled the struggle by resorting to avoidance measures. Carmo for example warded off a struggle by establishing boundaries around his addictive behaviours, *'I came in actually not to leave any of my abuses you know my vices'*. The reference to *'not to leave'* reveals a pre-emptive strategy. Given his acquaintance with *'Alcoholics Anonymous'*, (AA) he was probably familiar with the act of surrender. His acquaintance with AA suggests a deep-seated problem with alcohol although he attempted to minimise it by claiming *'I am not an alcoholic'* and that *'only sometimes when you think a lot it goes overboard'*. Furthermore, his claim that *'basically I dreaded coming here'* leaks out a level of hyper-vigilance towards boundary setting particularly with regards to his behaviours. Seemingly he had pre-empted such a possibility and claimed his own space even though he had discovered that at DRC, *'no one was saying anything about abuses'*. He seemed to have found a sense of safety with me that enabled him to claim his own space.

Seby seems to have minimised his anxieties associated with the call to surrender by comforting himself with the thought that he had already *'changed my life'* and had given up *'drinking and smoking'* since he had arrived at DRC. Even though the change was only for a day, he was impressed enough. Perhaps there had not been a single day in his life at least in recent

times that had not been without alcohol or tobacco. Arguably it could also be that it was his way of avoiding going deeper into an examination of other issues in his life.

### **6.1.2. Struggle with surrendering their inhibitions with Charismatic activities**

Another form of surrender involved voluntarily surrendering their inhibitions at joining in the charismatic activities of singing, clapping and the raising of hands. For example, Nadine had to talk to herself to conquer her inhibitions at joining in, *'I said like it's ok fine, everyone is doing it I'm pretty cool with it'*.

Carmo talked about his struggle with his inhibitions at joining in these charismatic activities as a swing between joining in and holding back. He stated that, *'then in between like suddenly I felt it was nice and then I would sing along...then again I'd just you know keep to myself, that was happening for a little while'*. The swaying was probably a reflection of an internal conflict. He had described himself as *'always defiant'* and called it, *'my trait'*. Perhaps it was this need to be different that was creating the internal conflict. However, that struggle gradually diminished with time as the following demonstrates, *'then towards the end, the second session, it was like, I really wasn't really holding back, I mean I was singing, I was clapping hands, I wasn't doing that in the first session, I was little bit you know tight'*. Carmo did not declare what facilitated this movement but he contradicted his self-definition and leaked out his own search for compliance when he disclosed that *'nobody is basically looking at you'*. Although he claimed that he is *'not that way'* in that he raises hands and says alleluia because others *'are looking'* yet here in this instance he seems to have checked around to see whether someone was looking at him. Perhaps he was protecting himself from the embarrassment at joining in with these charismatic activities. He appears to have increasingly gained a level of confidence because by Day 2, he reported that it was *'something not tying me down'*.

Seby laughed when he began speaking about his experience of *'singing, clapping'*. When I drew his awareness to his laughter he justified it by saying *'I'm into more old fashioned thing'*, thereby implicitly suggesting a level of struggle with his inhibitions at joining in these charismatic activities although he eventually succeeded at joining in.

None of the participants alluded to these charismatic activities from Day 3 onwards suggesting that they had resolved this struggle by then.

It must be noted here that once participants joined in the singing and clapping they then began to notice over the days, the benefits of engaging in these charismatic activities. For example, Nadine reported that *'these hymns always keep us going because we are clapping and singing alleluia'*. Remo reported that when he was *'praying or while singing the praises...I became very lively'*. Referring to the singing, Seby indicated that *'they are powerful hymns, so does touch your heart you know does touch your heart, does touch your brain'*.

### **6.1.3. Struggle with surrendering their familiar routine, space and comforts**

Still another form of surrender involved surrendering their familiarity with time, space and bodily comforts in their efforts to adapt to the Retreat schedule. Only a few of the participants who reported this struggle found the schedule of the Retreat physically tiring and mentally exhausting because according to them, it did not provide for adequate rest.

Given his background as an international marketing professional, Brennan who was first interviewed on Day 2, found it difficult to surrender his familiar routine of only *'five hours or six hours'* of busyness. Looking back at his experiences of Day 1, he reported that he felt *'out of place'* with the schedule of DRC which goes *'so long till you drag it till late at night'*. Consequently, he found it *'very difficult to put up at half past five'*, that is, arise at 5.30 am which is a *'very very important point of consideration because you can't focus'* during the



sessions in the course of the day. As a result the day ends up being a *'waste'*. The businessman in him sought productivity of his time spent at DRC. He stated that, *'at the end what happens is you are down to getting sleepy and this may not be the right way'*.

The *'time consuming'* schedule generated some intense emotions for him. His elevated tone suggested that he was venting his frustration before me. I recognised that the professional in him was *'very, very upset'* such that there was anger and disdain towards the management of DRC. Prior to this particular point in the interview, he had talked about how the management had failed to provide the key agenda for the day. The professional in him was looking for a formal agenda that enlisted the events of the day. He wore a striped shirt and appeared formal. His voice was loud but the content lacked a flow suggesting a level of rigidity. Perhaps this rigidity was a reflection of the conditioning he had assimilated from the workforce. He found it difficult to adapt to the new routine at DRC and seriously wanted the retreat schedule to suit his routine. He implicitly requested me to communicate this problem to the management at DRC and offered prompt advice on what should happen. According to him, the retreat should be confined to a maximum of *'six hours'* and the Mass *'be for 40 minutes, 45 minutes'*.

He appeared quite directive when he used the word *'you'* in the following statement, *'you make a retreat, make it also in a manner whereby you know, you value people's time also the end of the day seeing people's condition or what they are, some people could have been some sort sickness or something'*. I was taken aback by such directedness. To me, it was apparent that he was using the interview to offer advice to the management of the Retreat. He repeated it at least three times in the course of the interview indicating how strongly he felt about the schedule. In generalising the issue to *'people's time'*, he was probably seeking to endorse his claims. Furthermore, he wanted me to *'publicize it'*. He possibly felt powerless before the management

which may explain why he sounded vindictive in the interview. He possibly thought my association with the management was a good avenue to discredit the management publicly. It explains his suggestion that I *'publicize it'* so that the management of DRC is publicly shamed. The *'it'* was obviously a reference to the schedule of the retreat. The salesman in him had surfaced yet again, as he persuasively tried to sell his proposition to me.

He repeated this request for *'publicity'* another two times before reiterating it a final time towards the end of the retreat, *'I would really appreciate if you go ahead and publicize and you know go ahead wherever you are in the world'*. Perhaps his wife's comments had reinforced his resentment. He claimed that *'I was kind of very very upset because my wife said to me I can't go on like this'*.

It was as if through drawing on his wife's statement he was saying to me: 'Look, I cannot manage it and even she who urged me to come cannot manage it and we don't want to waste our time. Why don't you do something about it?' What seems to have unexpectedly ensued out of restating the comments of his wife was a quick decision. It was as if he had found his assertive voice in sharing that experience with me. It was not clear at what point he made the decision. However, he chose to declare it to me, *'I'm not going to come tomorrow and I made it a point with effect from today I said I want to sleep'*. Notably, he did not indicate in later interviews whether he executed his decision for the rest of the days and whether he arrived late for the sessions in the morning. Neither did he make a reference to it.

Rosanna is another example of a struggle with surrendering her routine. She was resentful that she had to wake up early *'at 5.30'* in the mornings which was too early for her given that she usually woke up at 9 am back home. She complained that she was consequently, *'feeling tired, very, without energy'* and that during Mass she was *'juggling between feeling sleepy'*. She had

also experienced a *'feeling of restlessness'* and *'body itching'*. All these bodily discomforts reminded her of the un-bearableness that people back home had referred to, *'I was kind of thinking about all the people who said, they had said that, you know after 2-3 days it became unbearable because I was feeling an unbearable sensation'*. Like Brennan she also struggled with staying focussed and attentive during the session and was occasionally *'surprised at my own receptiveness'* because she has a *'very short attention span'*. Such a claim also leaks out her tendency for absent-mindedness. Perhaps the retreat had forced her out of her comfort zone. It was possibly a difficult space physically and mentally for perhaps the pain associated with her history may have resurfaced. She alluded to it in the passing without giving details, *'I started involuntarily thinking about the past'*. It was only on Day 3, that she disclosed an experience of being sexually molested by a cousin. In addition, she revealed feeling challenged at giving up her addictions to drinking and rock music, *'where do I draw the line, should I draw any lines?'* These questions suggest a struggle with finding the mental space to contain what was being activated in her body and mind at the retreat. Perhaps it was easier to give in to her familiar habit of taking flight as implied in the following, *'I had this brief fleeting thought that you know maybe I should think of how people were talking about going away, should I very briefly like a split second, then I said no, I shall stick around, let's see what happens, let's see.'*

Nadine kept quiet about her struggle with bodily discomforts. It was only on the last day when she was recounting her experiences at DRC that it leaked out in the following declaration, *'everyone back home used to speak about Potta but they never actually told me how, actually it was a very trying moment for me over here, it wasn't easy...sleeping on hard beds, sleeping on hard pillows...this entire week has been a hard life...early in the morning I used to grumble like will I get through this day'*. The reference to *'hard beds'* and *'hard pillows'* suggests a familiarity

with bodily comfort which she had to surrender in her time at DRC. She talked about engaging in a personal grouse every morning owing to the discomforts she had to endure.

## 6.2. Self-Reflexivity on Surrender

I had a fleeting thought at the end of the interview with Remo that his pervasive mood may have had its roots in his family of origin. I was reminded of it on Day 5, when he revealed that he had lost his mother when he was 5 years old and had *'never felt her love'*. He was abandoned by his father into the care of his uncle who did not want him and sent him to the *'boarding'*.

Now faced with the prospect of forgiveness at the invitation of the preacher, he was probably searching for a convincing rationale. All that he possibly found was a voice emanating from this pervasive mood and one that differed from the preacher. This voice blamed his immediate family, namely his wife and children, for his current state of affairs, which he described as *'my life is finished'*. Perhaps a part of him was voicing out before me what it had felt for a long time, that his life had indeed *'finished'* in that family. Yet he could not escape from that family because they were his only possessions. He appeared to be a man with no options. Perhaps he felt trapped and an outsider in that family. What stood out strongly for me was a sense of his reality of feeling not heard and misunderstood. I felt a sense of compassion for him. So time and again I found myself overly straining to give him a listening ear and a sense of understanding to him.

I wondered about his eagerness to forgive when he said *'I'm looking forward when Holy Spirit touched me'*. It appeared as if he was desperate for the magic solution. A part of me disbelieved him. Did he really mean it? I wondered whether he was trying to impress me. He probably found in me a listener who had validated him as a person. Perhaps his need for being

heard and understood which was difficult to obtain at home was being met. He appeared confused with his disjointed and repetitive sentences. I felt he would have responded to anyone who was sympathetic to him.

Far from rescuing him, the Retreat seemed to have induced further crisis. He seemed to have had a heightened sense of the seriousness of his situation. It incited an internal conflict that he was desperate to resolve. Yet his habitual pervasive mood prevailed. At the end of Day 1, he was waiting for the magic cure to this predicament.

I was touched by Remo's disclosure. He had revealed what he had perhaps told no one. He was pretentiously setting out each morning to work when in fact he went and sat in a public park. His family did not know about it. Yet here he was making a public disclosure. To my mind, he knew that the research would be published (It is one of the reasons I did not put down such personal details earlier). Could it be that he had forgotten that this was a research enterprise? Could he have thought that the research was confined to some Australian or some distant University context? A plausible explanation is that my attentive listening had assisted him to move into a territory that moved him beyond restraint into disclosure. The listening possibly had facilitated this disclosure, for it had met his need to be heard and understood.

### **6.3. Discussion on Surrender**

Almost all the participants of this study indicated experiencing a struggle with regards to surrendering aspects of their life to God at the behest of the preachers. Together it was a struggle with letting go of their inhibitions at joining in the charismatic activities of the retreat and with surrendering their familiarity with routine, space and bodily comfort. While different models place Surrender under different stages of conversion, it appears that DRC adopts the theme of

surrender strategically to assist participants' movement towards a resolution of their crisis for it is crisis or the preceding unease or emotional distress that draws the participants to DRC.

### **6.3.1. Participants' appropriation of the preachers' calls to Surrender**

Bourgeault (2009) suggests that surrender in the religious context "means, literally, to 'hand oneself over,' to entrust oneself entirely" (p. 26). It appears that for the participants, the task of enlisting aspects to be surrendered resonated with the idea of handing over, for participants reported enlisting and then handing over the list ritually into the basket. It appears the content of handing 'oneself over' was partial rather than total as warranted in religious conversion. Paloutzian et al. (1999) for example, note that a "change in the self-system" (p. 1053) is a key constituent of religious conversion. None of the participants except Rosanna alluded to such a comprehensive meaning of surrendering their total life to God. But even she was not prepared to make a full commitment. Hence her dilemma about whether she should make full commitment because *'in God it is supposed to be all or nothing'*. Nadine seems to have alluded to her whole life when she made a reference to *'all the things that are keeping us away from God'*. The *'all'* could be taken to mean her whole life. However, arguably, the reference to *'keeping us away'* leaks out her focus on the blocks that needed to be surrendered rather than her whole life. Thus the meanings ascribed to surrender seemed to be more of "makeshift versions of surrender" (Dueck & Goodman, 2007, p. 610) rather than a radical version that is as comprehensive as their life.

Traditionally surrender has been treated as a spiritual discipline suggesting that it is a process to be accomplished over time rather than as a single wholehearted effort (McMahan, 2002). It seems that DRC does not seek an overnight wholehearted effort at surrender from the participants because surrender is reiterated on successive days as if it is irrepressible. For

example, the call to open up on Day 2 is another effort to go deeper with one's surrender and so is 'Confession', Counselling and 'Inner healing'. Thus the above background explains why participants may have perceived the call as a partial act of surrender.

Kierkegaard noted that surrender is always a process and never a state that is attained definitively (Wolff, 1962). Furthermore, Granqvist (2003) indicates that surrender is an overarching reality implying that it occurs over a period of time. Hence it is understandable that participants appropriated surrender in the partial sense rather than the sense of a single complete act of surrender of their life. Participants' individual differences portray a more realistic and pragmatic perspective, that surrender is likely to unfold in time for as Dyslin (2008) points out, surrender is a learned response which takes time for the consequent reorganisation of life to take effect. It appears that Day 2 was the beginning of a learning process that would unfold and intensify across the days and perhaps beyond the retreat.

Ghent observes that with surrender comes a discovery of the 'other' together with a discovery of oneself (Barsness, 2006). In the context of the retreat, this deeper engagement seems to be the discovery of the importance of relationships with God, with others and with oneself. For example Nadine declared, *'I have never made God as the centre of my life, as the top priority of my life'*. Seby hoped that the centre would help him to *'find God'*. Remo's struggle with surrendering his resentment leaks out a realisation about the significance of healthy relationships which he desired from his family members. Johnson's struggle with surrendering his anger leaks out his realisation about the significance of a healthy relationship with his own self.

### 6.3.2. The nature of the struggle with the preacher's call to Surrender

Kahn and Greene (2004) note that "the experience of surrender is often fragile and precarious, and difficult for the convert to sustain" (p. 237). Most participants felt fragile and precarious in their efforts to surrender because it was not as forthcoming as they had expected. For example, Remo swayed between wanting to forgive and withholding forgiveness probably because at some level he felt stuck in his pervasive mood of resentment (Finlay, 2011).

Highlighting the role of surrender in the therapeutic context, Barsness (2006) points out the need for creating the space for affective dynamics of surrender to emerge. Remo's complaint that forgiveness '*was not coming from my heart*' highlights his impatience with forgiveness without addressing his affective state of resentment. Perhaps his case reflects a similar lack of space for such affective dynamics at the DRC.

It appears Carmo also experienced a sense of fragility. Seemingly, his pre-emptive strategy was his way of managing the anxieties that may have surfaced at the prospect of surrender. Perhaps it re-surfaced his unresolved anxieties with surrender given the fact that he was already familiar with surrender at Alcoholics Anonymous. It appears he lacked the willingness that Dyslin (2008) and Holley (2007) claim is critical to surrender, namely that of giving up control to a higher power. Devenish (2001) notes, that "the process of passive surrender ensures that human autonomy is not only fully relinquished, but comes to be actively reappropriated under the terms of a new constitution of love"(p. 255). It appears Carmo was not prepared to accept limitations to his autonomy nor the control over his addictive behaviours. His decision that he '*came not to*' suggests an inclination to be in control rather than a choice to surrender control to a higher power.



The above discussion suggests that on one level, participants' struggle appears to be an emotional struggle as in the case of Remo and on the other, a cognitive struggle as in the case of Carmo. What might be an added possibility is an underlying concomitant struggle to stay authentic to the real issue that surfaced. For example Remo knew that the real issue to be surrendered was his resentment. But when it came to the concrete act of enlisting elements for surrender he chose instead his health problems and his habits. Carmo too had got in touch with issues that mattered for surrender but he chose to avoid staying in touch with those real issues. Thus these participants demonstrate a struggle with acknowledging the real issue and with staying in touch with what surfaced in their awareness even after knowing that it needed to be surrendered. Holley (2007) noted that the struggle with authenticity is a struggle to move away from lies and self-deception. It appears that both Remo and Carmo satisfied themselves with the less painful way. Seby too chose to comfort himself by acknowledging that he had made small shifts.

In her phenomenological work, Holley (2007) presents her own struggle with surrender which involved letting go of fear and finding the ability to trust. The struggles of Remo and Carmo could also be argued to relate to a lack of these two abilities. Remo for example, spoke about anxiety, suggesting the presence of fear. The struggle of Carmo may have been a struggle with trusting the future. His pre-emptive strategy suggests a tendency to be in control rather than trusting what might emerge as a result of letting go. The strategy may have helped to ward off the fear arising from the prospect of surrender. Seby also avoided the anxiety by comforting himself with shifts such as stopped '*drinking and smoking*' for just one day.

In contrast to Carmo, Nadine and Johnson evidenced a willingness to surrender. It may explain the lack of struggle on their part. Nadine's surrender involved attempts at forsaking her

depressed self and finding her own worth in her relationship with God (Mahoney & Pargament, 2004).

The above discussion highlights participants' response to the call to surrender with an implicit focus on their own agency. Kahn and Greene (2004) note that Christian writers from St. Augustine to Eldridge have highlighted that the element necessary for surrender is not self-initiated. Rather as Kahn and Greene (2004) maintain, that in the Christian tradition, "...the essential, element in the experience of surrender comes from outside the individual, that is, from God or the transcendent dimension of the experience" (p. 237). Furthermore, "this dramatic inbreaking of the transcendent, or 'transforming moment' (Loder, 1989), is often at the heart of surrender" (Kahn & Greene, 2004, p. 237). Participants' reference to the call of the preachers implicitly suggests that they perceived it as a response that they had to reciprocate. Such a perspective may explain why they did not explicitly refer to a 'dramatic inbreaking' on Day 1. Remo was the only one who made a reference to an external agency claiming that he did not *'experience any touch of the Holy Spirit'* although he was *'giving hundred percent'*.

### **6.3.3. Struggle with surrendering their inhibitions with the Charismatic activities**

Participants' struggle with surrendering their inhibitions at the Charismatic activities seems to be a reflection of the struggle that the Charismatic movement and the Catholic Charismatic Movement on the whole have endured over the years. The non-Catholic charismatic movement has had its difficulties with being accepted by its hierarchy and the majority of its mainstream members. For example, Wright (2005) highlights such a struggle with the Protestant Assemblies of God Churches. Bebbington (2007) notes that physical activities such as dance and mime were initially trialled on children before they were adopted by adult Evangelicals. When the charismatic movement came into the Catholic Church it was met with resistance (M. J. A.

Abreu, 2008). It was disdained and even banned, particularly in South America (Chesnut, 2003). Hocken (2004) notes that the opposition to the charismatic activities of singing, dancing and raising hands did not cease until Papal approval came forth. The reticence may have been fostered by the view held in Christian circles that activities such as singing and holding of hands were reminiscent of medium worship (Walker, 1975).

The reticence of both Nadine and Seby who both represent Goa and Goan Diaspora respectively suggests that such an acceptance has been delayed in Goa. Given the Indian and Portuguese context of Goa these two participants challenge the claim of Hocken (2004) that this reticence is confined to English-speaking countries. Nadine claimed that in Goa, Charismatics are considered '*fanatic people*'. Furthermore, while referring to clapping and singing, she claimed that in Goa, '*if you do something like that they point out the finger*'. Perhaps Nadine's comments reflect the broader Goan divide between the religious and the secular. Even to date, although Goa has a rich cultural engagement with music and dance, gross body movements in worship are yet to find full acceptance among mainstream Goan Catholics. Perhaps the comment also reflects the prejudice against the Charismatic Movement that has prevailed from early times (Chesnut, 2003; Walker, 1975). Bebbington (2007) notes a shift in attitude, beginning from about 1965, when the West began to integrate the body into worship. Abreu (2008) observes that with the advent of the Charismatic Movement, the body has begun to be honoured as the "prime recipient for charisma" (p. 64).

Overall, this subtheme, 'struggle with surrendering their inhibitions with the charismatic activities' captures an important aspect of the Charismatic Movement, namely its engagement of the body in worship with the highest regard (Csordas, 2007). It also endorses a similar claim about DRC made by Jansen and Lang (2012).

#### **6.3.4. Struggle with surrendering their familiar routine, space and comforts**

Finlay (2011) points out that a phenomenological project is concerned with "taken-for-granted human situations and events" because "they are known in everyday life but typically unnoticed and unquestioned..." (p. 15). Reszke (2011) argues that everyday experiences are the most appropriate context for understanding a struggle that is existential, emotional and spiritual. The literature on religious experience identifies negative emotions such as anger, confusion and frustration in relation to religious or spiritual struggle (Yarhouse & Tan, 2005). However, there is a lack of focus on bodily aspects of the struggle. Some of the participants of this study reported negative emotions. While some of the participants like Remo reported feeling confused, others such as Rosanna drew attention to the bodily component of the struggle which included accompanying bodily sensations such as itching and restlessness. Rein's (Nauta, 2008) phenomenological analysis of Augustine's conversion however is an exception to this lack because it draws attention to the intensity of his struggle by highlighting bodily manifestations such as changes in his face and the timbre of his voice.

Coates (2011) discovered that the participants of his study reported sleep deprivation in their charismatic group experiences and that they perceived it as a strategy employed to enhance participant vulnerability. Although the participants of this study did not make such a claim, DRC remains open to such allegations drawing on participants' reports about the lack of adequate rest.

Thus this subtheme, namely participants struggle with surrendering their familiar routine, space and comforts highlights participants' experience of vulnerability and the embodiment of their struggle with surrender. Thereby it provides visibility to what occurs at a very human level. It demonstrates the relationship between discomfort and surrender by highlighting the fact that the body is not a mute spectator of what transpires within the individual. Rather, that it is

impacted simultaneously. Jansen and Lang (2012) note that DRC assumes such a relationship between the body and the person.

## Chapter 7: Theme 3 - 'Opening up'

### 7.1. Analysis on 'Opening up'

On Day 2, participants found themselves struggling with 'opening up' to aspects of themselves and to others owing to the inputs of the retreat. This was the "initial tentative hypothesis" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 31) generated iteratively for Day 2.

The generic text in this case is as follows. On Day 2 most participants inspired by the retreat inputs noticed a struggle in their efforts to open up to themselves and others. This 'opening up' was manifest in their shifts in perspectives, emotions, level of engagement in the retreat, their ability to examine their own past and the desire to bring a new level of intensity to their relationships with others and with God.

#### 7.1.1. A holistic view of 'Opening up'

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies participants' experience of opening up on Day 2 of the retreat. The following quote highlights Johnson's global perspective on his experience of opening up:

*...so like, it's opened lots of like doors for me, like it's given me...in the sense makes me realise like things...*

Johnson used the metaphor of '*opened lots of like doors*' to encapsulate his experience of Day 2. When queried on its meaning, Johnson indicated engaging in an intense state of reflection through the use of the word '*realise*'. This word was used 18 times, suggesting an experience of opening or a significant difference in the varied aspects of his life as indicated in the generic text above. Most of his narrative of Day 2, was an attempt to substantiate this claim with evidence. At the start of the interview he passed a summarising remark on the whole day: '*today was extension*

*of yesterday*'. Such a claim suggests that aspects triggered on Day 1 were carried over into Day 2. It appears that the reference to *'extension'* was an allusion to this reflective attitude.

The metaphor of *'opened lots of like doors'* acquires significance against the background of the metaphor of a closed door. Although he did not explicitly refer to a closed door, Johnson gave enough clues to surmise that there were areas in his life where it felt like a closed door, for example, the loss of his home territory. He had arrived at DRC within three weeks of his release from a prison overseas. He claimed it was a case of *'wrong allegations, false allegations'* by the cashier of his company who had *'framed'* him. Following his release from prison he was deported to India never to return to the country of his current residence. The deportation meant a closed door on this country where his family of origin currently lived. At first, the thought of deportation *'would actually send (him) into a frenzy'*. He indicated experiencing a state of grief when he lamented that he would *'never be able to see'* his family members again, except when his family members moved out of his country of deportation on a *'vacation'*.

All the participants referred to an experience of opening up. Though not all of them used the word *'open'* they alluded to such an experience via synonymous references. This similarity suggests that it may have been prompted by the preachers. For example, Lyn leaked out such a possibility when she said, *'they want you to open out'*.

Johnson clearly had a sense of opening up in his life which presupposes a prior sense of feeling closed. Perhaps during his time in prison he felt confronted with the reality of closed doors for he revealed engaging in *'thinking, thinking and thinking'* and a sense of helplessness because *'there was nothing I could do'*. He had not known then how long he would be imprisoned. So he was surprised at being released within *'three months'*. He claimed that he *'thank(s) God for that'* because *'normally for that amount'* which is *'1.2 million (dollars), people*

*in X country normally get a term of a minimum of one year'*. Thus life seemed to have been like a closed door.

#### ***7.1.1.1. Variations in 'Opening up'.***

The following table identifies the varied allusions of participants to the experience of 'opening up'. Nadine and Seby represent the range in the comprehensiveness of the 'opening up'. Nadine did not use the word '*open*' but alluded to it twice through the phrase, '*start a new life*'. The word '*start*' suggests an opening to a new beginning that was as comprehensive as her life. For Seby the opening was far less comprehensive, for it occurred in '*small steps*' and on his part he was '*not rushing as well*'. For Rosanna the opening was a revisit '*one final time*' to her wounded past. The following quotes portray variations on 'Opening up'.



Participant	Quote
Remo	<i>Today, the experience I will call, ah, opening up means it took me back to my past...</i>
Carmo	<i>...my eyes opened and really I was, you know, I was dozing at that time because it was after lunch...</i>
Seby	<i>...coming but in small steps you know and I'm not rushing as well...</i>
Brennan	<i>I opened up myself here...and that's what I was open for today, his perfect will is all I am looking for...</i>
Rosanna	<i>'Maybe they needed to be, you know, brought out one final time for a final resolution'.</i>
Nadine	<i>I have done my failures, Christ is just telling me, forget about it ok, start a new life that was a meaning for me... it was like, ok come on let me forget about what I have done, let me start a new life, we all do mistakes...</i>
Lyn	<i>...they want you to open out...Today I found myself in tears trying to speak to the Lord...</i>

### 7.1.2. Facets of 'Opening up'

The subthemes presented below are the varied areas in Johnson's life where he experienced an opening. These include his perception, his emotions, his body, his past and his relationships.

These subthemes also include variations evident in some of the participants.

### ***7.1.2.1. Opening to new perspectives.***

Johnson reported arriving at newer perspectives in certain areas of his life. He highlighted this difference by prefixing the word *'realise'* with everyday words such as *'today, now, but, then I did not'* and *'so'*. For example, in the context of disclosing his newfound awareness of how his behaviour was impacting on others he admitted, *'but then I didn't realise now I'm like, today I realise everything ya'*. Furthermore, *'today I realised ok where I was going wrong, why I was going wrong'*. These quotes highlight a contrast which probably was his way of emphasizing the newness in his perspectives. These new perspectives seem to have influenced a change in his behaviour during the day as evidenced in his *'unusual behaviour'* of going *'quiet'* and not saying a *'word'* when he was *'normally very aggressive'*. This contrast in his behaviour had been noticed by his parents but surprisingly they had not questioned him as they would otherwise.

The following participants are variations to the subtheme: *'opening to new perspectives'*. While Johnson had a sense of certainty with arriving at new perspectives, it appears Rosanna felt unsure about her readiness to respond to the change in perspectives that she felt called to. The thrust for opening to new perspectives felt like a struggle and she wondered whether it was *'too much too fast'*. Her question, *'how am I going to integrate these principles?'* suggests a level of ambiguity with her readiness to respond. Apparently, her way of managing it was by seeking a compromise position, *'what compromises do I have to make?'* Furthermore, she revealed that she had come with a *'pre-determined state of mind'* about herself and others. She had felt *'ok'* about herself. It was others who needed help. However, *'all that changed until eh the sermon'* which seems to have confronted her on her view about herself.

### **7.1.2.2. Opening to a new emotion.**

For Johnson the change in perception was accompanied by a change in emotion. Johnson spoke about experiencing a new feeling of calmness: *and it's opened me up in lots of ways actually ya, I'm much calmer, very calmer, that's one thing that I really wanna mention.* The 'it' was a reference to the Retreat. His claim that he had '*wanted to have this feeling for a long time*' and that it was '*one thing that (he) really wanna mention*' suggests that he had felt its absence for such a considerable amount of time that he needed to highlight it. It appears Johnson wallowed in anger. He would easily '*snap*' at '*whoever came in front of him*' to the point that '*people actually got shocked*'. Although he would feel sorry after an outburst, that what he '*did was really bad*', he felt helpless and stuck. He could be '*upset all day*' as if he was locked behind that door for the whole day. When this happened, '*everyone bore the brunt of it*'.

It appears the experience of allegations and imprisonment had contributed to this pervasive mood of anger. He was '*angry with the system*', namely the legal system of that country, which in his estimation had a '*fake law*'. It was his view that he was wrongly implicated by the managers of the company, who wanted to '*save their jobs*'. He felt '*forced to accept something that (he) had not done*'. Thus he was harbouring resentment against them because he felt violated by the management of that company.

The characteristics of this new feeling of calmness involved being '*quiet*' and not saying a '*word*' implying a state of reflection. He described this state as '*some sort of freedom*'. In this state, he noticed that his '*anger*' had '*basically gone down*'. He was surprised by his own reaction. In two instances on Day 2, he had not been reactive and the '*fighter cock*' in him had quietened such that his anger had '*gone down*'. When queried about what happened to the anger, he indicated that it had '*just gone*'.

Lyn is another example of feeling closed but with a variation. She felt called to *'come out of the shell'*. In her own words, the shell referred to being *'bound up with walls'* and being secretive about herself to the point that she *'never used to reveal'* herself. The reference to *'shell'* and *'walls'* suggests a sense of being closed to her emotional vulnerability, in the area of emotional expressiveness to others. So on Day 2, she had *'found (herself) in tears'* which seemingly surprised her because she *'didn't expect it to happen'*.

After listening to the preachers, Nadine recognised the pervasive influence of guilt in her life for she was *'still not letting go of that sin'* even though she had been for *'confession'* on earlier occasions prior to the retreat. She felt constricted by *'all that guilt...all that dirt we are actually messing ourselves in'*. The use of the words *'dirt'* and *'mess'* suggests an intense level of self-loathing. When she heard the words *'let go'* from the preacher, she seems to have registered it as a solution to her pervasive mood of guilt. Hence she wrote those two words *'in bold you know capitals'* for the *'let go'* meant *'believing in God's forgiveness for her'*. It appears Johnson too was impacted by guilt for he admitted, *'today it is hitting me and I actually regret those moments'*. The reference to *'today'* suggests that unlike Nadine for whom the guilt was pervasive, his guilt was induced by the Retreat.

### ***7.1.2.3. Opening to engaging their body in the retreat.***

The change in perception and emotion was accompanied by a change in bodily experience for Johnson. His declaration that he was *'feeling a lot calmer, clapping and singing'* links his act of overriding his inhibitions and engaging bodily in the charismatic activities of singing and clapping:

*...lots of opening up, clapping, singing that never...that's something that I never do, sing or clap, or even move around, I would be like very uptight...*

He admitted to attending charismatic prayer group sessions overseas, which lasted for only a few hours as against this Charismatic retreat at DRC which lasted for a week. At those meetings, he had felt *'very uptight'* suggesting he had noticed a bodily felt inhibition at joining in the charismatic activities of clapping and singing for *'that's something I never do'*. It was not any different initially at DRC for he had reported a similar inhibition on Day 1. By Day 2, however, he had moved beyond those inhibitions because he had begun to experience *'some sort of freedom'* as highlighted above.

Other participants like Nadine also experienced similar inhibitions. She had initially justified it to herself saying, *'she did not have to copy exactly what others were doing'*. However through *'lifting up hands for the minimum'* and *'saying praise, praise, alleluia in my own words'* she seems to have arrived at a level of comfort with these activities. Seby too indicated an increasing level of comfort with these charismatic activities. He declared, *'I'm getting, going more deeper into, into singing and feel like that and clapping'*.

#### ***7.1.2.4. Opening to re-examining the past.***

Another area of opening up for Johnson seems to have been the area of ownership with his past wrongdoings. He disclosed that *'today (he) realized ok where (he) was going wrong'*. Earlier, he *'could never say I'm wrong'*, suggesting that he had found it difficult to admit to his wrongdoings and to such an extent that he had to make himself *'right'* even over *'tiny issues'*. He described himself as a *'fighter cock but without reason, even if I'm wrong I'd fight for to say that I am right'*. Today he found himself *'thinking about all my anger, my habits how they've hurt my parents...friends'*. The *'thinking'* points to a reflective engagement, an examination of his past following which he owned the implications of his behaviour as suggested by the rest of the sentence. Consequently, he found himself envisioning a new future for his relationships. He

proposed that *'all I want is happiness for my parents, my brothers, my girlfriend...I just want to keep all of these people around connected to me happy...because the amount I've put them through I guess is, they've taken enough for a lifetime'*. These statements are expressions of both a regret but also an aspiration for a future with a difference.

A few of the other participants also spoke about being led to an examination of their past. Rosanna spoke about *'involuntarily thinking about her past'*, the contents of which she did not disclose. She referred to them as *'certain issues'* which she thought she had *'resolved'*. She was however willing to revisit them because she thought *'maybe they needed to be, you know, brought out one final time for a final resolution'*. It was only on Day 3 that she disclosed her experience of being sexually molested by her cousin as a child. For Remo, the opening up was a revisit to his *'past'* that called for examining issues of resentment with his in-laws spanning a period of over 20 years.

#### ***7.1.2.5. Opening to relationships with others.***

Another area of opening the door for Johnson was his human relationships. He admitted to being insensitive to how others felt about his behaviour of smoking tobacco. For example, recounting an instance of his parents' reaction to his smoking, he revealed that *he never thought of whether things would hurt them or no'*. This insensitivity extended beyond his family. When his friends complained about his smoking that it was *'affecting'* them, he was inconsiderate and *'wouldn't bother'* nor *'wouldn't think'* about them. Rather, he would retort saying *'get lost, get out of this room if you don't want to take it'*. Apparently, this insensitivity was not confined to smoking for *'anything could trigger me, anything'* and then he would *'go home, take it out on my parents, my brothers, my fiancé'*. However by Day 2, he had begun to acknowledge the impact of his smoking habit on others. He declared, *this is not just about harming me, it's about the others*

*as well, I've to think of my family around me, even if I got friends who don't smoke for instance, that was affecting them'. This statement suggests a movement towards acknowledging others' feelings. Perhaps the preachers had facilitated such a movement for he reported that 'one of the talkers actually said anger in itself is not a sin but what it leads to is a sin'. He admitted to being overcome by a feeling of 'regret'. Until now, he has been pointing a finger of blame on others, particularly the legal system of the country he was deported from and the management of the company. But then, he appeared to have become conscious of the impact of his behaviour on others for he disclosed that, 'like today it is hitting me and I actually regret those moments like because I felt, now I feel bad for what I have done'.*

Some of the other participants also tried to impress that others, rather than themselves, were at fault. Lyn reported feeling unloved by her family including her mother who she initially thought was close to her but eventually discovered that she *'wasn't close either'*. Unlike Johnson however, she had not yet moved away from self-absorption to owning her contribution to her problems.

Remo who had difficulties in his relationships with his in-laws, particularly his father-in-law, found it difficult to forgive him *'even when Father told about forgiveness'*. He had not been convinced about forgiving his father-in-law until then. However, the story of Joseph in the Old Testament seems to have altered that conviction when the preacher stated, *'God has some other plan... we are nobody to judge someone which made (him) to forgive him immediately'*. Only then did he consider forgiving his *'father-in-law'*.

#### ***7.1.2.6. Opening to a new level of relationship with God.***

Johnson also experienced an opening to a relationship with God. When this occurred, Johnson also came to a greater appreciation of his body. The preacher's declaration that the body

was *'God's property'* was an *'eye opener'* to him for he recognised how he was *'harming (his) body'*. He had begun the *'process of coming closer to God'*. *'It started off in end of April 2007'* which was two years prior to the interview. Earlier *'even going to church was an issue'* for him. He would excuse himself going to Church worship through excuses such as *'not feeling well'*. So the preaching *'opened (his) eyes'* for he realised that seeking to continue his relationship with God warranted a *'duty'* of care towards his body. He perceived such care as an act of reciprocation, a giving back *'something in return'* to God.

Nadine arrived at a new understanding of God. She had believed in a punishing God. Earlier, her belief was that *'for all the sins that (she) had done, God was going to punish'* her. However, at the invitation of the preacher, she had begun to consider the new proposition that *'God is a loving father'*. It was not clear at this stage how ingrained was the new perspective. She however admitted that the next time *'if anything bad happens I am not going to blame it on God'*.

Lyn also had a new understanding of God. In her case it was about discovering a God, who was *'willing to say I forgive'* her and *'willing to take her in'*. She had felt *'so much faith in God'* on Day 2. It was a contrast to her earlier lack of faith. Prior to the retreat, when her friend had asked her to pray to God for a resolution to her problems, she had responded saying *'I don't believe that he will listen to me'*. In as much as this response leaks out her belief in the reality of God, it also leaks out an attitude that God would disregard her, thereby revealing the level of distance she had felt towards God. But on Day 2, she appears to have had a faith experience of an experiential encounter with Jesus. She revealed that she *'found myself in tears trying to speak to the Lord'*. Her claim that she *'felt as if the Lord was present with me as if he was there'* suggests a felt sense of the presence of Jesus. The experiential encounter appears to have deeply impacted her. Apparently, it was a beginning to finding her worth. She disclosed that she had



*'realised'* that *'there is still someone who is there who is willing to say I forgive you...to take us in when the rest of the world says you're worthless'*. The *'rest of the world'* was probably a reference to her family because they appeared to be a major point of reference in her worldview. They had until now forced her *'to do a lot of things'* and she had been *'dancing like a puppet according to their tunes'*. However her intuition differed from what she heard from them. She disclosed that *'I kind of have this kind of feelings that something bad might happen I should do this I should do that'*. But she *'used to always go against' 'this kind of feelings'* which seems to be a reference to her intuition. By Day 2, she had found a link between her intuition and God for she claimed that *'the Lord is putting it into me that you should do this'*. Possibly she had found a supportive relationship with me. The fact that I did not dismiss her as *'unworthy'* as did her family may have given her a sense of safety so that she could negotiate the validity of her intuition. She confidently declared that *'my life is ultimately in my hands the Lord decides it and I should go the way he wants me to go'*. She had come to trust her inner knowing. According to her, her family considered her *'worthless'*, implying that she was not merely disregarded but even possibly dismissed. Such a disposition could have negatively impacted her ability to trust her inner knowing. Just as Johnson had discovered his relationship with God through his body, Lyn revealed discovering God through her inner knowing.

Rosanna revealed harbouring anger against God owing to an earlier experience of feeling betrayed by God. However, facilitated by the retreat, she revisited that incident in her mind and recognized that she *'didn't do my bit'*. Such a disclosure reveals that she had not only gained a new perspective on the event but also an ownership of her contribution to her problems. This ownership seems to have impacted her disposition to God for she *'wasn't angry at God anymore'*.

After complaining about the schedule and the space at the retreat venue, Brennan

indicated that inspired by the preaching, he '*opened*' himself to God. He seemed to love his independence given his lifestyle overseas. Against this background, his declaration, '*that's what I was open for today, his perfect will is all I am looking for*' is significant. It suggests a movement towards other-directedness which probably was alien to him.

## **7.2. Self-Reflexivity on 'Opening up'**

On Day 2, I recognised a contrast in the posture of Johnson compared to Day 1. On Day 1 he had sat recoiled with folded hands and drooping shoulders suggesting a posture of constraint. His body was indeed '*uptight*'. On Day 2 in contrast, he rested his hands on his laps. It seemed as if the metaphor of the closed door and the open door was enacted before me. The sense of closed-ness that I had seen on Day 1 was missing. I wondered whether his body was reflecting what he had articulated and highlighted in using the word '*open*' a number of times. This posture remained with me as I mulled over what Day 2 meant for him. This posture was the source of inspiration for naming the theme of Day 2 as '*opening up*'. It was corroborated by his use of the word '*open*' as well as by others. His posture of Day 2 was a posture of openness, which to me seemed to be a non-verbal portrayal of his overall disposition on Day 2.

I was impressed by the level of disclosure he brought to the interview. I was struck when he made what seemed like a confessional statement when he declared that '*even if I am wrong I am right*'. I was taken aback by the level of this expose which was revealed without much input from my side and wondered at what might have facilitated it. Perhaps he had found in me someone with an open attitude and curiosity about him and his experiences at DRC. I was also reflecting his words, ensuring a listening ear to him. He probably felt safe with me. He was not being chastised by me as would probably be the case in his interactions with his parents. Moreover, I enquired about how he felt. Perhaps, owing to his angry outbursts which he qualified

as *'extreme reactions'*, he had distanced people away from him and was thereby a loner. To add to his limitations in this area, he was insensitive to others' feelings. He possibly found in me someone who was interested in how he felt. Perhaps there was a meeting of his own wondering about himself as he revealed himself increasingly which was met with openness on my part. He did not have to defend himself in front of me. I had a sense that Johnson was exploring himself in front of me, constantly using the refrain *'you know'*, at the end of his sentences, as if I was a sounding board. He appeared to search for meaning as he paused now and then.

Lyn is another participant of note. I noticed myself being drawn into her narrative as I listened to her struggles with her family. I was moved and had tears in my eyes but noticed the lack of them in her eyes. When I highlighted this difference to her, by saying that there was no emotional accompaniment to her narrative, she sought to justify her lack of tears. It was only later that I recognised that she had probably established a *'wall'* before me. The metaphor of the *'wall'* that she had used was probably a reference to the emotional walls she had enacted to protect herself from emotional volatility.

Some of Nadine's observations about Day 2 remained with me for a long time. She had spoken about a punishing God and the preacher's call that *'when you are leaving from here, please do not carry the concept that God is going to punish you'* remained with me for days. I began to recognise that I had grown up with a fear of God that had not helped my faith in God. Like Nadine, I did not feel close to God either. I could recognise and own that I had held a similar perspective about God. I remember after hearing her that I bore an eagerness to hear what further changes would unfold in her life following this change. Participants' experience of Day 2 had set me on a journey of transformation, questioning the view of God I had grown up with.

Listening to the participants had quickened my understanding of the God of Jesus; namely a loving and forgiving God.

### **7.3. Discussion on 'Opening up'**

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), a "metaphor is one of our most important tools for trying to comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally: our feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices and spiritual awareness (p. 193)" (as cited in, Pnina Shinebourne & Smith, 2009, p. 163). The participants of this study used the metaphor of '*opening up*' in its varied linguistic forms such as '*open*', '*opened*' '*opened the door*' '*open out*' to encapsulate and describe their experience of Day 2. For the participants, the experiences of Day 2 included a concomitant opening to new perspectives; to new emotions; to engaging their body in the retreat; to an examination of their past; to an appreciation of their human relationships and a new level of relationship with God.

The metaphor seems to have been inspired by the preaching. Although Johnson gave the impression that the word open was his own conceptualization, it appears that the participants were influenced by the preachers. Packer (1989) notes that the call to openness is part of the charismatic preaching. Devenish's (2001) research found that openness to the Holy Spirit is a characteristic of the Christian mind, which suggests that this openness is part of the Christian catechesis or teaching. Perhaps participants like Johnson had assimilated the expectancy from the preachers to open up, to such an extent that they had forgotten the source of that inspiration.

Another issue that participants' narratives seem to impress is that of their self-agency. Their focus on Day 2 is on their own movement towards '*opening up*' with the exception of participant Lyn who seems to have experienced a felt encounter with the Divine. While self-agency may have been a possibility, a Christian approach to change also acknowledges Divine

influence and therefore Divine agency (Hay, 2001; Tan, 2007). Branson (2010) notes that such an influence is experienced as the "interior helps of the Holy Spirit" (p. 235). To add, Francis and Turton (2002) clarify that "the Christian community is open to God who acts, guides and speaks to the church" (p. 136). The Charismatic worldview also recognizes the role of Divine intervention (Packer, 1989) as evidenced in the case of Lyn.

### **7.3.1. Parallels to openness in other contexts**

It appears openness has parallels in other contexts. For example, in Buddhism staying open in one's mind is an important feature of its mindfulness practice (2007). Welwood (2000) claims that in the mental health context, facilitating the wellbeing of the clients calls for a cultivation of the mental space of openness. Thus these parallels highlight a similarity across the human reality that is addressed by these other systems. In the context of the DRC retreat, the '*opening up*' process was critical towards assisting the participants with self-examination.

### **7.3.2. Opening to new perspectives**

Johnson's use of the word '*realise*' contrasted with prefixes such as *today, now, but, then*, seems to imply a change in his perspective which arguably equates his mind. Writing within the context of conversion, Devenish (2001) notes that the mind is that "part of human 'being' which believes, reasons, perceives and attributes truth to objects, events and relationships" (p. 58). In using those prefixes, Johnson was contrasting a change in his mind which involved his earlier and newer perspective on himself, the events in his life and his relationships.

Kahn and Greene (2004) found that conservative and evangelical Christians were less open in the face of uncertainty, which might explain the ambiguity of some of the participants. For example, Rosanna demonstrated an ambiguity at opening up, implying the presence of a struggle with uncertainty. She was doubtful and questioning. Such ambiguity probably had its

roots in her upbringing in an orthodox Catholic family.

### 7.3.3. Opening to a new emotion

Banister and Fransella (1980) point out that, emotions are an indication of the presence of or a possibility of an experience of change. In addition, according to Rosenberg (1998), emotions "are acute, intense, and typically brief psychophysiological changes that result from a response to a meaningful situation in one's environment" (p. 250). Johnson was eager to '*mention*' his experience of the emotion of calmness which he wanted to have '*for a long time*'. He was particular to draw my attention to this change because he probably wanted to highlight the pervasive influence of anger on him. According to Finlay (2011), Ratcliffe alluded to pervasive emotions and labelled them as "existential feelings" (p. 20) whereas Heidegger labelled them as "mood" (p. 28). In Rosenberg's (1998) terminology, they are referred to as affective traits. According to Finlay (2011), such pervasive feelings operate across time and situations and orientate people's ways of being in the world, influencing their perception and behaviour. The reference to '*calmness*' and the corresponding sense of '*freedom*' encapsulate Johnson's newfound emotional experience on Day 2 which was probably a contrast to his familiar pervasive anger. Capps (2007) identifies hope, happiness, security and resolve as emotions associated with conversion and suggests that these emotions can seize upon a person experiencing conversion almost explosively. Perhaps Johnson's expression of '*wanna mention*' suggests that sense of being seized by this unexpected emotion of calmness. Hence he could not keep it to himself. Rather his buoyant voice revealed that he was overjoyed as he narrated this experience.

For Lyn, the pervasiveness of her vulnerability seems to have been so encompassing that she was constantly living behind '*walls*'. The walls were possibly an emotional protective measure against the perceived rejection and physical abuse emanating from her family (M. J.

Horowitz, 2005).

In the case of Nadine her pervasive mood was guilt. She referred to it as '*all that dirt we are actually messing ourselves in...*' The mention of the words '*dirt*' and '*mess*' suggests intense guilt. Generalizing that experience to '*others*' through the use of the word '*ourselves*' was possibly an aid to make acceptable what might have been a devaluing experience for her. Perhaps she felt shameful. Drawing others into the narrative was possibly her way of negotiating a level of acceptance before me. The acknowledgement of her guilt probably reflects a heightened recognition of what she was not (Jones, 2007).

According to Kelly (1991), guilt is associated with the social estimation of an individual. It pertains to how an individual is socially perceived and assessed for responsibility with regards to assigned roles. While it was only Nadine who was explicit about her guilt, arguably all the participants were failures in their socially assigned roles. This is very true of Johnson, Remo, Carmo and Seby. It might have been one of the reasons that brought them to DRC for this socio-moral emotion is one of the motivating factors that leads to a religious or conversion experience (Good, Willoughby, & Fritjers, 2009; Lofland & Skonovd, 1981; Rambo, 1999; Spellman, Baskett, & Byrne, 1971).

#### **7.3.4. Opening to engaging their body in the retreat**

A focus on embodied struggle is an important ingredient of the phenomenological project (Finlay, 2011). Such a focus identifies the exigencies of the human condition (Devenish, 2001). Participants' narratives evidenced a bodily felt opening with participation in the retreat.

Johnson's claim on Day 2 that he felt '*very uptight*' adds an embodied dimension to his struggle suggesting that joining in the activities meant experiencing a bodily felt constraint. Johnson's response might be an instance of "...experiential avoidance...a phenomenon that occurs

when a person is unwilling to remain in contact with particular private experiences (for example, bodily sensations, emotions, thoughts, memories, behavioural predispositions..." (as quoted in, P Shinebourne & Smith, 2010, pp. 66-67). He possibly avoided staying in contact with his urge to join in. Even Nadine's attempt to raise her hand *'for the minimum'* suggests such a bodily felt constraint. While the literature on Charismatic movement does provide very few instances of a mental struggle with participating in charismatic activities, no reports of a bodily felt struggle were found on the PsycInfo database.

Goan Catholicism, which is predominantly conservative (S. Abreu, 2009) has promoted sobriety in worship and disdained the clapping of hands and gross body movements which explains participants' inhibitions at these Charismatic activities. Against such a background, participants' opening up to these charismatic practices is significant because they would have been familiar with a type of worship that emphasized emotional quietude. Fieguth (2000) suggests that the Charismatic movement assists people with opening to their feelings which also probably facilitated their bodily engagement in these Charismatic practices.

Johnson's observation that the preachers taught that the body is *'God's property'* is added emphasis on the body by the preachers. It has already been discussed under the theme, 'Surrender' that the engagement of the body in worship is a recent trend that parallels a similar movement on the secular scenario (Bebbington, 2007). Perhaps highlighting the relationship of the body with God is reclamation of the holistic nature of the human person that seems to have been lost to the West owing to Cartesian dualism. The Charismatic movement on the whole has experienced a shift with regards to integrating the body in worship (Csordas, 2007). It could be argued that in embracing this perspective, DRC has reclaimed the body not merely for Catholic Indians on the whole but also for the Traditional Goan Catholic participant of the Retreat. The



East, which includes Hinduism in India as far as the Maori of New Zealand, has always viewed the person holistically as an unity of body, mind and the soul (Raab, 2007). Given its location in Kerala, a place known for its Ayurvedic origins and thereby for its integration of the body and the mind, DRC is probably influenced by its local eastern culture.

### **7.3.5. Opening to an examination of the past**

The Charismatic movement has been alleged to "simply relive the past rather than look at it introspectively" (McMahan, 2002, p. 341). Johnson contradicts such a claim in his statements about his introspective stance. He indicated that he found himself '*thinking about*' his past behaviour of hurting others. What could have facilitated such an introspective activity, at least in the case of Johnson, was the discovery of a rationale for his behaviour. Clement (2003) contends that religious systems have been successful in history because they provide comprehensive stories. These stories help integrate past misfortunes through proposing a better way of life as the solution. Possibly owing to a new vision received through the preaching, Johnson was re-visioning a new future, with a new purpose and meaning to his relationships. The introspection over the past was not a mere reliving of the past for him. Rather he was looking ahead to making a difference to his past because he had found a new perspective through his faith that illuminated his future (Clement, 2003; Paloutzian, 1981). Thus in the light of his faith, his past had become not merely meaningful but also useful to him. Perhaps it could be hypothesized that the '*thinking about*' was a beginning to something quite significant, that is, the reconstruction of his past (1980) or the negotiation of a new identity (Petts, 2009).

Rosanna also reported that she was '*involuntarily thinking about her past*'. The use of the word '*involuntary*' suggests a level of ambiguity towards the re-examination of her past. She had not consciously initiated the process. Rather the preaching had moved her to get in touch with

her wounded-ness. At this stage, she neither disclosed what the '*certain issues*' were nor whether she envisaged a different future for herself. But what leaked out was a sense of hope that if she opened herself to those burdensome issues '*one final time*', they would finally be resolved. This sense of hope is another instance that counters the claim of McMahan (2002) stated above. The examination of the past was not a mere reliving of the past but an examination that looks backward so as to then turn forwards in life.

### **7.3.6. Opening to relationships with others and God**

Millspaugh (2005) notes that spirituality is primarily concerned with relationships. The act of surrender in spirituality necessarily involves a movement from oneself to accommodating the needs of others (Dyslin, 2008). It is an understanding of the self in relation to a higher purpose where God becomes the centre of one's life (Barsness, 2006; Devenish, 2001; Mahoney & Pargament, 2004). Leffel (2007) observes that the Christian West has facilitated guilt to promote a fulfilment of one's obligations to God and others. Johnson's experience of '*regret*' seems to have achieved its intended purpose. Apparently, he had moved from self-absorption to recognition of others in his life. This shift in his orientation towards others and God counters the allegation that the Charismatic movement has been confined to intra-psychic change (Csordas, 1990). This movement of Johnson also highlights the therapeutic dimension of DRC. Arguably, retreat participants go to DRC to receive the DRC therapy, which assumedly assists them in their relationships (Sells & Hargrave, 1998).

Sydor (2010) claims that when young men fail to earn a wage they compensate for it by focusing on the appearance of the body. Such a claim may explain Johnson's narrative about his relationship with God on Day 2. For him, this relationship seems to have been mediated through his relationship with his body. Physically he appeared robust. He had broad shoulders and appeared

well-built, suggesting that he was taking care of his body. When the preacher spoke about the body being '*God's property*' he recognized that he was '*harming*' it through his smoking. Although on one level he calls this information an '*eye opener*', it leaks out his focus on the body. The fact that it absorbed his attention suggests that matters of the body were a concern for him. He then negotiated the care of his body through his relationship with God for he declared that taking care of his body was his way of reciprocating his relationship with God, who cares for him. Thus it appears that the relationship with his body became significant to him because the care of his body, which he apparently was engaged in, was now given added significance. He had drawn on his body to provide a rationale for his relationship with God.

Johnson reported that he had initiated a movement towards God since two years prior to the retreat. Such a movement was perhaps a search for a secure base in God (Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2004). Against this background, the experience of calmness and the sense of freedom may have added a significant layer to that secure base. He claimed that he had been looking for '*this feeling for a long time*' thereby suggesting a search for a felt sense of security amidst the uncertainties of his life.

In reviewing the research on the God images of adolescents, Potvin (1977) discovered that adolescents of controlling parents perceived God as a punishing God. The parental background of both Nadine and Lyn who had controlling parents seems to attest to such a claim. By Day 2, both had registered a new perspective that God was a loving and forgiving father. For Nadine, this sense of a forgiving God seems to have been a cognitive level understanding whereas in the case of Lyn it was a felt sense of the presence of Jesus. The felt experience of Jesus was so intense for Lyn that she had come to believe in herself owing to the new found validity in that relationship because '*there is still someone*', referring to Jesus, who is '*at least willing to take us in*'.

## **Chapter 8: Theme 4 - 'Confession'**

### **8.1. Analysis on 'Confession'**

On Day 3, participants reported feeling challenged and thereby a struggle with adequately making their confession following the call to confess their sins. This was the "initial tentative hypothesis" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 31) for Day 4.

The following is a generic text for the super-ordinate theme of Confession. On Day 3, following the inputs of the retreat, participants reported feeling challenged and thereby a struggle with adequately confessing their sins. This challenge was experienced in three phases: making a preparation for 'Confession', a sense of incompleteness during the 'Confession' and seeking a resolution to this incompleteness. From a global Retreat perspective, the 'Confession' continued participants' journey of a struggle as highlighted earlier in the themes, 'surrender' and 'opening up'.

Unlike the previous three super-ordinate themes which are presented with a single core extract, this super-ordinate theme of 'Confession' is presented with three different core extracts that represent the three phases of the 'Confession' experience. The purpose of such a presentation is to remain faithful to the phenomenological experience of the participants. Together the variations on these three different phases are also presented.

It is important to note here that although Nadine has been the core participant already in the super-ordinate theme, Crisis, she is considered a core participant for this theme of 'Confession' as well because she typifies participants' experience of 'Confession' as it occurred on Day 3.

### 8.1.1. Preparing for 'Confession'

This subtheme highlights participants' experience of feeling challenged during their preparation for 'Confession'. Consequently, most of them brought a level of seriousness to it that they had never achieved in their prior preparations for 'Confession'.

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies the first phase of participants' experience of 'Confession'. The following quote highlights Nadine's experience during the first phase of preparation for 'Confession':

*Nadine: ...today is, was the day rather for Confession...he also explained to us the step wise procedures...I didn't know now so he enlightened me today with that so...during the break what I did is, I had tend to forget my sins so I noted my sins down...*

The '*step wise procedures*' refers to the details provided by the preachers on the '*how*' of 'Confession'. Such teaching seems to have had a convincing effect on Nadine as indicated in the use of the phrases '*didn't know*' and '*enlightened*'. This convincing influence seems to have added a level of seriousness to her preparation for 'Confession' such that she chose to enlist her sins lest she '*forgets*' them. It appears that there was a convincing effect on some of the other participants too. Rosanna for example, reported feeling '*convinced*' about the need to confess following the preacher's reference to Carl Jung who '*talked about how if only Catholics were to go for Confession half of the psychiatrists' job would be reduced*'. Johnson also referred to the influence of preaching, '*the preachers what they said, what they didn't say made me realise a lots of things*'.

The variations to this core extract about the preparation phase are presented in the following table. It is important to note here that participants spent a considerable amount of time

in the preparation phase of 'Confession' which included even part of Day 2 of the Retreat.

Johnson leaked out such an occurrence when he stated, *'yesterday they built up the whole*

*Confession'*:

Participant	Quotes
Johnson	...I was very, I was prepared today like I felt prepared today never like never before, even like when I was receiving holy communion for the first time...
Brennan	...I wanted to make this great and was looking forward to making a thorough Confession where I could sit, I could reflect upon, I could look back into my past history and I kept my eyes on everything I could remember...
Rosanna	...to think with a clear mind about what my sins were...
Carmo	...so what I was made to believe is that you have to go into detail with everything...
Lyn	...today was the Confession day and initially I was very scared because I haven't gone for a Confession for a long time, so I was scared what would I tell, what should I tell, what, how will the priest react...

Like Nadine, some of the other participants were also explicit about the level of seriousness they brought to their preparation for 'Confession'. For example, Johnson claimed that he *'felt prepared today never like never before'*. Even his very first 'Confession' which in the Catholic Sacramental practice occurs at the time of the First Holy Communion did not carry a similar level of seriousness as his preparation for 'Confession' at DRC. Brennan reported that he wanted to make a *'thorough Confession'* suggesting that he also was serious about the preparation. He wanted to execute it through strategies such as sitting down, reflecting, looking

*'back into my past history'* and keeping his *'eyes on everything'*. The reference to *'past history'* and *'everything'* seems to suggest a thrust for examining his whole life. Rosanna also reported engaging in an effort of seriousness and had found herself, *'able to think with a clear mind about what my sins were'*. This claim that she was able to think clearly would have warranted an exerted effort on her part, because her usual disposition as revealed on Day 2 was one of being easily distracted.

Carmo leaked out an awareness of the reason for the seriousness. He indicated that the inputs of the preachers had called for a detailed effort in their preparation for 'Confession'.

Another notable feature of the preparation for 'Confession' is its apparent link with the super-ordinate theme of 'Opening up'. Arguably, 'Confession' adds a public dimension to the process of *'opening up'* for participants were now prepared to disclose their personal sins to another human being. Some of them saw a benefit in such a declaration. Brennan for example, explicitly reported that *'he felt it was high time that I open up everything and talk about it and be released from this burden'*. This statement leaks out his awareness of the benefit of making a disclosure about his personal sins. However, not everyone was comfortable with making such a disclosure. Rosanna was secretive about *'writing down (her) sins'*. She chose to enlist them in a *'very adapted form of Arabic'* and not in *'English'* which for her was the language in which *'I think'*. The change of script was possibly a pre-emptive strategy of warding off possible shame, in the event that her list of sins were to be discovered by someone else. Perhaps, her experience of sexual abuse had made her vulnerable to exposure and she was probably guarding herself. It was perhaps another of the *'walls'* she had erected to protect herself.

Some participants experienced raw emotions at the idea of declaring their sins. Carmo appears to have experienced *'worry'*. He leaked it out through quoting the preacher, *'the priest*

*said that don't have to worry'*. He probably recalled this statement of the preacher because it resonated with his experience. In contrast, some participants were open about their intensely felt emotions. Lyn reported feeling *'very scared'* about *'how the priest will react'* because she had not been to 'Confession' *'for a long time'*. Some of the other participants also had not been to 'Confession' for years. For example, Carmo reported that he *'confessed after I think 20 years'*.

Thus the above subtheme captures the two-way composite process which forms part of the design of the retreat schedule: the preaching of the preachers moving the participants to go for 'Confession' and how participants respond to that urging by engaging in a level of seriousness, seemingly unaccomplished in their earlier preparations for 'Confession'.

### **8.1.2. A parallel process interferes during the act of 'Confession'**

This parallel process that reportedly interfered with the actual act of 'Confession' refers to the challenge and thereby the struggle that participants experienced during the actual act of 'Confession'. It refers to participants' preoccupation with their personal feelings and their meaning making of what was occurring to them while interacting with the priest in the Confessional. Owing to this parallel process, participants could not make a satisfying confession and were left feeling incomplete with their act of 'Confession'. The interfering parallel process seems to have distracted them from their engagement in the Confessional.

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies the interference of the parallel process during the act of 'Confession'. Variations to this experience are presented below. The following quote highlights Nadine's experience of the interfering parallel process during her act of 'Confession':

*Nadine: ...I usually avoid, even during lent whenever there are such situations I do not form a queue over there, I prefer going when there, where there is a Confession box, so*



*when I saw the scene I was completely nervous, so my friend like she told me like, it's ok, we are all sinners, you just go coolly and, but you know certain things just don't (laugh) go down well with me so when I was, I was very nervous, I was like, my palms were all sweaty and all that, the main reason why I don't like this is because fine I am a sinner but now, the worst part of it, is the priest gets to see me...what if somewhere I just come across him, oh my God this girl, she has done this, this, this sins you know, so that's why...I was completely nervous and I had told the priest that I have written down my sins, so he said ok fine you open it up, and then I started reading my sins, when I was reading the sins I was kind of getting a choking sensation in the sense, that I was choking back tears and, but I controlled them because there were lot of people all around, priest all around, people all around...I was feeling a little embarrassed to cry over there.*

*Interviewer: what were the tears about? What were you feeling?*

*Nadine: basically, ya, at that point of time I was feeling very sad basically past hurts,...ok there were things like which I'm not able to forgive people who have hurt me...when I was going back I wasn't feeling all that well, I was getting a sense of nausea...and I was getting a pain on my left side just below the collar, the shoulder bone over here, I do not know what was that pain...when I went back to the session I was not concentrating much...*

Nadine did not provide much information on her emotional experience during the initial phase of preparation for 'Confession'. However she was very articulate about her emotions in the actual act of 'Confession' as is evident in the narrative above. She did not reveal the actual content of her 'Confession' but reported on her emotional experience during the act of 'Confession'. The narrative leaks out her usual disposition to 'Confession', her familiar protective

strategy for privacy and a heightened sensitivity to being perceived well by others.

Her emotional experience seems to have occurred in two phases. At first, she was feeling '*nervous*'. This occurred when she saw the scene of 'Confession'. For her the scene meant being exposed in her vulnerability not merely before the priest but before everyone else in the Confessional Hall who might be watching her. In earlier instances of 'Confession' she had ward off such an exposure by avoiding a face-to-face confession with the priest. It must be noted here that the 'Confession' was held in a Confessional Hall where each penitent went to the Confessor who would be on a chair sitting face-to-face rather than the usual Confessional box that penitents would otherwise be familiar with. So the anonymity between the priest and the penitent was missing in this DRC context. This anonymity was so important to Nadine that even during busy times of the year, such as the season of '*lent*' when it is difficult to remain anonymous behind the Confessional box, she had managed to '*avoid*' such encounters in her home parish. During such times, she would opt to go to the priest in the Confessional box even if that meant waiting in the long queue. At DRC however it was a different scenario. She felt confronted when she saw the scene of 'Confession'. Her spatial boundaries were being dismantled because a face-to-face confession was the only option offered. It was as if she had come to expect an anonymous space for 'Confession' but felt '*nervous*' when she saw the very public context of the Confessional Hall at DRC.

She used the word '*nervous*' four times highlighting her awareness about its prevailing influence on her. She qualified the emotion with adjectives such as '*very*' and '*completely*' suggesting a level of intensity that was overwhelming. She was so anxious that it manifested bodily through her palms that were '*all sweaty*'. Such a physiological response highlights the impact of the public context of the 'Confession' on her. This difference offered by DRC had

possibly triggered the survival response of fear in her.

Such anxiety on the part of Nadine is further proof to the earlier claim that she was preoccupied about her image and what others thought about her. Her high caste background may have sensitized her to image consciousness. Furthermore, it may be the reason why she was preoccupied with being perceived well by others including the priest. Her friend seems to have recognised this implicit need and reassured her by saying, *'just go coolly'*. The friend also normalised such a move by saying, *'it's ok, we are all sinners'*. Such a prompt by her friend seems to have helped Nadine become clear with the nature of her nervousness. She declared that this nervousness was associated with what the priest would *'think about her'* if he had to meet her outside the confessional context.

The second phase of her emotional experience seems to have occurred in the actual act of 'Confession'. She spoke about a bodily felt experience of a *'choking sensation'*. It appears she was holding back the release of the emotion of sadness that surfaced when she started *'reading my sins'* for she spoke about *'feeling very sad'*. The reading had enabled her to get in touch with her narrative of being *'hurt'*, particularly by her family members, and had triggered the emotion of sadness. She did not articulate her emotional experience to the Confessor. Perhaps she managed to suppress it. Her need for being perceived well by others may have superseded her need to stay present to the emotion and release it. Such an orientation leaks out in the following disclosure, that she was *'embarrassed to cry over there'*. Consequently, she found herself making efforts to exercise bodily restraint to control the emerging emotion and thereby to avoid drawing attention from the *'people all around'*.

Thus Nadine observed that the actual act of 'Confession' had triggered emotions which had become a parallel process in itself. This process had overwhelmed her to such an extent that

she was left feeling incomplete after the 'Confession'. It appears to have stifled her ability to forgive those who had *'hurt'* her. The journey of Forgiveness seems to have become a struggle. Hence the feeling of incompleteness may reflect a sense of incompleteness with the Confessional act. Perhaps she had not confessed everything that she possibly wanted to or was aware of. Perhaps she had not revealed her story of hurt and resentment against others. The emotional accompaniment of that incompleteness appears to have been a *'feeling of nausea'* which had a bodily component to it, for she reported *'getting a pain on my left side'*. Furthermore, the incompleteness was so consuming that she noticed she struggled to stay mentally alert and listen to the ongoing talks after the 'Confession'.

Thus even though she had enlisted her sins to assist her act of 'Confession', it appears she could not stay fully connected to her list owing to the interfering parallel process. Thus she felt dissatisfied with her actual act of 'Confession'.

Seby too found himself in a parallel process as he struggled with trust. Trusting others with his vulnerability seems to have been an issue for him. He claimed that he *'trust(s) no one'* and it is as *'simple as that'* suggesting that a part of him had accepted this aspect about him. He recognised that his lack of trust affected his interaction with the priest for he could not make a complete 'Confession' about his sinful self. It appears he had dared to take the risk at opening himself and hence went to Confession but then this parallel seems to have taken over for, *'as soon as you trust someone they are going to stop you'*. Perhaps there was an earlier experience of being rejected. Implied in such a disclosure was a declaration that he was not willing to take another risk at being vulnerable lest there be another instance of rejection. Like Nadine, he could not stay in touch with his vulnerability.

Rosanna reported noticing a parallel process of lacking trust. She revealed that *'all this*

*was happening in the midst of the Confession'*. It was as if the observer in her was noticing the interaction with the priest on the one hand and a parallel process of an internal conversation on the other. She claimed that she felt that the *'priest was looking at (her) in a very very dirty light'*. She qualified the reference to *'dirty light'* as *'very sexual light'* suggesting that she found sexual overtones in his looks. She was quick to follow that claim with a clarification that *'there is reason why there is whole sexual matter running through my life'*. The reason was the conditioning from the past experience of sexual molestation by her *'cousin'*. Perhaps the quick response was a withdrawal after recognising that she had portrayed the priest negatively. It appears labelling the priest as bad, had helped her recognise her projective process for she admitted that *'that kind of taints whatever'*. The *'that'* implicitly was a reference to her sexual abuse history. Possibly, her sexual experience was so close and present to her that it impinged in her interaction with the priest and may have impinged in her interaction with most males.

Lyn was another instance of feeling incomplete at the end of the actual act of 'Confession'. She reported that at the end of 'Confession', she was *'still lost in thought and still worried and tensed'* and that she was *'not completely freed'*. She did not provide details about what she was worried about.

Johnson is an exception to the experience of a parallel process that interfered in participants' actual act of 'Confession' and their sense of incompleteness reported above. In response to the preacher's call to *'let go'* he had acquired a perspective that he was *'not going to gain in anyway'* *'holding on to those grudges'* or *'holding on to those bad memories'*. It appears he had accomplished a significant amount of *'opening up'* as reported on Day 2. Significantly, he reported experiencing a bodily felt release of the letting go process which he described as *'something is gone off, like something is been taken off my head'*. He went further to describe

how it felt for him including what seems to be a physiological experience. He reported, *'what I feel is lots of light, no more darkness, no more negative energy sort of thing like earlier, I needed to do this to concentrate (shrinking his forehead)...today, I, all I do this and it is like a bright light beyond those closed eyes, shut eyes'*. The experience of a bright light with shut eyes was a personally felt experience.

Remo is another exception to the parallel process. He reported on some of the actual content of his 'Confession'. He reported an effort at *'going back down my memory lane 27 years ago'* into his relationship with *'ex-girlfriend'* which he had not been able to do before. Although he did not explicitly state that he was still resentful with her, it leaked out in his declaration that he was *'clinging to the past' 'as if I got some money in the pocket'* and *'counting, counting everyday'*. He sought to communicate that it was a *'good Confession'* and that *'all my past has as good as vanished'* thereby seemingly seeking to suggest that he had found some sort of resolution.

### **8.1.3. Experiencing either a resolution or a disengagement**

It appears participants made a decision after the 'Confession', either to continue participating in spite of the discomfort of incompleteness or to withdraw from full participation in the retreat. This subtheme thus captures participants' post-confessional experience which again was the challenge of containing the prevailing feeling of incompleteness.

Experiencing a *'resolution'* refers to the experience of two participants, namely Nadine and Lyn, who capitalized on the opportunity at Mass to bring a resolution to their feeling of incompleteness. They seem to have found it easier to disclose to the *'Host'* which represents Jesus what they could not disclose to the priest in the Confessional. Whereas *'disengagement'* refers to the experience of two other participants, namely Carmo and Seby, who chose to resign

from full participation in the retreat by Day 3. For example, Carmo had a sense that he could not handle the unease arising from the confessional experience. He did not however provide details about the confessional experience but the sense of unease arising from it was clear in his declaration that *'this is too much'*. This subtheme highlights a decisive point in time whereby some of the participants seemed to move in opposite directions as far as their participation in the retreat was concerned.

Nadine and Lyn utilized the opportunity that emerged at the Sacrament of the Eucharist to bring a resolution to their sense of incompleteness. They found that the Eucharist following the 'Confession' gave them an opportunity to bring a resolution to their sense of incompleteness. This opportunity came in the form of a ritual which involved holding the *'Host'* in their hands and then consciously offering themselves to the Host, which represents the 'real presence' of Jesus. Two of these participants participated fully in that ritual and benefited with a sense of resolution to their earlier experience of incompleteness.

The following is the core extract that highlights Nadine's experience and to some extent represents Lyn's experience as well:

*Nadine:...now for Mass there was this step which he did, which you can say, really shook me...each one had their Host in their hands, he started saying get back to your past, go through all these events of your life where you have been hurt... betrayed...all the bad things wherever you get pain, whichever organ...you feel is not working fine, if you are having some sickness...so bring all that...to the Host all that you are having so when I started doing that, I was just crying continuously, I was, I do not know if people have noticed me or what...that was like all my emotions basically you know like, as I told you during Confession I had pulled back my tears I didn't allow myself to cry...there have*

*been times where I think back of the past again I prevent myself from crying because there are people looking and all, but when the Host came into my hand , when I had to do that I could not control myself...*

The 'step' refers to the improvised ritual of offering, introduced during the Mass on Day 3, whereby participants were invited to bring their past experiences and offer them to the 'Host'. This act of offering was a symbolic act of surrender of their past to Jesus Christ. It appears Nadine took the experiences of the past to mean her psychological wounds of 'hurt' and 'betrayal'. She had found it difficult to surrender these in the Confessional even though she had enlisted them for surrender. At the Eucharist however, she chose to surrender this psychological pain of betrayal perhaps with the hope that she would be able to forgive those who had hurt and betrayed her. Nadine admitted that this step 'shook' her suggesting that it was unexpected and had shaken her out of her comfort zone. The expressions, 'shook me' together with 'I do not know if people have noticed me' followed by 'when the Host came into my hand...I could not control' seem to suggest an intense emotional experience. Unlike earlier when she had restrained her emotions during the actual act of 'Confession', she could stay present to her emotions in this instance. This release of the emotions thus seems to have brought a resolution to her sense of incompleteness experienced during the actual act of 'Confession'.

Lyn too appears to have capitalized on this opportunity at the Eucharist to bring about a resolution to her sense of incompleteness. She reported feeling 'someone like actually putting their hand into me and pulling everything out' as if she had a visceral experience of someone pulling out some material within her. She did not provide details about the content of the material. The 'everything' may have been a reference to the wounds of the past or her sins. The visceral sense was so intense that it engulfed her emotionally for she reported wanting to 'just



*stand there and cry*'. However she restrained herself because her mother was next to her. Like Nadine, Lyn seems to have had a similar preoccupation about how she would be perceived by others. When she put the *'Host'* into the bowl that was passed around, she reported that she *'just felt free...that there were no bonds around...anything pulling her back'*. The felt sense of *'pulling everything out'* seems to have empowered her with self-forgiveness for she declared, *'one thing that I made a big mistake in life, it was a big mistake that I don't know, I mean at least, I feel that if I had to forgive myself I don't think I would be able to but the Lord did...I know now there is somewhere I can turn to, some person I can look to, someone who is going to be there for me whenever I need him'*. Apparently she could bring compassion and forgiveness to herself because she had felt forgiven by Jesus.

While the *'Confession'* seems to have been about confessing one's sins and participants like Nadine failed to stay connected with their actual experience transpiring in the Confessional context, the Eucharist gave participants like Nadine an opportunity to reconnect with their parallel experience and find an experience of healing.

In contrast, Seby and Carmo seem to have resigned from full participation in the retreat. Seby leaked out that he was taking the retreat in *'small'* steps and that he did not *'need to rush up change in 24 hours'* because *'healing'* in his estimation *'is a long process and with time we reach there'*. He seemed to have decided that he would *'come back again'*. Carmo gave the impression that he was *'getting a lot of things off my chest'* as if there was a sense of completeness with his act of *'Confession'*. He felt so excited about having gone to *'Confession'* that he made a phone call to his mother to communicate his accomplishment. This phone call was only the second time he had spoken to his mother after his father's death. It seemed to reflect his delight at having been to *'Confession'*. He had been to only one other Confession in his life and that was the one

before his First Holy Communion. *'...after that I never confessed...been either too busy or never wanted to you know'*. Thus although Carmo seemed to impress that he had benefitted from the 'Confession', a part of him seemed to have disengaged from the retreat which leaked out in his declaration that he wanted to *'do it slow and steady'* because he *'just cannot say no'* to his *'vices'*.

Although all the participants experienced the new ritual at the Eucharist on Day 3, the rest of the participants however did not make a mention about their Eucharistic experience or of any other post confessional experience.

## **8.2. Self-Reflexivity on 'Confession'**

The focus on the 'Confession' directly engaged the priest in me. I was very conscious of the need to bracket that side of me. I found myself exercising utmost restraint on probing for details about the content of participants' Confession. The very little material shared by them about their Confession is a testimony to that effort at bracketing my curiosity. It also reflects my effort to respect the phenomenology of the participants, without forcing them to confess the very personal material of the 'Confession'. I had a heightened awareness about the need to let the participants chart the course of the interview rather than be directed by me. Thus I chose to give them the sense of safety in navigating the very personal territory of the Confessional material.

In addition, I also refrained from hearing 'Confession' in spite of repeated requests from the management because I did not want to compromise my role as the researcher. I had assumed that such a restraint on my part would portray the distinctness of my role as a researcher to the participants. I had assumed that it would endorse the fact that I was at DRC merely for research purposes. Furthermore there was the possibility that participants could have come to me to make their Confession and that would have compromised the research. Such a possibility was thus averted.

The need to go into detail as appropriated by participants like Carmo made me wonder about the level of scrupulosity that may be induced by the DRC focus on a detailed examination of one's whole life.

### **8.3. Discussion on 'Confession'**

'Confession' in Catholic practice involves “a manifestation of personal sins to the Church in the person of a duly authorized priest for the purpose of obtaining sacramental absolution by virtue of the power of the keys” (Latko, 1967, p. 131). The domain of personal sins involves everything that negatively affects one's relationships namely ruptures in relationship with God, with others and with oneself. McMahan (2002) observes that 'Confession' is a critical aspect of the Charismatic formation. However, although DRC adopts the Sacrament of 'Confession' and invites the participants to acknowledge their sinfulness, the overall emphasis seems to be on healing one's wounded-ness or the psychological pain borne by the participants rather than sin. This aspect is highlighted in the case of Nadine in the subtheme: *Experiencing either a resolution or disengagement*.

Of significance in the literature on 'Confession' is the argument highlighting the relationship of 'Confession' to psychotherapy as indicated in the Literature review. It appears that the preaching and rituals of Days 1 to 4 at DRC elicit Shadow material in the participants. For example, it could be argued that the overarching issue that underlies the call to surrender on Day 1 is to assist participants to become conscious of and own their Shadow material. Thus, Steere's (2009) observation about the relationship between 'Confession' and the psychotherapeutic construct of Shadow appears relevant to the DRC context. Some of the participants experienced difficulty with such ownership.

The call to surrender beginning from Day 1 is a distinct strategy that DRC seems to adopt to invite the participants to surrender their Shadow aspects to God. According to Nelson (2009), a “factor in spiritual and religious change is our willingness to admit our need for help and to accept it, surrendering our will to a higher power that will help us find wholeness” (p. 282). The actual act of 'Confession' itself is the intended culmination of that act of surrender, for, as Dyslin (2008) points out, Confession is at the heart of spiritual surrender. As indicated in the analysis above, the incompleteness experienced by some participants highlights the fact that the intended act of surrender in 'Confession' might not always be accomplished for some participants at DRC owing to their interfering parallel processes. While the participants of this study encountered their Shadow material in their preparation for 'Confession', it appears they could not stay connected with it in the actual act of 'Confession' because of the accompanying overwhelming emotions which impinged on their level of disclosure.

Steere (2009) argues for a more visible interaction between Confession and Shadow material. He suggests that Confession can be more actively turned into Shadow Work where the disowned and disallowed aspects of oneself are brought into awareness. The reality is that Confession as it is operationalized in Catholic practice facilitates such conscious effort through an examination of conscience because the concept of sin in Catholic Theology is concerned with the same dark side in one's relationship with God and others, as does Shadow work (Nelson, 2009). The fact that participants did not provide details about the content of 'Confession' may suggest that their act of 'Confession' engaged Shadow material. Rosanna's strategy of writing her sins in Arabic suggests her discomfort with disclosing this dark side to others.

An explicit purpose of the Sacrament of Penance ('Confession') is, “to restore the holiness of life forfeited by grievous sin and to deepen it through a livelier sorrow for sin and an earnest

desire to purify one's conscience as a worthy preparation for Eucharistic Communion" (Halligan, 1967, p. 132). The tacit purpose of this Sacrament is the integration and ownership of the dark side of one's personality, which in actual practice might not always occur. The sense of incompleteness reported by Nadine and Lyn highlights the possibility that parallel processes may stifle this integration and the process of ownership as enunciated under the subtheme: *'a parallel process interferes with the actual act of Confession'*.

Participants' narratives reveal that DRC integrates both these purposes of the Sacrament of Penance ('Confession'). According to Kaniyaraseril (2005) the explicit purpose of 'Confession' at DRC is to experience "the activity of the Holy Spirit as total conversion, and as the joy of the forgiveness of sins by God. From this deep experience of radical conversion, the people are led to a total self-surrender that results in an intimate union with Jesus in the Holy Spirit, as experienced in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist..." (p. 144). DRC spends four days engaging with participants' disowned and disallowed aspects through the call to surrender, to open up, to confess and to receive counselling. Notably, the participants of this study did not seem to respond as radically as implied by Kaniyaraseril (2005).

### **8.3.1. Preparing for 'Confession'**

The literature on 'Confession' does not report on the significance of time in the context of 'Confession'. However, popular literature on 'Confession' endorses the significance of the time spent in 'Confession'. For example, O'Toole (2001) bewails the fact that 'Confession' quite often is "all over quickly, like an eventful trip to the dentist" (p. 12). The unintended outcome of that speed is only "little of genuine moral scrutiny, repentance, the opening of the heart to God's grace" (Steinfels, 2001, p. 14). In contrast, participants' experience of the time spent in preparing for confession at DRC highlights the significance of time and its impact on the participants. The

comments of Johnson, Brennan and Rosanna suggest that they were better prepared than ever before to make their 'Confession'.

The issue of time is also notable for allowing some inspiring preaching. The two themes of 'surrender' and 'opening up' were oriented towards preparing the participants to open themselves to own their sinful selves. Regular Confessional practice may lack the benefit of such preparation. Nadine and Rosanna reported being convinced by the instructions and the rationale for Confession provided by the preachers. Similarly Johnson found it easy to *'let go'* of his *'grudges'* and *'bad memories'* because the preaching had inspired him with a pertinent rationale. Remo's report about *'going back down (his) memory lane 27 years ago'* is another instance that highlights the significance of the time spent in preparation which had enabled him to surrender a memory that possibly interfered in his functioning.

Nadine's activity of writing down her sins lest she forgets and Carmo's claim that he was *'made to believe to get into detail'* highlights the possibility that for some penitents 'Confession' may become an activity of preparing lists of sins. They might fail to note that the intended purpose of 'Confession' is to look honestly at oneself, at one's relationship with God and others (Collins, 1994). Sparrow (2008) notes that the 'Confession' in Catholicism has the curative purpose of healing through an experience of God's love which might be lost if 'ticking off' lists becomes the sole focus of confession.

### **8.3.2. A parallel process interferes with the actual act of 'Confession'**

It is important to make a distinction between academic literature and popular reports on 'Confession'. The experience of emotions intervening in the Confessional context does not appear to be well reported in academic literature. Only one non-peer reviewed article reported the phenomenology of nervousness experienced by the penitent going to a Catholic 'Confession'

(Collins, 1994). The phenomenology of the parallel processes that interfered with participants' actual act of 'Confession' is relevant feedback for Confessors in general because it highlights obstacles and elements that might be omitted in the Confessional interaction. It draws attention to the possibility that the penitent might not be fully available in the Confessional owing to the overwhelming influence of parallel personal processes. Consequently, the Confessional interaction might remain impersonal and fail to engage the penitent at a level that matters. Nadine's emotional experience was not anticipated. It emerged in the context suggesting a process similar to the therapeutic context. She did not report whether she was encouraged or supported in that emotional struggle. Arguably, it might not be entirely wrong to claim that the Confessor had failed to meet Nadine at that level which might explain her sense of incompleteness. Her phenomenology of incompleteness highlights the fact that 'Confession' has to be an art where empathic skills like resonance and the ability to read body language are warranted on the part of the Confessor. Such a disposition will ensure that penitents are truly met in the depth of their experience as it emerges in the moment.

The Confessional engagement thus has to move beyond a mere verbal engagement to a connection with the experiential life-world of the penitent. It suggests that Confession is a multi-layered dialogue where the person of the penitent and what occurs with the penitent needs to be honoured to effect the experience of healing, because 'Confession' is essentially a healing process (Monroe & Schwab, 2009). Otherwise the 'Confession' may result in a shallow cognitive exercise about 'ticking off' a list of sins rather than an experience of healing the sinner which is the goal of 'Confession'.

Rosanna's report about the priest '*looking at (her) in a very, very dirty light*' and then indicating that '*there is a whole sexual matter*' which '*taints whatever*' seems to suggest the

operation of projective processes. The use of the word *'taint'* leaks out her awareness of her projective process. Nadine's report highlights the presence of such processes in the Confessional context even though the singular meeting that occurs in the Confessional context might not provide an avenue for engaging these processes. It highlights the near-impossibility of engaging at that level owing to the single encounter with the penitent. Consequently, the penitent may go away from the Confessional with a 'feel good' experience that lacks depth, as in the case of Carmo who reported getting a *'lot of things off (his) chest'* but then implicitly leaked out the beginning of his disengagement and consequent distance from the retreat.

The anxiety experienced by Nadine on seeing the scene of 'Confession' together with Rosanna's secretive strategy of writing her sins in Arabic highlights participants' need for privacy around the Confessional practice. The considerable amount of time spent in preparation for 'Confession' had enabled the participants to connect with emotionally activating issues. Such an effort meant that accompanying emotions needed to be processed. Nadine's sense of incompleteness experienced intensely as *'nausea'* calls into question the DRC practice of lack of privacy at 'Confession'. A private context for 'Confession' might benefit some participants like Nadine who need it to facilitate their contact with their emotions and to process them.

Seby's revelation about his struggle with trusting others is perhaps an invitation to DRC to consider possible strategies whereby they could support such participants at an individual level. It appears revisiting his past was an overwhelming experience for him, such that he could not support himself. Seby's struggle might be a reflection of the struggle with most men at opening themselves emotionally and thereby staying present to their emotions such that they can stay present to processing the emotional and bodily activating issues.



### 8.3.3. Seeking a resolution versus disengagement

DRC provided the participants with a tangible opportunity to experience both the Sacramental and Sacrificial aspects of the Eucharist (Dewan, 1967; Kilmartin, 1967). The improvised ritual at Mass, referred to as the '*step*' by Nadine and reported in the analysis, gave the participants a very tangible opportunity to experience both these aspects. For example, having felt incomplete with her act of 'Confession', Nadine admitted to being unable to '*control*' herself at this step. She could not exercise a control over her emotions as she had done in the Confessional. It seems Lyn capitalised on this opportunity to offer her Shadow aspects to God for transformation. Such an offering is the purpose of ritual (Sherwood, 2011) and of the Catholic Mass (R. A. Johnson, 1991) and enacts the sacrificial aspect of expiation (Kilmartin, 1967). It appears, that for both these participants, the tangibility of the '*Host*' gave them a very viscerally felt sense of touching and speaking to Jesus thereby enacting the Sacramental dimension of the Eucharist. The tangibility gave them a felt sense of Jesus, reflecting the experience of 'real presence' (Dewan, 1967) as ascribed to the Sacrament. This experience of these participants highlights the substantive dimension of this experience. It could be argued from a psychodynamic perspective that this felt sense of an encounter with Jesus had disconfirmed Nadine's Internal Working Model of abandonment by her family (Badenoch, 2011). Following Johnson's (1991) claim that, "The Catholic Mass is a masterpiece of balancing our cultural life" (p. 23), it could be argued that Lyn had perhaps experienced a balancing act in her social life, which might explain her insight about her lack of self-forgiveness. This Eucharistic experience had become a turning point for her.

## **Chapter 9: Theme 5 - Counselling**

### **9.1. Analysis on Counselling**

The initial tentative hypothesis for Day 4 is as follows. On Day 4, most of the participants reported experiencing both a struggle before and during the counselling session and after-effects following the counselling session.

The following is the generic text for Day 4. Following the inputs from the retreat, most of the participants reported experiencing a struggle in the form of an anxiety prior to the counselling session and as a challenge during the counselling session. However they reported positive after-effects following their respective counselling session. Thus the counselling experience occurred in three phases: an anxious anticipation of Counselling, feeling challenged during the Counselling and the after-effects of Counselling. From a global retreat perspective the Counselling continued participants' journey of a struggle as highlighted earlier in the themes, '*Surrender*', '*Opening up*' and '*Confession*'.

As with the theme of '*Confession*' this theme of '*Counselling*' is presented with three different core extracts that represent the three different phases of '*Counselling*'. The purpose of such a presentation is to remain faithful to the phenomenological experience of the participants. Together the variations on these three different phases are also presented.

#### **9.1.1. Anxious anticipation of Counselling**

This subtheme highlights participants struggle prior to the Counselling session. Most of them experienced a level of anxiety as they prepared for their counselling session. Although it was not stated explicitly, participants' anxiety seems to have been related to questions such as: How much will I be exposed? What sort of detail will I be asked for? What will I be forced to talk about?

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies the first phase of participants' experience of an anticipated anxiety experienced prior to the counselling session. The following quote highlights Rosanna's experience of this anxious anticipation:

*X 4: I was waiting for counselling because I was waiting for to hear the other person's kind of opinions or possibly actually, what I wanted was the other person to comfort me...I prayed for my counsellor, I said God give me a good counsellor...I want the counsellor who can understand me, understand my point of view, put his or her self in my shoes...I finished my breakfast very fast and like okay, I have to go for counselling now I was like to, I was very excited. I said okay...I am confident that after the counselling I am going to have a definite road map for the future I am going to know what to do with myself I am going to know how to take care of the garbage in my life....*

Rosanna spent a considerable amount of her narrative reporting on her experience prior to the counselling session. The 'waiting' stated twice suggests an anxious wait for what the Counselling session would unfold for her. On Day 2, she had declared that she 'was going to do social work' and 'help all these people'. She had sought to impress then that it was others rather than herself who were in need of help for they had a problem. On Day 3, she reiterated this belief saying, 'At first, like I said yesterday I have that position that you know that, that itself I just position that ok I am okay you are not okay kind of thing'. However on Day 3 itself, this belief had been implicitly challenged by the preaching owing to which, she had begun 'questioning myself' and 'telling myself, hello look something is wrong'. The preaching seems to have involuntarily led her into the unfamiliar territory of reflecting on her limitations. Hence she had to talk to herself and say 'hello' as if she was waking that part of herself. No sooner had she

connected with it, a sense of helplessness seems to have emerged, which might explain why she had to wake herself to this dissociated aspect of herself.

I had registered a viscerally felt sense of helplessness and wondered whether my body was mirroring her experience. Perhaps she did feel helpless although she was not explicit about the visceral aspect of that experience. She revealed a felt need for '*comfort*' and anxieties about getting a '*good counsellor*' who would '*understand*' and '*put his or her self into my shoes*', suggesting an intense sense of helplessness and vulnerability that may have been felt viscerally. The '*walls*' she had maintained with the narrative that '*I am ok*' and others are '*not ok*' seem to have been shaken in their foundations. Her tone sounded one of desperation. She had finally admitted her need for help. However, the '*intellectual*' in her, the part that seeks '*logical arguments*', was seeking cognitive help for she disclosed that she was '*waiting for to hear the other person's kind of opinions*'.

Admittedly, she had encountered and recognized her vulnerability, which she chose to qualify as '*garbage*.' Drawing on her narratives across the first three days, the garbage was possibly a reference to the prevailing effects of her early childhood experience of being sexually molested by her '*cousin*'. Comparing the felt experience to '*garbage*' suggests an intensely felt disgust. Perhaps the disgust was a pervasively felt experience with accompanying bodily and emotional activations and associated memories which together may have been a warded off experience. It appears she had learnt to manage it until then with '*alcohol*' and '*rock music*' and by shielding herself with '*walls*'. One of the significant '*walls*' seems to have been the strategy of withholding forgiveness from this cousin, thinking forgiving him would mean '*I am weak*' and '*I am letting you have a victory over me*'. So building the wall was apparently her way of protecting herself from being a '*victim again*' and refusing to give this cousin an upper hand, probably in the

confines of her mind or in her mental rehearsals associated with the event of molestation. On Day 1 without describing the details, she had declared that she *'thought maybe I had resolved them but maybe they needed to be you know brought out one final time for a final resolution'* implying that she had sought external help. However, the indication on Day 1, that she was *'feeling restless'* and having an *'unbearable sensation'* together with the conflict about *'what compromises do I have to make'* and *'where should I draw any lines'* suggests an internal struggle. On one level, the whole experience of molestation may have become a very present experience to her together with viscerally activated sensations and feelings. On another level owing to the preaching, she felt called to let go of her strategies of managing the associated pain with *'alcohol'* and *'rock music'* and *'walls'*. This call of the preachers may induced a tension.

No wonder then that she was *'excited'*, suggesting a sense of urgency about wanting to *'hear the other person's kind of opinions'*. She harboured the hopes that owing to such an effort, *'I am going to know what to do'* and *'know how to take care of the garbage'*. She entertained high expectations from Counselling, that it would give her a *'definite road map for the future'*. From feeling that *'life is empty, meaningless'* which she admitted to on Day 3, she had suddenly found a new promise for the future.

Most other participants also experienced anxieties about finding the appropriate counsellor although they differed in the way they managed their responses to this anxiety.

In the case of Lyn, it appears her controlling mother had chosen a counsellor for her as revealed in her statement, *'my mother had put an appointment with someone else'*. She *'resisted'* such an initiative from her mother. She *'did not want to go to this counsellor'* because she had chosen her own counsellor and had decided to become assertive about it. On Day 2 she had revealed that she *'used to listen to my family'* and dismiss her own *'feeling'* which apparently

could be a reference to her own intuitive processes. In this instance, she was probably listening to her own inner wisdom and finding her own voice before her mother. So she declared to her mother that *'no by any means I am going to'* the counsellor of her choice rather than her mother's choice. She leaked out her anxiety when she disclosed that she did not want to go to the counsellor of her mother's choice because she *'didn't know'* this counsellor *'so well'*. The unfamiliarity with the counsellor may have generated a level of anxiety.

Remo is another instance of an anxious anticipation. He *'decided not to go for counselling'* because *'if the counsellor'* suggested a particular direction, he *'would be forced to follow that way'*. Such a declaration leaks out his susceptibility to being gullible. He was consequently shielding himself from possible anxieties ensuing from the pressures of the counsellor into doing what was not of his choice. However by late afternoon he had changed his mind after hearing a preacher who *'said something it really moved me'*. He rushed into counselling towards the evening and spent two hours with the counsellor.

Johnson also revealed an anxious anticipation which seems to have stopped him from going to Counselling. He admitted to feeling *'not ready at this point of time'* to go to counselling, a claim that leaked out his anxiety. It appears, like Remo he doubted himself about whether he would be able to engage with the difference that might be offered by the Counsellor. He rationalized his stance by claiming that he had got *'over the whole grudge thing'*, suggesting that the issue he would have taken to counselling was the issue of resentment and that he had already resolved it.

Seby was another participant who did not go to counselling. However he did appear for the interview in the evening and disclosed that he had spent the day in sleep because he had diarrhoea.

Two other participants, Carmo and Brennan went to counselling but did not provide any inputs about what transpired for them prior to the counselling session.

Nadine revealed that she went to counselling because she was '*supposed to*'. Such an expression suggests that she went to counselling out of a sense of duty. She did not report on how it felt for her before going to counselling.

### **9.1.2. Feeling challenged during the Counselling**

Feeling challenged refers to participants' struggle at receiving the difference offered to them in the counselling interaction. This difference involved feeling challenged on their basic orientation to themselves and others and to being offered unwelcome advice.

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies the second phase of participants' experience of being challenged during the counselling. The following quote highlights Rosanna's experience of feeling challenged during the counselling session:

*...so we sat, she is like looking everywhere I am like this lady is a tense she is not hundred percent on me...so she just says start...I am thinking in my mind okay aren't I supposed to have a prayer or something...all the time I am feeling that she is looking about she is, doesn't seem to sympathise...kind of tell me, joke, nicely you know talk to me and tell me that everything is going to be okay nothing of that sort instead after that suddenly she, I notice her being very impatient and so I am trying to cut myself short...Then it really hit me...this is no nonsense kind of a woman, no she is not going to take any sort of sob stories from anybody...So then I lost my bearings and she is like okay, next, then I had to actually scratch my head and tell her, think about it...I was quite sure that you know I am going to go systematically like how I did for confession...*

*... "you think you are great", I agreed with her in my mind, I didn't say it out loud, but I agreed with her, I did have, a kind of a superiority complex, that I felt that you know I was out to save the world... "why are you bothered about somebody else, first concentrate on yourself, are you okay? No, if you are not okay, first get your focus right", get your, she didn't say centre, but another friend had once told me, "get your centre right"... ..she said "why you are so bothered about the past". That hits me like a jolt.*

*...I used to consider myself a very religious and pious person, not very religious at least I used to pride myself for my faith in God, "you have no faith in God, you tell me, no need, no use of keeping this ring on your finger because you are not praying enough,...you know what's your problem? You don't pray", and she said that "now, you, that is your problem, that is the only thing, and everything else, is connected to that"... It was like a shock, it was like a physical shock, as if someone had given me a blow on my chest...*

Rosanna presented a graphic portrayal of her Counselling interaction. It appears her whole focus was trained on the counsellor's body and behaviour. The details about the counsellor '*looking everywhere*' and '*tense,*' '*not hundred percent on me*' suggests that she was monitoring closely the counsellor's eyes with a hunger for an eye-to-eye contact with the counsellor. The hunger was probably for '*sympathy*' which could be a reference to her expectation that the counsellor joins in her '*sob story*'. The sob story was the major content of her counselling interaction. This story refers to her early childhood experience of sexual abuse which she described as '*the major shaping block of my life*'. The hunger was also for a reassurance, a sense of hope from the counsellor that '*everything is going to be okay*'. As indicated above, she had become very needy for '*comfort*' for she had got in touch with her vulnerability. It appears the counsellor did not satisfy her hunger. Drawing on her past experience of Counselling, she found



that the counsellor had omitted what she thought were the basics of counselling practice. These included saying a *'prayer,'* sympathising with her, reassuring her, talking *'nicely'* to her and even adding some *'humour'* to the conversation. Rather she soon discovered that there was *'nothing of that sort'*. The *'that'* was possibly an allusion to the basics she had expected from the counsellor.

Rosanna then noticed an emotional shift in the disposition of the counsellor. She referred to it as *'suddenly... I notice her being very impatient'*. The counsellor's *'impatience'* could have been an annoyance with Rosanna's detail and a desire to get to the core of her issues. The reference to, *'I am trying to cut myself short'* and *'she's like okay next'* seems to suggest such a disposition. As these dynamics unfolded, Rosanna had an insight as implied in, *'it really hit me'*. She realized that this counsellor was a *'no nonsense kind of woman'* someone who *'is not going to take any sort of sob stories from anybody'*. This realization seems to have dislodged her from her regular mental posture or the narrative that she had probably rehearsed before other counsellors. The dislodging is evident in her sense that she had *'lost (her) bearings'* and that *'she had to actually scratch my head and tell her, think about it'*. It had dislodged her from her strategy *'of going to go systematically'* in the Counselling with her prepared list which had worked for her in the Confessional, the previous day. But that strategy had now failed as she had been stopped in her regular narrative about her past. It was thus a break in her familiar narrative. Thus the observation of the *'impatience'* on the part of the counsellor had generated an unusual insight for Rosanna that the counsellor would not join in reinforcing her narrative about her past.

As if the work of being destabilised had not been enough, the counsellor confronted her attitude of *'superiority'* whereby she made herself *'great'*. This confrontation resonated with her for she knew that part of herself as revealed in her words, *'I agreed with her in my mind, I didn't say it out loud'*. I had registered this attitude of superiority in the course of her narratives across

the first four days for she had sought to impress me about her *'intellect'* and how others were *'not as good student as I am supposed to be'*. The counsellor seems to have raised her awareness about her impression management strategy.

Furthermore, Rosanna was dislodged from her narrative about her *'past'* by the counsellor who questioningly invited her to an ownership of her limitations, *'why are you bothered about somebody else? First, concentrate on yourself since you are not okay'*. Probably owing to her previous counselling experience, Rosanna was surprised by the confrontation coming from the counsellor so *'that hits me like a jolt'*. The confrontation seems to have struck at the core of her belief about others that she had to *'save the world'*, because others were *'not okay'*. The counsellor's invitation reminded her of her friend's statement that she needed to get her own *'centre right'*. The metaphorical reference to the *'centre'* was possibly a reference to the *'garbage'*, the disgust that pervaded her, and which her friend had registered. Perhaps, it was only after coming to DRC that Rosanna had openly acknowledged it.

Another area where she was dislodged was her religious self-presentation. Rosanna had considered herself to be *'a very religious and pious person'*, and used to *'pride myself for my faith'*. She would wear a rosary *'ring'* on her middle finger, which she chose to display to me. But the counsellor confronted her on that practice declaring that she had *'no faith in God'* and that there was *'no use of keeping this ring on your finger'* because *'she was not praying enough'*. To Rosanna, this challenge to her religious self-presentation felt *'as if someone had given me a blow on my chest'*. Perhaps this self-presentation was so closely tied to her self-definition that at some deeper level, dislodging it rendered her utterly helpless. So she declared to the counsellor, *'I don't know what to do'*. It appears Rosanna had been stripped of her self-definition and met in her unconscious process of defectiveness. This *'intellectual'* who admittedly bore a sense of

*'superiority'* and considered herself *'ok'* appeared to have had her *'walls'* shattered and exposed in her vulnerability. Metaphorically, it was the breaking down of her *'walls'* which she had erected to *'protect herself'*. I wondered and waited with expectation about what would emerge out of this movement into helplessness because she had presented herself as a confident girl on previous days. It appeared that Day 4 marked a shift in her basic orientation towards herself and others.

Lyn seems to be another instance of being challenged during the counselling. On hearing her story of rejection and her struggle at finding her own voice at home, the counsellor confronted her, saying *'you are not a child any more, you are old enough to make your own decisions'*. She did not elaborate on how the challenge felt for her. Metaphorically it was a call to grow up and take charge of her decisions. Lyn had already initiated changes towards finding her own voice as indicated in the subtheme above when she insisted on her choice of the counsellor rather than the counsellor of her mother's choice.

On his part, Carmo anticipated being challenged on his *'smoking'* and *'drinking'*. Given that he was not prepared *'to leave any of my abuses, you know vices'*, he evaded the challenge by opening up a conversation with the Counsellor on *'how to read the Bible'*. While such a topic was a legitimate concern in his case, it was possibly a subtle evasive strategy of restricting the counselling session to an impersonal issue and thus avoiding engaging in personal issues. The following statement appears to substantiate that claim, *'I didn't give her any other options'*. He had cleverly navigated the course of the conversation in the session.

Remo was advised by the counsellor to read a text from the Bible on a regular basis. He indicated that he took the advice *'very reluctantly'*, suggesting a level of discomfort. Quite possibly, he disagreed with it initially although he chose to accept it eventually.

Brennan was challenged on the area of *'darknesses in our lives especially as couples'* which arguably could be a challenging issue. He did not however provide details about the content of the conversation nor about how he felt about it. It is a variation to other participants. It suggests a variation in the range of discomfort arising from actual or anticipated challenge in the counselling session.

Nadine appears to be an exception to the challenge. The counselling session seems to have enabled her to get in touch with her *'past'* and she had *'tears flowing'*. Her report about the counselling session was about the advice given by the counsellor, *'she told me next time you get those fears coming to you what you need to do, so she's given me some two paragraphs...it's a kind of like a prayer'*.

The remaining two participants, Johnson and Seby, avoided going to counselling.

### **9.1.3. The after-experience of Counselling**

This subtheme highlights the effects ensuing from the counselling experience. Most of them were particular to observe what appear to be positive impacts ensuing from the counselling experience.

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies participants' after-experience of counselling. It is presented simply and then elaborated below. Variations to this experience are presented below. The following quote highlights Rosanna's after-experience of the Counselling session:

*X 4: I began to look at it from another perspective...ironically enough, I didn't feel disappointed at all, I felt okay this is, like tough love...I guess it's good for me...I was so surprised that how can it be, that, all my problems which I magnified and I dramatized you know and I made them so big, they just had a simple solution...*

*...to be very honest I never expected it...it's kind of funny because I was laughing at the end of it, I was happy, I was joyful, I was completely cleansed, I felt, it was in the core of my being that everything was wiped clean okay...*

*...I had to forgive those people, to forgive myself like that's how I can conclude it...*

The reference to *'I began to look at it'* suggests that Rosanna had moved into a state of reflection after the counselling. She began to deliberate on the significance of her interaction with the counsellor. In her estimation it was *'good for me'*. She assessed it as an act of *'tough love'*. Probably it was her higher self that saw the wisdom of being exposed in her *'sob'* stories which she had *'magnified'* and *'dramatized'* and *'made them so big'*. She reported being *'so surprised'* at discovering the simplicity of the solution to her problems. This simple solution recommended by the counsellor involved engaging in prayer. It was possibly a call for a connection with God.

She reported an awareness of her emotional experience which was *'never expected'*. It included feeling *'happy'* and *'joyful'* which was not anticipated and so it felt *'funny'* as if there was an element of unreality to it. This challenging experience had left an intense impression on her because she felt cleansed in the *'core of my being'*. Such a claim was possibly a contrast to her prevailing feeling of *'garbage'*. It was possibly a felt sense of the garbage being cleansed.

Given the *'shock'* that she had experienced at being challenged during the counselling, she found such an emotional experience paradoxical as implied in the use of the word, *'ironically'*. She perceived the irony in her work of building *'walls'*. While the walls were intended to protect her, they had in fact created a prison around her such that her *'un-forgiveness became a prison'*. The strategy of not forgiving her cousin had imprisoned her. What it did to her was contrary to her expectation that it would free her from her cousin. Quite possibly she had

entertained those memories and ruminated over them. She realised that this un-forgiveness had become a *'self-contained prison'* that she *'never even realized'*. The effort to gain a *'victory'* over him had resulted in holding him to herself in the intimacy of her mind when in fact she possibly wanted him out of her mind. Apparently, such a realization was a significant shift for her because it was an ownership of how she had contributed to her problems. There was possibly a sense of hope that she could make a change with her preoccupation with him. The preacher's words on Day 3 that life would become *'empty'* and *'meaningless'* with *'un-forgiveness'* had resonated with her and had opened her eyes to the *'irony'* of her mental engagement with un-forgiveness.

She concluded her narrative of Day 4 claiming that she had realized the significance of forgiveness in her life, so that she *'had to forgive those people to forgive myself'*. The reference to *'those people'* appears to be a reference to the *'cousin'* who had sexually *'molested'* her. Forgiving him was probably a too big a demand. She had generated a narrative that considered him a bad man. But in realizing the need to forgive him, she had discovered her own need for self-forgiveness, that it warranted forgiveness of others who had offended her. This statement about the need for self-forgiveness was her last statement at the interview. Given that the stipulated 20 minutes for the interview has elapsed, I did not probe into what the self-forgiveness entailed. I was also conscious of the fact that the next person was waiting in the queue for the next interview. Given her self-analysis that leaks through her narrative, the declaration about self-forgiveness may have emerged as a sense of clarity as she spoke to me. She had possibly come to conclude at this stage that the way forward in her life was through a relationship with God and through forgiveness. She had possibly recognized that she could not grow into a full human being while being imprisoned behind the *'walls'*.

Lyn summarized her experience of counselling as feeling '*calm*' and '*cool*' because sitting with the counsellor was an unburdening experience. She claimed that it was '*as if you felt like, her actually picking up the burden from you and saying it's with me now you don't have to do anything about it and she calmed me so well*'. It appears the counsellor through her presence had altered something viscerally within Lyn. Lyn seems to have registered this visceral difference within herself although she could not explain it. Hence the words, '*as if you felt like*'. The closest explanation she could give was the symbolism of '*picking up the burden*' to highlight the influence that the counsellor exercised on her. Although she did not state it explicitly, a sense of being oppressed by the '*burden*' leaks through her narratives. The '*burden*' seems to have been so intense and pervasive that she made six suicide attempts to rid herself of the burden. She needed to be told that she did not have to carry the burden. It appears the counsellor addressed this need of hers and consequently '*calmed me so well*'. On Day 2 she had revealed that she felt '*worthless*'. The counsellor had challenged her sense of worthlessness. It was a challenge to her self-belief. It was as if the counsellor was subtly saying to her, you think you are nothing because you are carrying that burden, give it to me or hand it over to Jesus because the fact is, that you are better than who you think you are.

Nadine reported that the counselling experience '*felt nice*' because the counsellor was '*removing things out*'. This metaphor of '*removing things out*' was possibly a reference to the '*guilt*' she had alluded to on Day 3. As in the case of Lyn, it appears Nadine had a visceral sense of the burden, which was the area she was '*messing*' herself in.

Although Carmo had managed to evade being exposed in his vulnerability by cleverly restricting the counselling interaction to a discussion on '*how to read*' the Bible, he reported feeling '*lighter*'. Such an emotion referred to in spite of evading the discussion of serious issues

suggests that he was normalizing his experience of the counselling session. He was possibly saying that he had anticipated a challenging session, but having cleverly restricted the content of the discussion to an impersonal issue, he had felt comparatively lighter.

Remo and Brennan are variations to the above participants. Both these men were future-oriented. They reported having an intention to make a difference to their lives rather than about how they felt after the counselling experience. Remo commented that he will '*avoid sin*' which suggests wishful thinking as if there was an element of unreality to that claim. It appears he was in a mode of compliance. Brennan too spoke about his intention to take action, namely to take '*time out*' in his marital relationship so as to nurture this relationship.

## **9.2. Self-Reflexivity on Counselling**

Rosanna's narrative resonated quite strongly with the therapist in me. For example, drawing on the amount of detail that Rosanna provided about the interaction, I assumed that like me, her counsellor had recognized a pattern with her. It was a pattern of verbosity in her articulation and of lengthy descriptions that seemed to re-inforce her victim or sob story. Furthermore, the counsellor in me had entertained a similar sense that she needed to be challenged on her sob story.

I felt anxious about making mistakes and about asking the wrong questions as soon as I recognized that Rosanna was treading on an area of vulnerability. It was recognition of my own vulnerability. The best solution I thought was to let the participant take the direction that she chose to take.

Over the months following the interview, I began to recognize the power of challenge in the counselling context, as I assimilated the evidence from the participants that those who were challenged had made considerable movement towards change in their lives.



With Nadine I had a sense that there was more to her communication than the mere words she was using, which is a contrast to Rosanna. It was as if Rosanna was giving me the keys to her inner process as evidenced in her detailed portrayal of her Day 4 experience. Whereas with Nadine, I felt that she was speaking from a third person perspective as if she was reporting her experience from outside herself. It was as if Nadine had begun to disengage and had built a wall around herself by Day 4. This wall became very visible on the last day when Nadine complained about how the Retreat was uncomfortable with *'hard bed'* and *'hard pillows'*. All along in the course of the Retreat she did not communicate this unease. Perhaps it was her self-presentation and desirability to be perceived positively by me. It could also be that it was only on the last day that she felt comfortable to talk about her negative experiences.

Over the course of the Retreats, I began to develop a hunch about the range in the commitment of participants to the retreat. It was obvious that by Day 3 participants had begun to deviate from one another. Day 4 further endorsed this deviance as some participants such as Rosanna and Lyn benefited greatly from their engagement in the Counselling through delving deeper into their life, particularly their wounded-ness. Others such as Johnson and Seby who avoided going to Counselling had begun to disengage from the Retreat and thereby failed to benefit from the counselling.

Although this study is not about the participants who were not interviewed and yet participated in the retreats, I had a sense that the range of commitment evident in the participants of the study could arguably be representative of the rest of the population that attends the DRC Retreats. Thus there might be people who benefit the most in terms of the change processes that occur with them personally and there might be others who are less engaged and therefore fail to

benefit from the retreat. The engagement and the disengagement evident on Day 4 highlighted for me the human dynamic of why some engage and why others begin to disengage in the retreat.

As with most therapy, I began to notice that at least half of the participants lie on the lower end of the continuum in terms of their engagement in the Retreat. I began to see parallels in my journey as a therapist trainee where I engaged in the therapeutic dance of going in and out of engagement, particularly when I encountered confronting issues. So participants' struggle resonated with my own struggle at opening up to issues in my life. A part of me was in admiration of those who had greatly opened themselves. Another part of me was envious at the progress they had made within so short a time.

### **9.3. Discussion on Counselling**

The theme '*Counselling*' was gleaned from participants' experience as evidenced in their narratives. Counselling was the structural requirement of the DRC schedule for Day 4. All except Seby, who absented himself, talked about '*counselling*'. Nadine, who interlaced her narratives across the days with a description of what transpired structurally on each day, reported that she had the '*counselling session today*' thereby highlighting the predominant focus of the day.

Hunter (2009) observes that the scriptural focus in counselling is the characteristic epistemological position of the 'Inner healing' approaches. Because this study investigates the 'Inner Healing Retreat', a similar epistemological position could be assumed of this Retreat. However, the phenomenological investigation adopted by this research suggests that there is a difference to this assumed link in the context of DRC because the focus in the DRC counselling seems to be primarily psychological as evidenced in the following aspects.

Most of the counselling interaction involved participants' human struggles that generated emotions such as anxiety and fear. Participants talked about their life events and their relational

problems which is the material that would form part of any secular counselling context. The healing too was about the hurts and psychological wounds. For example, Remo spoke about his experience of being upstaged by his girlfriend, 27 years ago. Thus the focus seems to be a predominantly psychological focus with an incorporation of occasional scriptural references.

Furthermore, participants' reports leaked out the employment of psychological techniques by the counsellors. They could be perceived as simple psychological techniques or as being informed by some secular psychological orientations such as Transactional Analysis and Psychodynamics. For example, the counsellor challenged Lyn with '*you are not a child anymore*'. From a Transactional Analysis perspective, such an invitation may imply an invitation to Lyn to examine the transactions between the adult and the child in her and to let the adult in her take control of the functioning of her personality. From a psychodynamic perspective, the counsellor's non-verbal behaviour before Rosanna could possibly be an astute stance adopted to provoke the client into a 'split' of her personality (Book, 2007), thereby seeking to counter what appears to be a overly self-centered orientation. Thus arguably, the individual counsellors may have integrated strategies from other secular psychotherapies.

The above discussion highlights the psychological focus that prevails in a DRC counselling session. Some of the participants were invited to read and honour the scriptures and to learn from them. The analysis on Remo is an example.

Thus the psychological and the spiritual are explicitly integrated in the counselling phase at DRC. DRC is a religious programme where an individual is invited to make a surrender of one's life to God and develop a relationship with God. The rituals, the preaching and the activities across the days bear this religious frame. So from an overall retreat perspective, the intended emphasis is to lead the participants into a relationship with God. But how this is

accomplished in the DRC context seems to be predominantly through a focus on addressing the psychological wounds arising from one's history. The improvised ritual of the Eucharist from which Nadine and Lyn benefited is one such instance. The counselling session is another where the individual is challenged on the Shadow aspects by the counsellor. It is an accomplishment that probably would not have been achieved by the participants themselves.

The above discussion also highlights the integration of the spiritual and the psychological content in the counselling interaction at DRC. Watlington and Murphy (2006) observe that understanding the religious and spiritual aspects of the client are critical for effective multicultural counselling. Such an observation, although made in an African context, is relevant to the Indian context of this study. Ten million people to date have attended the DRC Retreats over a decade. Taking into account the reality of the total Catholic population of India which approximates about 20 million people, such an attendance figure is a very significant proportion of the Catholic population. Apparently, DRC has become a very significant spiritual resource to the Indian Catholic. In addition, the huge attendance numbers endorse the fact that spirituality is an important component of the Indian mind and therefore counselling the Indian Catholic mind at least, warrants a familiarity with spirituality. Given the fact that counselling is not as popular in India as in the West, it could be safely assumed that for many Catholics, such as the participants of this study, DRC is the therapy they seek to resolve their issues. Carmo for example came for a *'peace of mind'*, a DRC parallel to the reason people go for counselling in the secular context.

A significant psychological role that counselling at DRC appears to address is to assist participants to process their Shadow material. While the 'Confession' on Day 3 gave them the opportunity to examine their sins and share it with the priest, the process was voluntary which

meant that they could choose to disclose at will, sharing only what is comfortable. What was distressing may have been avoided. In addition, the priest may have only comforted and reassured them. So the counselling which has a significant place in the excavation of personal wounded-ness seems to have challenged the participants on their Shadow material, at least in the case of Rosanna and Lyn. For example, Lyn was challenged with '*you are not a child anymore; you are old enough to make your own decisions*'. Implicitly the counsellor was prodding as well as inviting her to a level of emotional differentiation in her life, a movement away from emotional overdependence on her family (Clarkson, 1999; MacKewn, 2002). Brennan reported that the conversation moved into a discussion of '*darknesses*' in his spousal relationship although he did not reveal the details of it, suggesting that the content was too personal to expose.

### **9.3.1. 'Anxious anticipation' of Counselling**

This subtheme captures participants' preoccupation with the counsellor. Rose et al. (2008) note that Christians are known for such a concern. Perhaps this disposition is an outcome of the higher esteem and higher expectations Christians have of their counsellors (Godwin & Crouch, 1989; Pecnick & Epperson, 1985). But such a regard might imply that Christians experience a level of fear towards therapy as observed by Keating and Fretz (1990). This emotion of fear seems to explain the anxious anticipation of the counselling session by the participants of this study. Another pertinent perspective is that of Quackenbos, Privette and Klentz (1985) who suggest that potential clients may avoid going to Christian counsellors because of the prevailing prejudice that these counsellors are less flexible and inclined to promote their own values. Remo's initial struggle with counselling seems to be related to such a possibility. He was shielding himself from the ensuing anxiety associated with the feeling of being pressured by the counsellor into doing something that was not of his choice. Johnson and Seby also seemed to

have had similar anxiety about the counsellor and managed it by avoiding counselling.

The '*anxious anticipation*' that participants experienced could also be related to their fear of being exposed in their Shadow aspects. The anxiety was possibly associated with the level of detail and disclosure that they could be challenged into by the counsellor. Reportedly, Rosanna, Lyn and Seby had a prior experience of counselling before coming to DRC and may have experienced distress. Hence some of them wanted to ensure safety. Rosanna, for example, wanted to ensure that she got a counsellor who would '*put his or her self in my shoes*'. She was looking for '*understanding*' and '*empathy*' in her counsellor. These are characteristics that are expected of a counsellor even in the secular context (Rose, et al., 2008).

### **9.3.2. 'Feeling Challenged' during the Counselling**

'Feeling challenged' highlights participants' experience of the counselling interaction. Challenge is part of some psychotherapeutic orientations. For example, choice therapy concerns itself with challenging a client's behaviour (Glasser, 2000). Other orientations, such as psychoanalysis and psychodynamics, actively use the more severe form of challenge, namely confrontation to promote insight and growth (Raab, 2007; Shafranske, 2009). However, irrespective of the orientation, it appears challenge has its place for effecting change in therapy in general, particularly if it is employed with respect and care (Egan, 2002). Philpott (2009) notes that challenge offered with sufficient support and empathy ensures a beneficial effect on the individual. Participants' reports highlight the effectiveness of challenge.

Apart from the psychotherapeutic environment where challenge finds a place, it is also used in religious contexts. Tummala-Narra (2009) perceives challenge as a meeting point between psychoanalysis and the Catholic faith because both of them engage in an honest confrontation of the self. In Charismatic circles being confronted is known as the Charismatic

grace through which the individual then moves to an encounter with Christ (Mahoney & Pargament, 2004). Perhaps such an encounter becomes possible because through the challenge the person is forced to recognize the influence of the ego (MacKenna, 2009). Rosanna, for example, had this growing awareness of her inflated ego. When the counsellor held her accountable to her own standards, a strategy employed in some therapy circles (Sparrow, 2008), she recognized that she had inflated her ego with a sense of *'superiority'*.

Overall, the confrontation became for Rosanna, what Lofland and Stark (1965) identify as the turning point. At first the counsellor did not seem to buy into her sob story. As if that was not enough, the counsellor destabilised her self-definition by confronting her with, *'Who do you think you are? You are not as good as you think you are'*. This challenge probably led to a collapse of her world-view. Her sob story would have generated, maintained and defended that world-view of a victim. This collapse is highlighted in her expression of helplessness. Consequently she sought help. This collapse of her worldview was a culmination of the process that had begun on Day 2 when she reported wondering *'Where do I draw the line because in God it is supposed to be all or nothing'*. She had protected her worldview of a victim through building *'walls'* and through engagement in *'rock music'* and *'alcohol'*. It was possibly a realization of what she was doing in her life. She felt invited to place God at the centre of her life. The counsellor's indication about the lack of prayer in her life suggests a reference to a relationship with God. Pargament and Mahoney (2005) point out that it is the task of pastoral counselling to challenge clients when realities other than God usurp the centre of their lives. The challenge was also to help her recognize her need for others (Vitz & Meade, 2011). Rosanna had learnt to trust only herself for she had kept herself locked behind the *'walls'* to protect herself. It appears the counselling had confronted her on her false pride which according to Mahoney and Pargament

(2004) is a critical trigger warranted in spiritual conversion. It was a call to move from a stance of self-reliance and self-sufficiency to recognizing her neediness of others.

Another notable change that is apparent in Rosanna's narratives, but could be presumed in psychodynamic terms, is at the level of her internalised representations (Badenoch, 2011; Book, 2007; Horowitz, 1988). The experience of sexual molestation by her cousin seemed to have impacted her severely for she claimed on Day 4 that it was a '*major shaping block of my life*'. This quote suggests that Rosanna internalised this experience and that it became a point of reference, which she used to make meaning of the rest of her life and perhaps even to protect herself. Therefore it could be assumed; that this narrative would have impacted her internal mental model of men on the whole. On Day 2 she disclosed that she had considered becoming a nun. Such a choice was possibly to avoid further contact with men. Then on Day 3, she had admitted to engaging in a projective process that had sexual overtones with the priest in the Confessional. Besides, she had recognized how her strategy of un-forgiveness had imprisoned her rather than liberate her as she had expected. By Day 4 she had recognized that this strategy had failed her. This realisation had moved her to recognize that she needed to forgive herself and also to forgive the cousin who had molested her. It was a desire that warranted an alteration in her mental model.

The variations across participants such as Carmo highlight the reality that the counselling interaction can be manoeuvred by the participant. His case also illustrates the phenomenological orientation of some of the other counsellors. The counsellor seems to have recognized Carmo's strategy and suggested to him that by '*the end of the day*' he would '*find a way to read the Bible*'. Perhaps it was a subtle appeal to him to bring more serious issues into counselling than the impersonal issue of learning to read the Bible.



Lyn also reported on how the challenge during the counselling felt for her. Her description of this experience appears to resonate with Badenoch's (2011) notion of "disconfirming experience" (p. 189). Such an experience refers to the change effected in the counselee at a sensory level through the sober presence of the counsellor such that it contradicts the counselee's internalised relational experience. Although Lyn did not provide a detailed description of her sensory experience, the reference to sitting with the counsellor and the counsellor *'picking up the burden' 'as if you felt like'* suggests a visceral awareness of the change experienced by her at the sensory level.

### **9.3.3. The after-experience of Counselling**

Guthrie and Stickley (2008) report on the disdain over spiritualization of problems by some clients. They point out that such an attitude could be a reflection of the wider sceptical attitude in mainstream psychology towards religion. Perhaps Remo's reservations about the biblical reference to his problems could have been related to such an assumption that the counsellor would spiritualise his problems. Perhaps he was looking for a more concrete solution that was psychological in nature. However, some of the narratives of this study, for example, that of Rosanna and Nadine are counter evidence to such claims. Although she felt dismissed initially, Rosanna reported feeling *'happy'* and *'joyful'* and *'completely cleansed'* at the end of the session as highlighted in the third subtheme: *after-experience of counselling*. Such positive feelings were experienced in spite of her problems being spiritualized for she was being told that her problems had their origins in her lack of prayer. Nadine also accepted the biblically oriented recommendations of the counsellor.

## **Chapter 10: Theme 6 - 'Inner Healing'**

### **10.1. Analysis on 'Inner Healing'**

On Day 5, most of the participants reported experiencing varied changes during the two phases of the 'Inner healing' session and concomitant to these phases was an experience of dawning awareness about themselves. This was the "initial tentative hypothesis" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 31) generated iteratively for Day 5.

The following is the generic text for Day 5. Most participants reported experiencing varied changes during the two phases of the 'Inner healing' session, namely 'revisiting the wounded past' and 'Name calling'. Following these two phases, they had a dawning awareness about themselves. The first phase involved a focus on their past, particularly their wounded past, in the effort to heal it. During this second phase, most of the participants experienced a bodily felt healing, which began as physical pain followed by an alleviation of it together with a sense of psychological relief. During the second phase participants reported envisaging a new future for themselves with a sense of purpose and direction. They also reported a dawning awareness whereby they engaged in a reflective process that occurred concomitantly during and after the two phases. Owing to the 'Inner healing' process, most participants seemed to experienced a healing to their wounded past and discovered a meaning to their struggles.

As with the previous two super-ordinate themes, this theme of 'Inner Healing' is presented with three different core extracts that represent the two different phases of the 'Inner healing' strategy at DRC, together with the experience of dawning awareness. The purpose of such a presentation is to remain faithful to the phenomenological experience of the participants as it unfolded across Day 5. Together, the variations on these three subthemes are also presented.

### 10.1.1. Revisiting the wounded past

Following the inputs from the preaching, participants revisited their past through their imagination. Seemingly they were accessing their memories. Some could access their memories and eventually found a psychological relief whereas others experienced difficulties. Those participants who could access their memories experienced physical pain which seems consistent with emotional distress and physical manifestation.

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies participants' experience of the first phase of revisiting the wounded past. The following quote highlights Lyn's experience of revisiting her wounded past.

*L 5:...and Father had told us like, you know, you close your eyes and also I closed my eyes and I felt as if someone was taking a screwdriver and piercing it in my heart (pointing to the heart), like really hard, it felt that piercing feeling like, terrible pain...I felt it physically and it hurt so badly I could not breathe because every time I took a breath it would like pierce all the more and it hurt so badly.*

*...and Father was just saying forgive this one and get this out of you and do the breathing and everything, and I do not know for myself I felt like as if I was floating so I do not know, I was crying that time bitterly and I only realized when my tears fell on my hands and I felt my hands wet that is when I wondered why my hands were wet and I touched my cheek and I felt my tears and I was shocked, I'm like, why am I crying? I'm not feeling that I'm crying and by the time that's, that part of the Inner Healing got over I realized that this weird feeling, the pain, the piercing pain that excruciating pain I had in me just disappeared I said I did not think that I would cry, I did not know what the pain*

*was and maybe it was just to get that little feeling, that little fear that little setback I had in me to get it out...*

Lyn began her narrative about her 'Inner healing' experience by providing the context.

The reference to '*Father had told us*' refers to the inputs from the preacher directing the participants to '*close their eyes*'. It seems to have been an invitation to shut their physical eyes to the external environment so that they could connect imaginatively with their past. However, unlike some others who provided details about the imagery employed by the preachers, Lyn did not declare much about it. For example, Remo leaked out details of the imagery used on Day 5, when he stated, '*Father started about your negativity in your past starting from the womb of your mother till, from till today*'. Nadine provided further details about it. In her words, '*Father...said that drops of blood of Christ falling just imagine you are below the cross, drops of blood are flowing from this and passing through your body*'. She also added that '*we had to close our eyes and think that Jesus was in a white robe and a red stole kind of thing approaching towards you, placed his right hand on your shoulder and told you that, you are the, you are my loving child, you know don't worry about your past*'.

Across the days, Lyn had reported on what appeared to be very intense experiences of physical abuse in her teenage years. On Day 5 itself, she reported that her sister '*took a long stick and she banged me really badly I was unconscious for two days, just recently before coming here and my entire thigh was swollen up with all the marks and the trashes*'. Besides her '*dad also sometime back, he had beaten me up so badly. He caught my head banged it to the wall, I had two blood clots in my head*' following which she was '*locked up in a room*' and '*she couldn't go to the bathroom*'. Against this background, her effort at closing her eyes and connecting with her memories seems to have connected her with her physically activated sensation as suggested by

the reference to *'I felt it physically'*. The activation seems to have been intense and felt like the movement of a *'screwdriver'*. The word *'piercing'* probably captured for her the physically felt movement of the *'screwdriver'*. She was particular to highlight the physical reality of this experience through identifying the location of this physically felt experience which was in the area of her *'heart'*. Besides she also used her hand to draw my attention to the area of her heart. Noticing the sensation around her heart was a significant awareness of what seemed like a bodily held memory. Notably, she did not explain the reference to *'someone'*. It was possibly a reference to her sense of an external agency executing the movement of the screwdriver.

She made an effort to highlight the intensity of this experience through the use of words such as, *'really hard'*, *'terrible'* and later on *'excruciating'*. The experience was one of *'pain'* which felt so intense that it choked her for she felt that she could not *'breathe'*. It was as if her whole body was squeezing from the middle of her body and thereby choking her breath. In the midst of this apparent suffocation, she had made efforts to stay alive as she sought to support herself by making conscious efforts to breathe. She discovered that such efforts intensified her pain to such an extent that *'it hurt so badly'*.

It appears the preacher then invited the participants to forgive all those who they thought were the perpetrators. The identification of *'this one'* and *'that one'* suggests that in her mind, Lyn was considering who she should forgive. It appears the preacher was aware of participants' experience of choking on their breath. Hence included in the directives for forgiveness were directives to *'do the breathing'* so as to facilitate the release of the bodily held activation. At this stage she did not elaborate on what the *'get this out of you'* meant. However gleaning from across the narratives of other participants of the day, the *'this'* could have been an allusion to release the bodily held memories. Her experience of responding to these directives was one of *'floating'*

which possibly was a reference to a dissociative instance following the flooding and thereby the overwhelm arising from the bodily activations.

It appears the use of imagery had finally pierced through and empowered her to stay in touch with her tears so that she could release them. It is unmistakable in her narratives across the days that she was uncomfortable with her tears. For example, on Day 2, she had *'found myself in tears'* about which she was *'surprised'* because *'I didn't expect it to happen'*. On Day 3 because her *'mother was next to me and I'm not on good terms with her'* she had restrained her tears when she actually *'wanted to just stand there and cry till whatever is there in me comes out'*. This occurred before the *'Host'* in the improvised ritual at the Mass. However, with just *'two tears'* that she shed, which probably was a figurative allusion to a few tears, she had *'felt free'*.

So it is significant that on Day 5 she admitted to *'crying at that time bitterly'*. As the above paragraph highlights she seems to have had difficulty with staying present to her tears. The use of the word *'bitterly'* suggests an intensely felt crying expression as if it emanated from her guts. The bitterness could have possibly been related to her sob story of feeling victimized in her family. However no sooner had she disclosed the experience she then contradicted herself saying *'I'm not feeling that I'm crying'*. The tears reflected her vulnerability but it appears she was uncomfortable with it. No wonder then that she was *'shocked'* by her tears. It was as if she had all the evidence before her, namely that of *'wet'* hands and *'tears'* on her *'cheeks'* yet she could not believe that she had cried. She had not expected that *'she would cry'* and yet she had cried. She passed a summative verdict on her experience of crying by claiming that it was *'maybe just to get that little feeling, that little fear, that little setback'*. The use of the word *'little'* used three times probably reflects an attitude of minimizing feelings. Given her narrative of how she was victimized in her family, the use of the word *'little'* possibly reflects the lack of emotional

validation she may have experienced in her family. It was as if she was implicitly saying, 'I know holding back my feeling is actually wrecking me emotionally. I would like to express how I feel. However I might not be validated. So the best solution is to admit to only a 'little' feeling for at least that way I might find some validation from my family members'.

Interestingly, what appears to have occurred as a result of the *'bitterly'* felt *'crying'* was a release of the physical pain she had experienced at the beginning of the session. In her own words it *'just disappeared'*. It was as if the pain that had begun with the 'Inner healing' session had been alleviated after she had released her tears.

Rosanna reported difficulties with following the preacher's directives to *'visualize'* her past. She implicitly indicated that she took the invitation to *'visualize'* as meaning an invitation to revisit her experience of molestation in her childhood. She had disclosed on Day 3 that there is a *'whole sexual matter running through my life because when I was a kid, I was in the 2nd standard I was molested by my cousin'*. She *'tried'* and *'tried'* but *'couldn't'* revisit this memory. She wondered about this difficulty. At first she thought that the memory could have *'completely gone away'*. She then *'tried to, I forced myself to kind of, bring back that pain and I felt the tightening within my chest'*. The reference to *'bring back that pain'* followed by *'I felt the tightening'* suggests that she had established a link between the memory of her early sexual abuse and the pain. Unlike in the case of Lyn where the pain seems to have emerged in the moment, Rosanna was seeking to re-experience this pain suggesting that she was familiar with it.

Apparently, Rosanna had borne the pain longer than Lyn given that the incident of sexual abuse occurred in her childhood. Lyn described the pain as *'terrible,' 'excruciating'* and *'piercing'* like a *'screwdriver'* whereas Rosanna did not provide details about the intensity of her pain. However her wondering whether it was a *'heart attack'* suggests an intense level of pain. It could

be that she had grown familiar with the pain such that mentioning the intensity of the pain did not occur to her. It was only after she had located the pain in her body which she discovered was on the *'side'* that she felt reassured. A friend had told her that with a heart attack the pain is *'always on the centre'* and *'never on the side'*. At the end when she followed the directives of the preacher to imagine the *'blood of Jesus flowing'* into her body, she noticed that the pain *'disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared'*. The imagery seems to have served as a resource to the bodily activated memory. She did not mention the emotional aspect of that experience when she described her bodily experience. However her references to the *'walls,' 'seeking protection'* and *'feeling imprisoned'* mentioned on Day 4 suggest efforts at self-protection from shame, from her Shadow being exposed to others. The sense of validation that she experienced from Jesus via the imagery may have made a difference to that feeling.

Interestingly Carmo, who appeared to have withdrawn from the retreat, also reported a physically felt experience during which he experienced a physical release of his little finger. It seems owing to his many *'accidents'* about which he leaked out little information across the days, his fingers had stiffened and *'most of them don't bend'*. However during the session, he noticed that his little finger *'which was never coming down'* could be fully bent. He demonstrated the breaking of his knuckles before me thereby seeking to substantiate his claim that he had experienced a bodily felt experience of healing.

Remo provided some details about the imaginative process adopted by the preacher. These details were not reported by any of the other participants. The revisiting of memories involved *'starting from the womb of your mother, from till today'*. He had experienced a series of intense and impactful experiences in his childhood. At first his mother *'died just after my birth'* who he does not *'remember seeing'* and whose love he *'never felt'*. His father's presence did not



last long because his father *'handed over me to his brother'*. This experience had left him *'shattered and broken'* because his uncle had subsequently sent him away to a *'boarding'* because his *'aunty doesn't want to keep me in their home'*. He later joined the seminary but when he left the seminary and came back to his uncle's home, he was *'bashed up miserably because I left the seminary without'* his uncle and aunt's *'consent'*. Later, he *'fell in love with someone but she rejected me'*.

All the above background suggests that he had experienced disconnection with significant people in his life. Revisiting these experiences of rejection was painful such that he *'broke down and I wept bitterly but not inconsolably'*. It appears like Lyn, it was a cry emanating from his guts. As he cried, he reported a bodily felt sensation that *'someone touched me'*. He also reported that *'I had Jesus touching me, touching my heart'*. It was not clear whether the touch was an external touch of another human being or whether it was an imaginative experience of feeling touched by Jesus. Quite possibly it was an imaginative experience because from Nadine's account, it appears that the participants were invited to imagine *'Jesus was in a white robe and a red stole kind of thing approaching towards you, placed his right hand on your shoulder'*. Arguably, such a felt sense of being touched is consistent as a response to the imaginative experience of Jesus facilitated by the preacher. Besides, on Day 6 he recounted that *'I had felt the real presence of Jesus yesterday consoling me'* and then again *'yesterday I could feel that he is there next to me'*. The reference to touch and then feeling the presence of Jesus next to him was significant in his case given his background of disconnection as highlighted above. Hence from the above, it is could be argued that the felt touch was an imaginative experience and that it was a touch of Jesus. However this touch was real for him as he disclosed on Day 6. He had not known love and care from his mother, father and uncle. *'Touching my heart'* suggests that he had

a sensory experience which was real for him. Furthermore, he reported experiencing a *'joy within me'*. He repeated this claim in the course of the interview, saying *'I was feeling great joy in my heart, I can't believe it'*. Inspired by the preacher, he linked this joy to the Holy Spirit, for the preacher had indicated that *'when Holy Spirit touches you, you get the joy'*. Notably, Remo was the only participant who established such a link between personal experience and the Holy Spirit. For both Lyn and Rosanna, the alleviation of pain was linked to their experience of the healing presence of Jesus whereas for Remo, his experience of joy was linked to the healing work of the Holy Spirit.

While Lyn, Rosanna, Carmo and Remo included bodily felt activations in their experience of revisiting their past, such a bodily felt focus was missing from the narrative of Nadine. Instead she spoke about the psychological aspects of her experience. As in the case of Lyn, Nadine reported crying when she attempted to revisit her past. However she appears to have managed the imaginative process comparatively easier than Lyn. When the preacher directed the participants to imagine Jesus *'approaching toward(s)'* them and placing *'his right hand on your shoulder'* and telling them that *'you are my loving child you know don't worry about the past'* Nadine *'was crying'*. Thus, although the preacher's directive involved bodily ingredients such as a *'hand on the shoulder'*, she did not report how it felt for her bodily except for the reference to *'crying'*, suggesting a release of tears. She did not also provide details about the intensity of her crying. However when I enquired about the *'crying'*, she reported it was about her *'guilt'* and the *'remorse'* that she had felt for her *'sins'*. The reference to sins seemed to be the *'sexual talks'* with her *'boyfriends'* who she thought would eventually marry her. She closed the narrative about her *'Inner healing'* by claiming that it was *'such a nice thing'* because it was God *'telling me not to worry'*. This closing remark seems to suggest a personally felt reassurance from God. However

what was not explicit was whether such a reassurance had resulted in a difference to her sense of guilt and remorse.

Brennan did not provide details about his experience during the 'Inner healing' session. Rather he made global remarks about how he felt encouraged by hearing about others being healed. He claimed, *'I benefited from it'*.

It appears Johnson, unlike others, had difficulties imagining his past. He reported being distracted during the first phase of imaginatively revisiting his past. When he attempted to revisit his past, *'for some reason I pictured a snake, a big fat snake in my mind'*. When he opened his eyes, probably to move out of his distraction, he discovered with his physical eyes that the snake had *'wound up around the metal thing'* on the roof. He seems to have spent the rest of the time cogitating about the snake and wondering about what would happen if the snake had to fall *'down'* and *'bite us'*. Interestingly he was not embarrassed to disclose this experience but reported it as a matter of fact suggesting that he had found a level of safety with me.

Seby did not attend the session. He spent time seeking an *'appointment'* with the Director *'in his office'*.

### **10.1.2. 'Name calling'**

This subtheme captures the second phase of the 'Inner healing' experience. 'Name Calling' was an in vivo reference by the participants to this phase of the process. The first phase had led the participants into revisiting their wounded past which was followed by this phase of 'Name Calling'. The 'Name calling' was about a new commission for life. The two phases on Day 5 appear to be interlinked experientially. The latter is impossible and has no import without the former. It was as if their wounded past was engaged with the intent of healing it so that the person could consequently be empowered to face the future with confidence and resoluteness.

Some of the participants seem to have emerged out of the second phase with a new found sense of self. Four of the eight participants reported on this 'Name calling' phase during which participants' names were called out by the preacher. They were then given varied messages: such as being advised on a future course of action, to being reassured and given a sense of hope.

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies participants' experience of the second phase of 'Name calling'. The following quote highlights Lyn's experience of 'Name calling':

*...Father starts calling out names and says that these are the names the Lord has chosen, he just closes his eyes and names come to his mind, and he says I'm praying for these people and the Lord has said such and such message so people's name started getting called...*

*...then he called my name out and he said it so clearly and he said, Lyn, today your family is receiving salvation because the Lord is in you, he has touched you and I was so touched with that I said I never thought someone who would never believe in God, I never thought that the Lord would actually drown himself in you, I never knew that someone would ever forgive me so much, I knew the Lord forgive me but I didn't know he would forgive me so much, he actually put himself in me and not just gave salvation for me, but for my own family, a family that I had no hope in, a family that I actually said I hated, but the Lord said he is saving my entire family which meant that I have something to do with my family...*

Lyn prefaced the second phase of the 'Inner healing' process with an introduction to the context as the first paragraph of her quote indicates. The preacher called out names of the participants and suggested to them that they have been 'chosen' by 'the Lord' which possibly was

a reference to Jesus Christ. Her statement that *'names come to'* the preacher's *'mind'* might have been an allusion to Jesus communicating with the preacher. She did explicitly establish such a link by quoting the preacher who said, *'I'm praying for these people and the Lord has said such and such message so people's name started getting called'*.

When the preacher called out her name and gave her the message which she heard *'so clearly'*, she apparently considered it as coming from God. She quoted the preachers' words, *'today your family is receiving salvation because the Lord is in you, he has touched you'*. These words of the preacher seem to have given her a tangible sense of the presence of Jesus as suggested by the words *'I was so touched'* and *'the Lord would drown himself in you'* and *'he actually put himself in me'*. Feeling *'touched'* suggests an emotional as well as a visceral tone to the experience. In very succinct words, she highlighted a contrast between what appears to be a previously held and a new found perspective about God. Prior to the retreat, she did not *'believe in God'*. Having gone through the retreat, she had come to assume that *'the Lord would forgive me'*. She had possibly thought to herself that this would occur at some remote time and not as quickly as it did. The reality of forgiveness from God, to her surprise, became a very present reality to her as suggested by her statement, *'I didn't know he would forgive me so much'* that *'he actually put himself in me'*. The latter statement, *'put himself in me'*, suggests a felt presence of Jesus in her. It appears she felt forgiven by God. The words of the preacher that *'the Lord is in you'*, seem to have reassured her of being forgiven by God. She seems to have established a link between being forgiven by God and feeling God's presence within her. Thus this 'Name calling' by the preacher appears to have given Lyn a very real and concrete sense of being forgiven by God, such that she felt God came to be with her. Thus forgiveness had become a present reality to her. It appears to have given her a sense of self-validation.

The 'Name calling' phase seems to have altered her sense of self. She had disclosed on prior days that she felt '*worthless*' because '*I couldn't get love from her family members*'. In the eyes of her family members '*I am still the one who is always thought bad about*'. She had felt '*unwanted*' and had attempted suicide six times, suggesting that she had lost her sense of purpose for living. So the preacher's words made a significant difference to her because it countered that narrative about herself in relation to her family members. Subsequently, she discovered a purpose for her existence as implied in the words '*I have something to do with my family*'. This new found purpose was to be accomplished in relation to her family members whom she '*hated*' and had '*no hope in*'. To be unwanted and then to feel being chosen was noticeably a significant shift in her sense of self. She declared, '*I know that through, after these five people I am going to get many more back*'.

For Johnson, the message in the 'Name calling' activity was '*not to worry because he is there for you'll he is there right now with you'll do not doubt*'. He was particular to assert that '*precise these are the words*' that were uttered. He reported feeling '*happy and not shocked*'. He corrected himself by saying '*I was very awed actually; I was like it's an awesome experience*'. When queried about the awesomeness, he revealed that, '*God kept me alive*' in spite of his '*accidents*' and '*prison*', '*probably to serve him in a way*' which he was not clear about. Like Lyn, Johnson began to perceive a new sense of self. He had discovered a sense of purpose to all the misfortune that had occurred to him. However, unlike Lyn, he did not '*know right now what it*', namely the purpose, '*could be*'.

Like Lyn and Johnson, Nadine too reported feeling a new sense of self following the preachers' declaration that, '*you are my loving child you know don't worry about your past*'. This message deeply impacted her which explains why she '*was crying that time*'. Across the days she

had revealed a preoccupation with guilt. Beginning from Day 1, she had reported feeling guilty and remorseful for her past. She wished from hindsight that she had *'said no'* to the sexual intimations of her boyfriends. So being called *'my loving child'* possibly affirmed her sense of self as she felt accepted by God. Her closing comment that the message *'made me feel very nice'* suggests a sense of relief from the burden she had felt. It was possibly a reference to feeling good about herself because she had discovered that her fear that God would distance from her, had been unfounded.

Unlike other participants, Rosanna expressed feeling uncertain about whether the name *'Rosanne'* which was called out by the preacher referred to her. Knowing that there were two other participants at the retreat with the same name only intensified her doubts about whether it was about her. So it appears she turned the occasion into an opportunity. She talked herself into believing that it was about her. She *'said to myself ok this is a miracle'* that *'God is exposing me to'*. So after she *'felt this certainty'* that it was about her, she took it as an opportunity for a physical healing of her *'blurry'* eyesight owing to which she had to wear *'contact lenses'*. So she *'took off my lenses and I dropped them on the floor'*. Unfortunately no *'physical healing took place'*. But what this act led to was quite unexpected. It opened the *'flood gates'* of *'all that pent-up emotion that I could not express in these last couple of days'*. The use of the metaphor *'opened the floodgates'* indicates her awareness that she was restraining her emotions. Consequently, she *'cried like a child because at that point of time what I felt was utter helplessness'*. It appears the act of dropping her lenses *'on the floor'* had got her in touch with her vulnerability for she felt *'utter helplessness'*. In her own words, she had thought that she *'was on a pedestal'* when she came to the retreat. But now she realized that her sense of *'superiority'* was unreal and that she was *'one tiny speck in the universe between in the presence of a great and almighty presence'*. It

was as if the experience had forced her into an ownership of her limitations as a human being and thereby her neediness for God and others. Thus Rosanna too had encountered a new sense of self, which gave her a level of humility that was missing before, for she used to mask herself with a sense of superiority.

Brennan, Remo, Carmo and Seby did not explicitly refer to their 'Name calling' experience although all of them would have gone through the second phase as expected from the participants of the Retreat.

### **10.1.3. A dawning awareness**

This subtheme highlights participants' personal appropriation of the 'Inner healing' process. At first glance it appears that this appropriation occurred after the two phases of the 'Inner healing' because they were making this reflection before me at the end of the day. However, it is highly possible that the appropriation was more of an awareness that dawned on them across the two phases and across the rest of the day. Thus while participants were distinct about the two phases, the '*dawning awareness*' which seemingly was their meaning making of the two phases was possibly intertwined. The word '*dawning*' highlights this gradual evolution of the reflective process as a result of which they began to integrate those experiences and make meaning of their struggles and crises, the primary reason they had come to DRC.

This appropriating activity is isolated through this subtheme because doing so highlights its significance. Participants made contrasting global comments about their past and future. Metaphorically, the idea of the '*dawning*' suggests that there was darkness when they arrived at the Retreat. But by Day 5, it was as if the sun had begun to dawn. Although it expired in time, aspects of the first phase would have merged into the second phase through this dawning



awareness. So this subtheme highlights participants' progressive realization and their differentiation of the implications of the 'Inner healing' experience.

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies participants' experience of dawning awareness. The following quote highlights Lyn's experience of dawning experience:

*...I thought that it would take time for the Lord to work such a miracle for me to actually have so much affection to my family after so much hatred, I didn't know, it would happen in just maybe two hours but it did and I don't know, I feel, I don't have any hatred towards my father anymore, he might have been wrong but I forgive him, my sister might have been wrong I forgive her...*

*...I was having a very bad relationship with my mother, I do not know what was happening after the Inner Healing retreat my mother just held me tight in front of everyone and I did not think anything that day, I did not see people are watching I just held her too and she cried, and we both cried so badly hugging each other and both of us apologized that time saying that we are sorry for everything in the past and she said thank you that, through you the Lord has at least touched me.*

*...and the very fact that the Lord along with me has given salvation to my family has obviously proved that I should not move away from them, more than anyone else on earth they need me, he has sent me to that family for a purpose, maybe because they are so hurt, they tried hurting me but then I know now that they are hurt and I need to heal them and maybe he has sent me for that...*

*...and I was happy because I suffered, at least I gained something out of suffering I lost*

*nothing...I know I'm the chosen one, I know I'm not unwanted anymore like that was the initial feeling I came here with.*

*...worthy, of a lot things of, I would consider myself to be God's special one (the tone lowers), that he sent me down for a reason and this was the same reason why all the six times I attempted suicide, I did not succeed... now I realize why the Lord was not letting me give up my life because he wanted my family, a family of six members, he wanted the rest of them to be saved...I'm feeling very precious like you know, at least I'm made of use so well, so well in such a good way that someone at least is coming close, someone no, another five people are coming close through me that makes a big difference for me, it, it like, answers all the questions I had in life, like why Lord, why me, why this, why am I been blamed...*

The word '*thought*' highlights Lyn's reflective process as suggested by this subtheme, '*dawning awareness*'. The above quotes highlight her realizations which were gradually dawning.

The reference to '*it*' was probably a reference to the emotional contrast she had noticed with herself. She considered it a '*miracle*' that the emotional shift should happen in '*just maybe two hours*'. The observation about the '*two hours*' and calling the occurrence a '*miracle*' suggests a sense of surprise at the speed with which the movement occurred. It appears from her observation about this contrast that prior to the session she had felt '*hatred*' towards '*my family*'. But within '*just maybe two hours*' that were spent in the 'Inner healing' session, she had noticed an emotional change for she felt '*so much affection*'. It appears she did not expect to feel different as quickly as she did. She was particular to endorse her claim by asserting that '*it did*'. Perhaps I had leaked out my doubts about her claim and she was seeking to affirm her position. She

claimed that she did not *'have any hatred towards my father anymore'*. She claimed that she forgave *'him'* including *'my sister'* even though both of them might have *'been wrong'*. It was as if she was saying, 'I am healed of the grudges I have been harbouring and hence I can now accept my family members'. This was possibly damaging to her spirit the whole time. Quite possibly, the sense of being forgiven first as highlighted above would have set into motion this thrust for forgiving others for she had felt forgiven by God. Now she could forgive those who had hurt her which importantly included her father and sister. The past did not matter to her as strongly as it did earlier. She had gained perspective.

Notably, Lyn did not include her mother in her list of people to be forgiven perhaps because she had experienced forgiveness from her as described below. She disclosed that she had *'a very bad relationship'* with her. Yet her desire to forgive others had made its first expression with her mother in the form of *'hugging each other'*. From her words, it appears that she was surprised by her mother for she disclosed that, *'I do not know what was happening after the Inner Healing retreat'*. The initiative seems to have come from her mother as implied in the words, *'my mother just held me tight'* and *'she cried'* followed by *'I just held her too'* as if she was joining in the process that was initiated by her mother. She was particular to mention what she thought about this unexpected development that occurred *'in front of everyone'*. Reportedly, she *'did not think anything that day'* as if that instance of *'hugging'* was an exception to her usual preoccupation with what people might think about her and in this instance the display of affection. She had revealed on Day 2 that because her mother was next to her, she had restrained her tears when she actually wanted to cry. Both these references suggest a preoccupation with people's opinion about herself and her unease with the display of emotion. It was possibly her way of gaining acceptance from others which was important to her because she did not feel

accepted at home. However, in the comfort of her mother's hug, she could stay present to her emotions such that *'both cried so badly hugging each other'*. It was a moment when her usual guard about what others might think had been lowered for she *'did not see'* around, meaning she did not check to see whether *'people are watching'*. She also *'apologized'* to her mother.

Being called to save her family was a message from the preacher. Being thanked by her mother for being instrumental in being *'touched'* by the *'Lord'* would have forcefully endorsed this reality of being called to save her family. This forcefulness was evident in her claim, *'I should not move away from them'* for they need *'me more than anyone else on earth'*. It had given her a new sense of purpose for living. She felt that God *'has sent me to that family for a purpose'* one of which *'may be'* to *'to heal them'*. Until early in the retreat, she had pointed a finger of blame towards her family members about how they were wrong. But now this forcefulness seems to have enabled her to appreciate her family members' treatment of her. The rationale given to her by the counsellor on the previous day that her family members could not love her because they had not received love in their family of origin seems to have aided that appreciation. She expressed this understanding in the words, *'I know now that they are hurt'* and *'because they are so hurt, they tried hurting me'*. Thus she seems to have arrived at a new level of empathy that was previously missing. All that she appeared to feel then was self-pity.

The forcefulness seems to have provided meaning to her suffering. She declared that she felt *'happy because I suffered'* because *'I gained something out of suffering'* and that *'she lost nothing'*. This declaration is a sharp contrast to her narrative of Day 2 when she had claimed that *'I am tired of suffering like this'*, referring to the evidence of how her family members had made her to suffer. It was so painful that she had *'left the house...without telling anyone at home'*. Her family members had *'no idea where I went, why I did, where I was, with whom I was, what I was*

*doing'* until she was traced by her sister and returned home, only to be physically abused by her father for this shameful act of running away from home.

She then disclosed noticing a significant contrast in her self-definition. She claimed *'I know I'm the chosen one, I know I'm not unwanted anymore'* which was the *'feeling I came here with'*. She had revealed on Day 2 that *'at home no one wanted me'* and that she had *'lost all that hope'* of *'staying in a family'* when she realized that *'I have no one with me'*. Obviously, by Day 5 she had changed her narrative about herself and her family. Her mother's initiative at hugging her and expressing gratitude for being the instrument through which the Lord *'touched me'* suggests a change in their relationship. It would probably positively impact Lyn's position in the family. Metaphorically, it was as if she was being moved up the ladder after having lived her life at the bottom of the ladder in her family.

When she revealed her awareness of these contrasts, I sought further clarity about how she felt about herself emotionally. So I enquired *'What are you feeling about yourself?'* To this query she replied that she felt *'worthy of a lot of things'*. She reported that she felt worthy before God which is a contrast to her attitude towards God. She reported on Day 1, that in her desperation for help she had turned to her friend who had asked her whether she had *'called out to the God'*. She had replied that *'I don't believe that he will listen to me'* suggesting that she thought God was disinterested in her. Against this background, her claim that she felt she was *'God's special one'* was noteworthy. Apparently she felt special for being *'sent by God'* into her family *'for a reason'* which was that *'he wanted my family to be saved'*. In her estimation it was *'the same reason'* why she had not died in spite of six attempts at *'suicide'*. This realization had given her a sense that she was *'precious'* and that she was *'made use of so well'*. It had provided her with *'answers'* to *'all the questions'* as to why she had to suffer. A significant suffering was

the allegation of having '*stolen money at home*' about which she had reported on Day 2. It was as if she was saying, 'I used to get singled out at home to be blamed. Now I am going to be singled out to be elevated, to be given a job for God'.

Thus Lyn's experience of 'Inner healing' suggests that there was first a softening of her spirit following the experience of being forgiven by God as highlighted above and subsequently an offering of forgiveness to others.

Remo reported an awareness of a new-felt relationship with God. He had learnt through the preaching that he was a '*child of God*'. However, the teaching seems to have become a personally felt experience as implied in the words '*Jesus consoled me today so I was not weeping inconsolably*'. It was as if he could revisit his past with the reassurance that Jesus was by his side. In addition, he revealed an ownership of his contribution to his problems. He corrected himself when he initially stated that '*today my wife doesn't love me or I don't know, I don't love her, I should not say my wife doesn't love me, I don't love her*'. This statement leaks out his new-found sense of responsibility that he did not '*love her*' which is a significant shift from her earlier stance of blaming her for his problems.

Rosanna revealed her awareness about multiple aspects in her life. She spoke about a new-felt relationship with God. She came to the Retreat thinking she '*was on a pedestal*'. However the Retreat experience had humbled her. She realized that she was '*only a tiny speck in the universe between, in the presence of a great and almighty presence*'. Furthermore, she reported that her '*entire world-view changed*'. She recounted that she had been feeling '*complete emptiness that had to be filled with something*' and '*with no goal, no focus, no direction*'. It was like a '*wallow in the mud*' '*going round and round*' with '*nothing to look forward to*'. But now she had begun to ponder about a time plan for her future. She revealed that it '*occurred to me that,*

*you know I probably need to change the way I spend my time'* and that doing so was *'equal to changing my entire world-view'*. This importantly included filling the *'voids'* with *'prayer'*. Until now she had filled those voids with *'music, with TV you know and things like that'*. It was as if she was implicitly claiming that from being abused and thereby feeling *'imprisoned'* and stuck in the past, she was now looking ahead to her future with a promise.

Brennan claimed that the *'Inner Healing process has really made its way and got into me'*. He became aware that he was searching for *'success,' 'betterment,' 'future growth'* and *'commercial side'* of life instead of the *'the other side'* which from a Christian perspective could be surmised as the temporality of life. He wondered *'what if God strikes you one fine day'*.

Nadine reported feeling *'very light, felt very happy'* after the *'Inner Healing'* session which suggests an experience of a positive emotion as against the earlier negative emotion of *'guilt'*. However she did not provide details.

Johnson reported observing changes with himself. He reported that he was *'a changed person, calmer, quieter'* and that he had *'lost my anger'* which is perhaps suggestive of forgiveness. Lyn had reported a similar shift that she did not feel hatred towards her father and sister. It was as if both were saying that there was a shift in their resentment.

## **10.2. Self-reflexivity on 'Inner Healing'**

After hearing Lyn, I recognized that a remarkable shift had occurred with her on Day 5. Across the retreats, I began to recognise the power of the imaginative process as a therapeutic variable. The narratives of Lyn, Rosanna and Remo evidenced the power of this process in effecting a change in what Rosanna referred to as her *'world-view'*. I recognised that it is a very powerful way to re-experience Christ that I could adopt in my own therapeutic practice as well as

for my own spiritual growth. I wondered whether it was possibly one of the resources that facilitates the passion for Christ evident among most Charismatics.

When Lyn was narrating her experience, I had tears in my eyes. I felt that I was holding her unexpressed emotion of sadness. I noticed the contradiction in her presentation that she could present her narrative without displaying a similar emotional expression. So I drew her attention to this contradiction by declaring '*what stands out for me is a, how shall I put it, a face that doesn't depict what is going on inside*'. She responded saying '*I can bear my own tears but I cannot see anyone in front of me crying*' even if he is '*my biggest enemy*'. I recognized a defensive stance on her part and that she had found a rationale for restraining her tears.

From hindsight I began to see the contrast in Lyn's disposition about the way she spoke about herself across the days. On Day 1 she spoke slowly, softly and presented a sunken frame. However by Day 5 she was enthusiastic as if a new sense of life had emerged for her. Her voice was buoyant and high-pitched. She was speaking faster and appeared confident about herself.

### **10.3. Discussion on 'Inner Healing'**

The Charismatic movement is known to adopt the following journey back methodologies in its Inner Healing practice: imagery, whereby the participant imagines the healing presence of Jesus; discernment of the Spirit, through which spontaneously occurring messages are decoded by the healer; one-to-one counselling and subjectively appropriating biblical passages (Csordas, 1990; Hurding, 1995; E. Jones, 1998). The Catholic Charismatic healers claim that the strength of these methodologies lies in the speed with which they heal an individual of his or her ruptures of the past (Csordas, 1990). Thus, the individual may experience changes such as a healing of the mind, emotions, memories, including benevolent health effects. From participants' narrative it appears that DRC adopts these journey back methodologies as evidenced below.



The first phase of the 'Inner healing' session included the use of imagery whereby participants experienced the healing presence of Jesus. Imagery is used in contemporary psychotherapy (Klinger, 1981; Sheikh, 1984). It is however central to the Catholic Charismatic approach to healing. Divine healing is assumed to occur through the imagery of the healing presence of Jesus (Csordas, 1990). Participants' narratives appeared to attest to such a claim. Nadine provided details about the two different types of imagery adopted by DRC. Participants were required to *'close our eyes and think that Jesus was in a white robe and a red stole kind of thing approaching towards you, placed his right hand on your shoulder'*. Another imagery invited the participants to imagine *'drops of blood of Christ falling, just imagine you are below the cross, drops of blood are flowing from this and passing through your body'*. Thus in both the strategies the imagined healing presence of Jesus seems to be invoked to bring about the healing (Garzon et al., 2009). This imaginative experience which was reported by most participants suggests a projective process at play whereby participants project their own psyche to the imagined or sensory experience and thereby find a resolution (MacKewn, 2002; Phil & Sills, 2001; Polster & Polster, 1973). A recent article on DRC by Jansen and Lang (2012) notes the presence of an intermediate step between the two imageries, namely the prayer of exorcism. Interestingly none of the participants indicated such a step.

The discernment of the Spirit seems to occur during the *'Name calling'* phase when the preachers decode messages from the Spirit and communicate these to the participants. Lyn leaked out such an understanding when she claimed that the preacher said *'I'm praying for these people and the Lord has said such and such message so people's name started getting called'*.

It is only Rosanna who demonstrated an explicit appropriation of the scriptures. She reported being *'reminded of Psalm 23'* when she got in touch with her vulnerability. However she

also admitted to a difficulty with Biblical quotes. According to her, *'it's ironic I can quote, you ask me any literature I can quote Milton, I can quote Shakespeare but when it comes to the Bible I cannot remember the exact words'*. Rosanna's comment might be reflective of most participants' memory about Biblical quotes. This difficulty is probably the reason for the scant references to the scriptures by the rest of the participants.

Some participants' narratives appear to indicate a correction of distorted perceptions of self. Thereby the 'Inner healing' session appears to be an organic process which is fluid and occurs as a result of the reflection rather than as a mechanical process as implied in the notion of reconstruction of self (Hurding, 1995). There seems to be an evolving shift, a dawning awareness on the part of the participants in the understanding of what their life is about.

The references to 'intense experiences' highlighted in the analysis of Lyn, Remo and Rosanna are suggestive of trauma. Trauma seems to have been at the root of these distortions. For example, Lyn had felt unwanted and unworthy prior to the retreat. Her descriptions about feeling *'worthy'*, *'very precious'* and *'God's special one'* highlight a shift in the victim story about herself. Rosanna's distorted perception about herself was that she *'was on a pedestal'* and that she was *'ok'*. However by Day 5, the retreat experience had got her in touch with what appears to be a schema of defectiveness, as implied in her reference to herself that she was not ok. Remo too corrected his distorted perception claiming *'I should not say my wife doesn't love me, I don't love her'*. Thus he seemed to own his sob story as well.

Apart from correcting distorted perceptions of the self, the 'Name calling' phase seems to have served the purpose of commissioning the participants to a promising future. It appears to be the DRC parallel to the call for a mission or vocation as reported in Christian Charismatic circles (Battley, 1986; Martin, 2011). According to Trulear (2007), the call to the mission is an

important feature of the Christian identity. Following the 'Name calling' activity, Lyn and Rosanna for example reported feeling enthused about their future when they discovered a sense of purpose to their life.

The engagement of the body in the work of healing and thereby finding wholeness is unmistakable in the narratives of the participants. Perhaps participants' focus on their bodily felt experience appears to highlight the link established between the body and trauma (P. Ogden, Minton, & Pain, 2006; Scaer, 2007; Solomon & Siegel, 2003). It seems that in the case of Rosanna and Lyn, the trauma had physiological components to it. Perhaps participants' experience of the physical activations when they revisited their traumatic memories through the journey back methodology of imagery was suggestive of such a relationship. Lyn's use of the metaphor of a screwdriver accompanied by adverbs such as '*excruciating*', '*piercing*' and that she '*could not breathe*' suggests a real and physically felt pain. The metaphor of the '*screwdriver*' seems to suggest the recognition of the movement of pain as if it was moving into her body. She reported that this pain disappeared when '*that part of the Inner Healing got over*'. Perhaps the use of imagery highlighted above is a DRC parallel to such an effort to decrease and thereby eliminate the physiological activations associated with trauma. Rosanna reported an appearance and disappearance of pain as highlighted in the analysis. This bodily experience highlights the bodily component of the memories associated with their painful experiences (Monroe & Schwab, 2009). Perhaps the relieving of that pain and consequent alleviation of it through the imagery had undone the bodily felt component altogether such that participants could subsequently recount the experience without having to re-experience the bodily pain again (Badenoch, 2011).

The location of the pain around the area of the heart is an interesting observation of the participants. It highlights the somatic component of that experience. This may be a

phenomenological parallel to the observation of the growing body of literature that has identified the central role of the heart and its encompassing influence on an individual's wellbeing (Luskin, Megan, Newell, Quinn, & Haskell, 2002; McCraty, Atkinson, Tiller, Rein, & Watkins, 1995; McCraty & Childre, 2010; McCraty & Tomasino, 2006; Novosel, 2012; Reich, 2000; Rein, Atkinson, & McCraty, 1995; Rozman, Whitaker, Beckman, & Jones, 1996; Tiller, McCraty, & Atkinson, 1996; Umetani, Singer, McCraty, & Atkinson, 1998). It appears participants were referring to their heart not in a metaphorical sense but in a very literal sense for they used their hand to physically identify the area of the heart.

## **Chapter 11: Theme 7 - 'Baptism in the Spirit'**

### **11.1. Analysis on 'Baptism in the Spirit'**

On Day 6, it seemed that the greater the level of engagement in the Retreat, including an openness to immerse themselves into the Retreat and thereby into one's wounded-ness and struggles, the greater the experience of immersion or 'Baptism in the Spirit'. This immersion is experienced in terms of a bodily, cognitive and felt experience besides bearing a sense of being empowered. This was the "initial tentative hypothesis" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 31) that was generated iteratively after reading and re-reading the transcripts of each participant and is evident in most cases.

The following is the generic text drawn from the accounts of the participants. On Day 6 participants reported on their experiences during the ritual of Anointment. It appears that those participants who had a greater engagement with the inputs of the retreat including openness to re-immense into their wounded-ness and struggles had an immersion or the 'Baptism in the Spirit'. This immersion was experienced phenomenologically as a physical, cognitive and felt experience during the ritual of Anointment. Furthermore these participants also experienced a sense of empowerment. Thus for these participants, the 'Baptism in the Spirit' appears to be an intensification of all that occurred on the previous days. Whereas those participants who failed to immerse themselves in the Retreat including their wounded-ness and struggles across the days did not report a similar experience as the participants referred to above.

The theme of 'Baptism in the Spirit' is presented with the two core extracts that highlight its two facets: namely the bodily, cognitive and felt experience and their sense of empowerment. Such a presentation honours participants' experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit' as it unfolded on Day 6. Together the variations on these two subthemes are also presented.

The retreat ended by the afternoon of Day 6. Most participants had made prior arrangements to leave for home by the afternoon trains. Consequently, most of them seemed preoccupied with their departure and were less forthcoming compared to previous days, which explains why most interviews on Day 6 averaged ten minutes.

### **11.1.1. Bodily, cognitive and felt experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit'**

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies participants' bodily, cognitive and felt experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit'. It is stated simply and then elaborated below. Variations to this experience are presented below. The following quote highlights Remo's bodily, cognitive and felt experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit':

*Well the anointment today was very touchy I was prepared for the anointment and when the time came for the anointment I had just put my, open palms over my knees, thighs, I closed my eyes and I was waiting for the anointment, I could see visions, I tried to imaginarily see vision all these five days, I couldn't see it, tried tried but today without any attempts it came in front of me a face of Jesus and I could see a shining dove, it was just pouring forth on me and before even I could, no before Father could touch me that was later me touched me while I was experiencing this I had a heater running down my body, it was much more than what I felt yesterday a heater that could even boil up a water in a pool, I was feeling the heat, I really felt Holy Spirit has touched me and as I was praying, receiving the Holy Spirit I felt Father's hand touching my head, I kept my eyes closing and after father my head I was looking for some happening like, but I realized Holy Spirit has already come upon me before Father could touch me and at that time I was closing my eyes and went on praising God alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Remo began his narrative about 'Baptism in the Spirit' by providing the context, which was the Sacrament of Anointing. During this ritual of anointing, it appears that participants were expected to *'open palms over my knees'*. Remo corrected himself saying it was over his *'thighs'*. Nadine as usual provided further detail about the context. According to her, *'they made us sit, my neighbour had to pray over me, then the priest came and prayed on individual I mean it's a big thing you know that there was just four or five priests and the crowds'*. From this narrative it appears that the first step in the Anointing ritual involved the reciprocal Laying of hands by the participants. Rosanna gave some details about this step, *'we had to lay our hands on the next, on the person, on another person to pray for the Holy Spirit to enter them it was a vice versa process'*. This quote from Nadine reveals that there was a second step which involved the Laying of hands by the priest as disclosed by Rosanna. As the excerpt indicates, Nadine highlighted being impressed by the individual attention given by the priests laying hands on each of the participants because there were only a few priests available. The reference to *'crowd'* suggests a high number of participants awaiting this individual attention. On an average, there would be about ten thousand participants at this event because all the language groups on the second campus would be brought together on this last day.

Another significant aspect of the context seems to be the singing as leaked out by Remo in his statement, *'praising God alleluia, alleluia, alleluia'*. Through her statement *'singing and shouting and praising and everything'*, Rosanna seemed to provide some detail about what this reference to praising God involved. Seby was the only other participant who referred to *'singing the music'*. He was also the only participant to report observing what appears to be a concomitant of the singing and shouting, namely that *'there's a feeling there in the air you know what I mean, it's a feeling I can't describe what it is'*.

Remo passed a global comment on the experience of anointing, acknowledging it as *'very touchy'*. The word *'touchy'* was possibly a reference to feeling moved by the experience. He had used this word on other occasions too. On Day 5 he had spoken about *'Jesus touching me'*. So this reference to *'touchy'* again on Day 6 together with the following related statement declared on the same day that *'today he was there on the same side as he stood yesterday I could feel that he is next to me'* suggests that he was again in touch with his felt sense of the presence of Jesus. This felt connection was a contrast to his earlier experience of disconnection experienced both in his family of origin as well as his current family by marriage.

Remo reported what appears to be the second step of the ritual for which he was *'waiting'* when an unexpected development occurred as suggested by the words *'without any attempts'*. Prior to Day 6, he had *'tried'* to *'imaginarily see vision all these five days'* but *'couldn't'*. The use of the word *'tried'* stated three times may suggest a relentless pursuit at activating his imagination which was an effort in vain. But on Day 6, as if *'without any'* efforts on his part, he could finally imagine the face of Jesus. It is important to note here that his experience of Jesus on Day 5 was a felt experience and not a mere imaginative one as in the case of Lyn and Rosanna. He saw the *'face of Jesus'* as well as a *'shining dove'* which was *'just pouring forth on me'*. He did not provide further details about this imaginative experience including what the dove was pouring on him. But the *'pouring forth on me'* suggests a sense of something being filled into him as a person. However, he had registered the visceral concomitant of that experience which was one of feeling *'heat'*. He used the metaphor of a *'heater'* to communicate this felt experience and used the word *'heat'* four times. The final reference to it was made with a clear declaration, *'I was feeling the heat'*. Notably he followed this claim with *'I really felt Holy Spirit has touched me'* as if suggesting a link between his bodily felt experience and his claim about experiencing the Holy



Spirit. Thus Remo established a link between his bodily felt experience and the experience of the 'Baptism in the Spirit'.

He was also particular to highlight the intensity of this visceral experience. He established in two ways. It appears from his claim that the *'heat'* on Day 6 *'was much more than what I felt yesterday'*. The reference to *'yesterday'* suggests that he had an experience of *'heat'* on Day 5 although he did not mention it then. This experience on Day 5 was not as intense as on Day 6. Secondly, the *'heat'* was so intense on Day 6 that he *'could even boil up water in a pool'*. This latter expression is further evidence of the intensity of that *'heat'* experience. Given the sigh and the deep breaths that he took as he narrated this experience, it appears he had a sublime experience, where he had an experience of the Divine but found it difficult to articulate and name it. How it felt for him in his body was the only feature of this experience that he could articulate. Thus the body became the medium that contained the experience but also helped him communicate the experience.

Remo appeared confused about the timing of the occurrence of events. He made efforts to retrace the sequence. At first he seemed to suggest that the above referred to, imaginative and bodily experiences occurred *'before Father could touch me'*. He later seemed to establish a link between the time of *'receiving the Holy Spirit'* and *'Father's hand touching my head'*. However his later statement that *'after Father my head I was looking for some happening like, but I realized Holy Spirit has already come upon me before Father could touch me'* suggests he was acquiring clarity as he spoke. It is more likely that the imaginative and bodily experience whose description he followed with *'Holy Spirit touched me'* occurred before the Laying on of hands by the priest. It could have occurred even during the first step of reciprocal Laying of hands by the participant sitting next to him. The confusion may have been induced by the fact that he had no

time to think since his mind was preoccupied *'at that time'* with *'closing his eyes'* and *'praising God alleluia, alleluia, alleluia'*. What seems significant in Remo's narrative is an effort at tracing the timing of the filling of the Holy Spirit. Yet again he had established a link between his bodily experience and his sense of being filled with the Holy Spirit although he seemed inaccurate at retracing the exact sequence of occurrences.

Rosanna also reported what appears to be a bodily felt experience. She reported that *'when I totally surrendered I fainted. I fell on the floor'*. She was quick to add that *'I fell immediately and I got up also immediately'* as if she was seeking to impress that she was in control. This quick recuperation was quite unlike *'in the past'* when she had *'fainted before and I have lain'* and *'was there on the ground fallen, people had to actually lift me up'*. However in this instance she perceived her ability to arise quickly from the ground as the work of the *'Spirit of God'* who *'was not making me a weak person. It was making me a stronger person, emotionally stronger because I had been very touchy about instances in my life what I allowed them to affect me'*. Thus like Remo she seems to have implied a sense of felt connection with the Divine whom she referred to as the *'Spirit of God'*.

Nadine too referred to this ritual as *'anointment'*. In contrast to Remo she provided a greater amount of detail about what appears to be predominantly an imaginative experience. She reported seeing a *'vision where I saw, you see Christ in the, in the background no, Jesus Christ, there was a beam that started from there'*. It appears the reference to the *'background'* and *'there'* was possibly a reference to the portrait of Jesus that is sketched on the back wall of the dais directly facing the audience. This *'beam 'enlarged and it was focused on me'*. However later when *'they'*, meaning the participants, *'prayed for the Holy Spirit'*, she saw *'not one beam, it was like multiple beams coming on the people ok from the same spot'*. She was particular to mention

what she thought of this experience. In her own words, *'for me the act when I have those multiple beams coming, it was an act that God was pouring the Holy Spirit on the, on his beloved people that were praying so hard and asking'*. The phrase *'pouring the Holy Spirit'* seems to be a similar imaginative experience in the case of Remo. However, the personalized felt sense of connection with the Divine evident with Remo, Rosanna and Lyn was lacking in her case. In addition, while Remo seemed to have attempted to link the experience of the Holy Spirit with the Laying of hands by the priest, Nadine was very clear that *'when the priest placed his hand on top of me'* she *'was not feeling anything'*. It was only when the priest *'lifted my hand, there was a slight giddiness that came'*. The reference to *'lifted my hand'* was possibly a reference to her bodily felt experience during the ritual of being blessed on the palms by the priest. Then she almost abruptly stopped her narrative indicating that *'now it's time for us to leave'* suggesting that she was in a hurry to leave so that she could attend to her plans for departure from the Retreat Centre.

Notably Lyn who until now appeared to have made intense movements in her life, seemed to have been negatively impacted by the altered seating arrangements. She reported that she *'did not get a place in front so I had to sit behind'*. Such an alteration is a normal practice on Day 6, when all the language groups on campus two are brought together for this final event of 'Baptism in the Spirit'. This alteration impinged on her concentration levels such that she *'was distracted a lot'*. This admittance on her part suggests at first glance that she is an exception to the first part of the hypothesis, that the greater the engagement in the retreat and thereby into one's wounded-ness and struggles, the greater is the experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. However as noted under the second subtheme, the second part of the hypothesis - the greater the engagement in the retreat, the greater is the sense of empowerment - was evident in her case.

The following claim of Lyn seems to leak out a sense of felt experience. Lyn reported that she *'felt as if someone was tapping me on the shoulder and calling me back'*. It was not clear whether this reference was an imaginative experience or whether someone literally touched her body and thereby facilitated her concentration and engagement in the retreat. The *'tapping on the shoulder'* could be a metaphorical expression to describe something of immediacy in her experiential space at this particular time. It could even be an allusion to a felt sense of some Divine presence. Beginning with Day 2, she had reported a felt sense of the presence of Jesus and seemed to have developed casualness in reporting about it. She did not provide details about it. Besides on Day 5 she had reported in reference to Jesus that *'he actually put himself in me'* suggesting that she had already experienced, what Remo and Nadine had referred to, by using the word *'pouring'* to refer to their experience of the Spirit on Day 6.

Notably as highlighted earlier across the days, Remo, Rosanna and Lyn had opened themselves quite intensely to re-examining their life stories compared to other participants. Thus they seemed to have had a bodily, cognitive and felt experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit' during the Anointment ritual.

Lyn's experience of distraction seems to mirror the experience of the rest of the participants of this study. It might explain their lack of detail about the bodily or cognitive or felt experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit'. Another possibility could have been the lack of time since most of them appeared pre-occupied with departing from the Centre by the afternoon of Day 6.

Brennan is another participant who did not provide inputs on the bodily, cognitive and felt experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit'. But he did refer to feeling empowered. Like Lyn, he is an exception to the first part of the hypothesis. But he fulfils the second part of the hypothesis; that greater the immersion into life's issues, greater is the sense of empowerment.

The following participants are an exception to the full hypothesis suggesting the absence of bodily, cognitive and felt experiences as well as the sense of being empowered. This lack suggests the absence of the experience of the 'Baptism in the Spirit' in these cases.

Johnson made only a passing reference to the 'Baptism in the Spirit'. In his own words, *'they had now just for the spirit and all it was, it was good...it was more a closing ceremony'*. It appears he evaded a personal engagement in this experience. As mentioned earlier he seemed to have withdrawn from the Retreat by Day 4.

Seby reported his ignorance about the Holy Spirit. He disclosed that *'the Holy Spirit, which I never heard that before about Holy Spirit is coming into you'*. This statement leaks out the possibility that it was a teaching imparted by the preachers.

Carmo, Seby and Johnson had failed to engage with their wounded-ness. Beginning from Day 3, Carmo and Seby appeared evasive in their engagement in the Retreat. Johnson evidenced a similar stance from Day 4. On Day 6, they did not report bodily, cognitive and felt experience during the anointing ritual nor did they report a sense of empowerment. Thereby they remain exceptions to the hypothesis. Nadine and Brennan seem to be an exception to the above polarity for they lie somewhere in-between on the continuum of personal engagement in the Retreat. Nadine appeared to make good progress till Day 3 for she had opened significantly to her wounded-ness and struggles until then. Johnson too evidenced a similar stance until Day 3. But by Day 4, he appeared to have disengaged from the Retreat.

### **11.1.2. A sense of empowerment**

This subtheme *'sense of empowerment'* highlights participants' appropriation of the 'Baptism in the Spirit' and their consequent sense of being strengthened by the Spirit cognitively, emotionally and relationally to accomplish what they could not in certain areas of their life. They

had a sense of being stronger, of feeling confident about their future and of being enabled to address issues that previously seemed difficult. Some of the participants recognized that they had a sense of having changed across the days of the Retreat. Some also had a sense of purpose and a mission to accomplish. Significantly, not all of them felt empowered. The sense of being empowered was a reflective activity that occurred across Day 6. It is highlighted through this subtheme because some participants spent a considerable amount of their time reporting about it. They were thus drawing attention to their progressive realization of the implications of the 'Baptism in the Spirit'.

In keeping with the steps for writing on large samples as identified by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), the following is a core extract that typifies participants' sense of being empowered. Variations to this experience are presented below. The following quote highlights Remo's sense of empowerment:

*...I'm already charged with this energy, the energy is generated by Jesus touch and when I felt this love I was all the time complaining till yesterday even in my interview with you...that I have never got love, I even mentioned the love lost, I was never loved by my mother, father, whoever, whoever but today I have realized that the love I was seeking was a worldly love, a passionate, an emotional love, it's a materialistic love, the love that only has a physical relationship, so that I realized that I have never missed a love, the very fact that I was continuously thinking of my family, family, family, my wife, my daughter, my son, I realized that I do love them and I'm sorry I would like to take back my word for saying that I do not love them...*

*...I already imagined in my mind my entire journey to Mumbai, as I enter my house I know that, I'll be taking a person along with me who is going to stay in that house and*

*he'll be with me, he'll come with me to work and he'll come with me everywhere and I also understand that I can't afford be sitting and wasting time...*

*...I have a resentment to strangers all my life, I resent people maybe because not all my life I should say after living in Mumbai because Mumbai is a ruthless city...I prayed for this blessing, for the blessings from God that I should love my neighbour...I was sitting in the dining hall, I was always feeling Jesus next to me, a very old, whatever I should say my judgment is such that she is that, doesn't belong to my class whatever, that is my previous, she sat next to me, I really took her like my sister I was, she was very loving to me, had she asked for a place I would have moved otherwise I should have looked at her with disgust, so I have got this great thing and I am going to take to Mumbai and I'm sure with my, I would call it a evangelization and with my attitude to the hostile people in Mumbai I'm going to change the nature and attitude of the Mumbai people as well, because that's how somebody has to start with and then the other person will reciprocate...*

The above quote from Remo highlights his sense of feeling empowered following the experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit'. This empowerment seems to have had a tangible component to it as implied in his statement that he felt '*charged with this energy*'. The reference to '*energy*' seems to be a felt sense of energy emanating from the felt touch of Jesus. This experience seemed to have generated a feeling of '*love*'. Quite possibly, it was a reference to feeling loved by Jesus which was a new-found connection for him. It may have altered his prevailing narrative of deprivation in early life and of marginalization in his present life. At first, it gave him a perspective on his pursuits. As indicated in the word '*realize*' he recognized that his pursuit until then had been a pursuit for '*a worldly love, a passionate, an emotional love*' and a '*materialistic*

*love, the love that only has a physical relationship'*. It was as if his eyes were opened.

Consequently, he began to perceive that he had *'never missed a love'*. He recognized that his preoccupation with his family was in fact a testimony to his love of them, that in fact he loved his family, particularly his wife rather than *'hate her'* as he had declared on Day 1. He seemed to have owned his resentment towards his family when he declared that he *'would like to take back my word for saying I do not love them'*.

Furthermore, Remo sought to draw on the new-found felt connection with Jesus to address the problems he came with. At first it was about facing the fear of meeting his wife and telling her the truth about his financial situation. His indication that *'I already imagined in my mind'* suggests that he was looking ahead to his journey back home to *'Mumbai'* and importantly his *'house'*. This imaginative process appeared to be a pre-emptive strategy to manage activations of fear in relation to his wife. On Day 6 he had declared in the passing that *'I was having a fear in my life all these days'*. As indicated in the theme on Surrender, he had leaked out *'feeling frightened'* in relation to his wife although he immediately corrected himself saying that he was *'not frightened of my wife'*. Then on Day 1 itself he had declared that he wanted to be honest with his wife and *'tell her that I've lost the job'* and *'that my flat which I've sold is in a mess'*. He also leaked out this fear when he disclosed that he had not told his wife about the loss of his job for *'if at all I tell her I lost my job, my life is going to be miserable'*. This claim suggests that he dreaded disclosing this truth about himself to his wife. Instead of sharing with her how it felt for him, he seems to have chosen to avoid it by *'wasting time'* in some *'escape routes'* such as *'shop'* and in some *'pub'*. So he *'asked Jesus what to do and how to find a solution to my problem and to open out my heart to my wife and tell her'*. His anticipation was that *'my wife will not accept anything of this crap once she knows the truth coming out of me and I feel that I'm going to make*



*my life and our life and our children, our whole family's lives more and more miserable'*. He had *'left home with a bad note with my family'* when he came to the Retreat. Just before Christmas he had a *'fight'* with his wife. It appears he had also felt alone at home. He disclosed that he feels *'sad, when I hear my daughter, my son with my wife having a wonderful conversation'*.

This background about his emotional mix of fear and of being ignored helps understand his pre-emptive strategy of taking Jesus *'along with me'*. Remo seemed to have finally found an ally, a connection he failed to find at home where he was disrespected and even taken for granted. He imagined *'taking a person'* referring to Jesus as his companion who will accompany him as he enters his *'house'*. Furthermore, Jesus would *'stay in that house and he'll be with me'* in that house. He hoped that he will not feel ignored again when the rest of his family have a *'wonderful conversation'* amongst themselves. Thus he looked ahead to drawing on this felt connection with Jesus to meet his wife. It was about gathering courage from one relationship to manage the fear associated with the other relationship.

Next on the list was his difficulty with getting to work. He had referred to it as *'one of the weakness that I want to overcome'*. He declared that he was *'having a starting problem'*, that he *'can't move'* and that he did not *'know what is holding me'*. He thought it was a *'curse'*. So on Day 1, he had asked *'Jesus today to release me from this bondage of not being able to work'*. It appears keeping the loss of his job a secret from his wife only worsened this predicament. Although he recognized that he was *'cheating her'*, he had cleverly managed to keep it a secret to protect himself as indicated above. He disclosed that *'till today my wife believes that I keep going to work because I carry my identity card, go out of the house in the morning and come in the evening'*. Instead of going to work he would resort to *'escape routes'*. One such escape route was to visit *'Chapels, Blessed Sacraments'*. He had also disclosed on Day 6 that *'I go to the Blessed*

*Sacrament making prayer an escape route for me instead of going out and selling'. Leaking through all this background about his work was a sense of diffidence and helplessness. So it is significant that he thought he could take Jesus along to accompany him 'to work'. As with his family he appears to have felt empowered to go back to work. He expressed his hope that having 'Jesus with me' he was 'going to be successful in my career'. Thus it was a movement from taking flight through 'escape routes' to a sense of feeling empowered to go back to work, an area where he had a 'starting problem'.*

The reference to *'everywhere'* seems to be a reference to another of his escape routes which involved going to *'sit in the noisy bar'*. The *'noisy bar'* is an apparent reference to the pub. Although Remo would *'drink only thumbs up'* referring to an Indian soft drink by that name, he began to see the *'noisy bar'* as a *'sinful place'* and claimed that he *'got enlightenment'* about what Jesus *'will tolerate and what he will not tolerate'*. The felt connection with Jesus seems to have given him clarity about the treasures that he possessed and that he would be grateful to them rather than *'take things for granted'*.

Another significant area of empowerment in the case of Remo seems to have been his attitude and behaviour to people who were culturally different to him. At first glance, his expression that he is *'going to change the nature and attitude of the Mumbai people as well'* appears unrealistic and wishful thinking. There is however implied in it a personal story about a life that earlier operated out of prejudice. It had now been altered following the recognition of such a disposition.

It appears this change began in the *'dining hall'* where he found himself sitting next to a *'very old'* person. He recognized his initial disinclination towards her. Notably he did not even initially specify her gender. However the use of *'she'* in successive references to her together

with *'I really took her like my sister'* suggests that the person was a woman. Whenever similar situations presented themselves earlier, he would simply walk away as implied in his statement, *'I would have moved otherwise'*. The reason for such a disposition was that she *'doesn't belong to my class'*. This phrase preceded by the declaration that *'I should say my judgment is such that she is that'* suggests that Remo was drawing on his culturally imbibed prejudices as he spoke to me. He refrained from completing the sentence. His utterance *'that she is that'* suggests that he had classified this woman into a particular category of people which quite possibly, given the above background, was the category of a social outsider. This categorisation explains why he would not *'otherwise'* interact with her. The phrase *'otherwise I should have looked at her with disgust'* further highlights his deep-felt resistance to people of such *'class'*.

Quite possibly in highlighting all this contrast about his earlier disposition to someone who *'doesn't belong to my class'* Remo had become aware of his culturally imbibed inhibitions towards the culturally despised. He began recognising what he had been doing in his interactions with so called *'strangers'*. It was a recognition of the fact that he had shut himself off from certain people. With this awareness, he was thus examining his Goan cultural disdain towards people of cultures inhabiting the neighbouring territories of Goa. Although he was born overseas and had also lived some of his life in Mumbai, it appears the cultural bracketing of people had become so ingrained in him that it generated a feeling of *'disgust'*. Prior to reporting this incident he had admitted to *'I have resentment to strangers all my life'*. The prejudice admittedly was so deep-seated that it triggered some intense repulsive emotions. He seems to have recognized that this prejudice affected his interaction with the people of Mumbai where he currently lived.

All the above background highlights the extent to which Remo had initiated a change such that it ensued in his behaviour. When he found himself sitting next to this woman, instead

of his usual response, he made a decision to continue sitting next to her. His normal response would have been to walk away. He had managed to exercise restraint this one time. He noticed that she was *'very loving to me'*. He felt connected to her, as suggested by the words *'I really took her like my sister'* and that *'had she asked for a place, I would have moved'*. This connection was a significant awareness in his case because, as highlighted earlier, he had reported a narrative of disconnection in his life. Quite possibly as with the other areas of his life, the felt connection with Jesus had opened him to a felt connection with another human being. It appears all his life, he was a loner seeking a connection and although he was in relationships, he felt unfulfilled and had difficulties in relationships. For example at home, he felt *'sad, when I hear my daughter, my son with my wife having a wonderful conversation'*. But now he had got in touch with a new dimension of himself. It appears he felt close to this woman. Thus a situation of possible disgust and disconnection had turned into one of connection and warmth.

Interestingly, the recognition of his initial inhibition towards the woman became a mirror to him of how he had lived his life in Mumbai. He recognized that he had bracketed people out of his consciousness and had lived a life of exclusivity. His initial disinclination towards the woman gave him an awareness and an insight into his interactive patterns with *'strangers'* in Mumbai. It was a moment of self-discovery. It was as if he was saying, *'once I was blind but now I see'*. Reporting the incident and thereby reflecting on it enthused him. So he declared before me that *'so I have got this great thing'* as if he had uncovered a new treasure. It also suggests a level of self belief which is a contrast to his earlier narratives that portrayed a lack of self-belief. He however did not say more on what the *'great thing'* was or how it felt for him. His expression *'I would call it an evangelization'* suggests that he felt called to a mission, to *'change the nature and attitude of the Mumbai people as well'* just as he had experienced a change in

himself. Although this latter phrase appears overambitious, through this expression Remo leaked out his new-found voice and a level of self-belief. It was as if he felt empowered to make a difference to others when all the while he was waiting for others, particularly his family, to offer a difference to him.

At a personal level Remo seems to have recognized his culturally imbibed prejudice. He chose to venture out to the very people he had apparently until then bracketed from his consciousness. He had initiated the first behavioural move towards this accomplishment with this 'very old' woman. He had got in touch with an aspect of himself that he had disowned until then. Thus this interaction is a brief case study in itself of how, after experiencing Jesus as a companion, this participant had initiated a change in his behaviour towards the culturally despised. Remo hoped he could extend this change to others; a change that he perceived was part of his 'evangelization' effort. It appears he became a much richer person after he felt the connection. This connection gave him a sense of power, a self-belief to go out and connect with others rather than hold back and complain that others were not connecting with him.

Lyn is an instance of further empowerment following the commissioning on Day 5 whereby she was called to be a leader in faith to her family. On Day 6 she had an experience that had empowered her with a self-belief in her intuitive abilities and thereby in her ability to lead others to God. It involved her friend who, following the 'Anointing' ritual, came to her and uttered 'there is God'. In response she found herself 'just looking at him'. It was as if she was surprised to hear those words emanating from him. She disclosed that she was 'so touched' by his declaration. Consequently she had a sense that *'I'm actually seeing it, that I have it in me, that if I believe I can make someone else believe'*. As indicated earlier on Day 2, she had distrusted herself, particularly her inner knowing. However by Day 6, she had come to believe her intuitive

abilities for she disclosed that she *'got a message now'* that she *'should put up a kind of...something that invites people from all over...and it's going to be including music and skits and the skits are going to be those skits based on the testimonies given over here of the lives of people so this entire thing had come into my mind it came as a big picture'*. The reference to *'this entire thing came into my mind'* suggests that she had considered what her mind had presented to her as a *'message'* from God. It was as if she was claiming that her intuition was a voice from God. Thus this instance with her friend appears to have given her a sense of empowerment to reach out to the wider world beyond her family. From being unwanted, she was now feeling wanted not just by her family members but also by the wider world. It was as if she had moved from being closeted and wanting to give up her life through the six *'suicide'* attempts, to giving life to others.

The following statement that *'I did not feel any electric current I just felt a smile within me as though my heart was smiling'* leaks out Rosanna's intuitive sense of feeling empowered. The reference to *'smile within me'* and *'my heart was smiling'* are a significant contrast to how she usually felt about herself. Following the recognition on Day 3 that *'hello look something is wrong'* she had come to acknowledge that she did not feel good about herself. It was a feeling she had managed to camouflage by adopting *'that position'* that *'I am okay you are not okay'*. She had earlier recognized that her personal world was *'not okay'* for it comprised of *'walls'*. She compared it to *'garbage'* and *'sticky messes'*. But now she could now look within herself and feel good about herself even if there were *'sticky messes'*. Furthermore, it was as if life had suddenly become worthwhile to her after she had experienced it as *'empty'* and *'meaningless'*. The *'smile'* seems to be a metaphor for this felt sense of empowerment.

A sense of being emboldened following the empowerment was evident in Rosanna's resoluteness that *'from this point of time I'm not going to allow them they cannot affect me anymore and the very fact that I can say this on record with confidence you know is proof enough for me'*. Perhaps the challenge and the consequent exposure to her sob stories that occurred in counselling had contributed to her sense of confidence that she was *'not going to allow them'* namely the memories of her past to influence her current functioning in life. While Remo had his escape routes, Rosanna seems to have escaped into grandiosity. In her own words on Day 4, she admitted that she had *'magnified'* and *'dramatized'* her problems and *'made them so big'*. Against this background, her claim that *'I'm not going to allow them'* indicates a movement towards the ownership of her contributions to her problems. So on Day 6, she admitted that *'if I look at my progress from Day 1, I thought I was on a pedestal'* but *'God was pulling me down...it was a complete and utter humiliation'*. This admittance was a metaphor for the intense alteration to her narrative about her life.

Brennan revealed a sense of empowerment in his self-agency to move towards forgiveness in his life. He disclosed that *'a lot of change has come in my life especially in the areas you know, where I couldn't meet up with my relatives'*. He admitted that *'it was a bit difficult to meet up with them'*. However *'now I have, I have the guts and desire to go up to them and shake hands with them and make them feel very good about how I have been a transformed person'*. Such was his sense of empowerment that he was prepared to go beyond his natural reluctance and make the gesture of forgiveness even though there was the possibility that he might not be received well. He felt that he had to respect them for *'it's from them from on the other side as to how they take'*. However he was not leaving anything to chance. It appears his way of managing his uncertainty was to entrust these people *'into the Lord's hands'* and in

*'praying for them each day'* possibly hoping that they might reciprocate favourably. The above discussion demonstrates his belief in his self-agency to initiate necessary changes in his life.

Johnson did not report a sense of empowerment. However, he took delight in the fact that he had decided to give up smoking, which was significant for him. He passed global comments about the retreat that *'it is a realisation for me, this whole trip'* and expressed the hope that he will *'not give into any of my vices again'*. He repeated his hope of coming back to DRC again. The sense of certainty evident in the previous participants was missing in his narratives possibly because he had dis-engaged from the retreat by Day 4. He had declared that *'even if I do need counselling like I, I'm not ready at this point of time'* suggesting that he anticipated difficulty with opening up to issues in his life at the counselling session.

Similar appears to have been the case with Nadine. She came to the retreat with a sense of inadequacy about herself which apparently continued in the course of the Retreat. On Day 6, she seemed to engage in self-doubt, *'early in the morning I used to grumble like will I get through this day'*. This inadequacy continued till the end although it took a different form. She reported feeling inadequate about her faith. She declared, *'I'm not saying that I'm going out with this retreat with a full-fledged faith, I'm still struggling with faith'*. She was prepared to *'trade places'* with the *'gardener at my work place'* who according to her had more faith. Quite possibly, the above expression about her lack of faith in God was a reflection of her lack of faith in self. Perhaps she had not adequately immersed herself into her vulnerability so that she could emerge out of it with a sense of adequacy. So unlike the other participants, the sense of empowerment was lacking in the case of Nadine.

A sense of certainty and empowerment was also missing in the case of Carmo. He felt *'trapped for so long like you are in a cage you just want to just fly away for little'*. So he wanted



to *'get outside, let me see when I'm going to touch those cigarettes again'*. Thus there was an element of self-doubt rather than a sense of empowerment with regards to refraining from his *'vices'*. He was however certain about his reservations about engaging in the Retreat and declared, *'I didn't come actually to change the rest of my life'*.

Seby seems to have experienced self-doubt with regards to his ability to refrain from his vices for he stated that *'I not going to say, I'm going to stop'*. For him change was occurring in *'very small steps'*. However he leaked out making a decision about minimising the intensity of his indulgences when he declared, *'but now definitely I will reduce and go move on to, lower drinks you know and see how it goes'*. As with Johnson, he looked ahead to *'coming back again'* for he appeared to nurture the sense that *'I need another one'* referring to another Retreat. It suggests an acknowledgement of the constraint he had experienced with opening himself to his wounded-ness and struggles. It was as if, like Johnson he was saying that he could take only as much for now, but that he would be back the next time for another attempt at re-immersing into his wounded-ness and struggles and thus fully engage in the retreat.

### **11.2. Reflexivity on the super-ordinate themes**

Following some participants' retrospective glance at the end of the Retreat, I found myself cogitating over how the experience of change had been for the participants. The therapist in me had witnessed the contrasts between what they came with to the Retreat and what they went with henceforth from the Retreat. It was emotionally moving to see how although they came into the Retreat with a sense of crisis, they had emerged at the end of the Retreat with a sense of empowerment, facilitated as they were by the Retreat into a self-examination and into a new-found relationship with Jesus. There emerged a sense of hope and a counter-narrative to the narratives that they came with. This was after opening to their wounded-ness and struggles and

to an experience of a felt sense of being touched by Jesus. I had a sense of their increasing self-agency.

Drawing on my life experience of feeling stressed and burdened in certain areas of my life, I began to see parallels and feel their sense of having had enough on certain issues in my life. For example Johnson, Seby and Carmo very clearly established boundaries with regards to how much they could engage in the Retreat and re-immense in their wounded-ness and struggles.

The participants who had accomplished much at the end of the Retreat reminded me of aspects in my life where I had accomplished much. I could relate to areas in my life where I had taken risks at exposing myself and discovered an unexpected sense of liberation. Whereas the participants who struggled with opening up to their Shadow aspects reminded me of my own human struggles while training as a therapist. There were times when I preferred to postpone and evade dealing with my Shadow aspects. Like Seby and Johnson, I had experienced discomfort when I anticipated encountering my Shadow aspects. It took me many sessions before I could declare my vulnerabilities to the Trainer Therapist. Carmo's declaration that he did not come to leave any of his vices resonated with aspects in my life towards which I had resistance.

Participants' experience of a felt personal relationship with Jesus resonated with me. Following participants' experience, I began to notice that I brought more to my own practice of the Sacraments. From a very formal stance that I had grown used to, I began to notice changes in myself in terms of the disposition that I brought along to the Sacraments.

### **11.3. Discussion on 'Baptism in the Spirit'**

In reporting about Day 6 of the DRC retreat, Jansen and Lang (2012), claim that the activities of the last day of the Retreat are about Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Kaniyaraseril (2005) encapsulates the experience of Day 6 at DRC as both "Baptism/Anointing of the Spirit" (p. 85).

The participants of this study appear to attest to such a claim that Day 6 is about 'Baptism in the Spirit'. Some of the references by which participants alluded to this experience are: *'receiving the Holy Spirit'*, *'pouring the Spirit'*, *'Holy Spirit is coming'* and *'Spirit of God making me stronger'*.

It must be noted at the outset that this discussion on the 'Baptism in the Spirit' in the context of this research is not a theological discussion. It is important to clarify this position because this theme 'Baptism in the Spirit' acknowledges the presence of substantive experiences. It does not omit, dismiss or minimize them, which according to Kahn (2000) is typical of psychological studies on religious conversion. This acknowledgement is established not through a theological discussion but by focusing on the ordinary everyday felt experience as reported by the participants, including a focus on their reports about their bodily felt experience. As noted earlier, the Charismatic movement assumes that the spiritual is manifest through the body. Hence as Csordas (2007) notes, "Charismatics place a premium on bodily events and practices ranging from revelatory sensory imagery and the sacred swoon of being overcome by the Holy Spirit, to ritual gestures such as the laying on of hands and prostration in prayer..." (p. 310).

Given the above background, the expression 'Baptism in the Spirit' is adopted metaphorically as the theme for Day 6 as well as for the following reasons. The interpretation of this experience of the participants warrants a consideration of the context. This experience of the 'Baptism in the Spirit' occurred within the context of a Catholic expression such as the DRC. Besides, such an expression honours participants' Catholic formation and therefore their Catholic 'forestructure'. In addition as indicated below, participants' experience resonates with the experience implied in the use of the expression 'Baptism in the Spirit' (Del Colle, 2004). As Martin (2011) appropriately contends, the metaphor of 'Baptism in the Spirit' in the Catholic context encapsulates the totality of the Sacrament of Anointment and the Laying of hands.

Hence, the 'receiving of the Holy Spirit' is assumed to occur only after the person has received 'Inner healing'. 'Inner healing' is assumed to occur after an immersion into one's wounded-ness and struggles and following the healing Divine touch. The experience of the participants of this study seems to attest to such assumptions. However these assumptions contradict the traditional Pentecostal position which argues for a reception of the Holy Spirit irrespective of whether one is prepared or not (Pousson, 1994). Thus, in the DRC context, all the work accomplished on preceding days seems to have been a preparation for the ensuing work of bringing wholeness to the person, namely the 'Inner healing' and the encounter with the Divine on Day 5 and Day 6 respectively.

Notably, the participants of this study did not say much about the context, particularly the Anointing and the Laying on of Hands. Rather they focused more on the phenomenological dimensions of their bodily, cognitive and felt experiences thereby suggesting a link between these phenomenological facets and 'Baptism in the Spirit'. These dimensions are the visible facets of their experience that they could communicate or the language they used to describe their experience of the 'Baptism in the Spirit'. Hence the three dimensions of Del Colle (2004) gain significance in the context of this study because they are phenomenological in nature and are visible in the experiences of the participants.

Interestingly these three elements were also visible in the experiences of the first Catholics who experienced 'Baptism in the Spirit' at the Duquesne University campus (Del Colle, 2004). Hence this visible relationship between the participants of this study and the experiences of the first Catholics at Duquesne University suggests that the experience of the participants of this study could be considered as an experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit'. Furthermore, these three elements provide what Beckford (1978) describes as a paradigm for accounting the process

of conversion. The above discussion highlights the possibility that influenced by the preaching, participants may have assumed this link between the phenomenological dimensions and 'Baptism in the Spirit'.

Del Colle (2004) suggests that in keeping with the Catholic understanding of 'Baptism in the Spirit', there needs to be a sense of spiritual hunger. Such a hunger was evident with the participants as highlighted in the first theme, *Crisis*. Given their Catholic lineage, most of them could be assumed to have been practising their Catholic faith as Sunday Catholics and given to moments of prayer. A few of them like Johnson, Carmo and Seby leaked out on successive days that they had failed to be practicing Catholics at different times in their lives. Johnson for example experienced a phase in his life when he absented himself from going to Mass. The crises that participants experienced gave them a sense of inadequacy which then seems to have driven them into a search. As noted in the first theme, participants were seeking the adequacy of God in the face of their own inadequacy. Nadine, the core participant for the first theme *Crisis*, for example clearly stated that *'I have felt that I've lived 31 years of my life, I've been just like the other Catholics just going for Mass and coming back but I'm not having, I've never made God as the centre of my life, as the top priority of my life'*. This statement reflects her spiritual hunger. It seems to be a realization of what she was lacking in her life which also suggests the answer to her dilemma. Thus the first criterion appears to be evidenced in the case of this study.

Secondly, Del Colle (2004) notes that "the retrieving of the baptism in the Holy Spirit means a new depth in one's personal relationship to Jesus..." (p. 270), or "...personal relationship with another person - Christ himself..."(p. 246). This characteristic accounts for the sacred dimension and thereby the substantive experience of the participants, which allegedly has been omitted in psychological studies (Kahn, 2000). Together there is a desire for a relationship with

others and a desire to bring others to Christ. The subtheme *'bodily, cognitive and felt experiences'* highlights the phenomenological dimension of this relational experience with Jesus. Remo, the core participant of this theme, evidences a strong felt sense of the presence of Jesus in his life. He had indicated on Day 5 that he felt *'Jesus touching'* him, thereby suggesting a felt relationship with Jesus. Then on Day 6 he repeated the claim and added another facet to this experience by claiming that he could sense the presence of Jesus *'on the same side as he stood yesterday'*. Furthermore he could *'feel that he is next to me'*. Together, he spoke about a bodily felt experience of *'heat'* which he associated with divine presence. Devenish (2001) points out that some of the participants of his study experienced what appears to be a similar experience of heat. He refers to this experience as a cleansing of the Spirit. Remo however did not make such an explicit claim. What is obvious in participants' reports is a sense of difficulty at communicating what seems to be an ineffable experience. The difficulty with communicating such an experience is referred to variedly in literature. Jung referred to such experiences as mystifying and beyond words. However he noted that they are deeply emotive (Schlamm, 2007), thereby reflecting the practice that the ineffable in religious experience is often communicated in emotional language (Csordas, 1990). Obviously participants' descriptions of their *'bodily, cognitive and felt experiences'* are a reflection of such an attempt. The reference to the *'heat'* was probably Remo's efforts at articulating what was basically a very absorbing experience. However, implicit in that communication is an acknowledgement that focusing on his bodily and felt experiences was the most convenient way of making tangible and therefore communicable what was essentially an ineffable experience. The confusion evidenced by him with retracing the sequence of occurrences is probably a reflection of this ineffable experience.

Devenish (2001) indicates that in a religious context, the sense of a deeply felt conviction of the presence of the Spirit can be experienced through the modalities of body, cognition and feeling. Participants' experience seems to resonate with such a claim. It appears for Remo, *'feeling the heat'* gave him a felt conviction that the *'Holy Spirit has touched me'*. For Rosanna, it was the falling down experience that seems to have given her a conviction that the Spirit was making her a stronger person. Arguably these physical experiences are signs of participants being 'deeply stirred', an expression associated with the workings of the Spirit (Baumert, 2004; Branson, 2010; Devenish, 2001; Martin, 2011).

Furthermore, what the participants could communicate the most about this experience was a post-reflection on what the experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit' enabled for them. Most of their narratives of Day 6 centred on this enablement and is highlighted in the second subtheme, *'sense of empowerment'*. This second subtheme also portrays the strength of this felt relationship. Remo spoke about taking Jesus along with him to re-encounter his wife. Then he would take Jesus into his work sphere and then to meet strangers in his life whom he had apparently avoided until then. The felt connection with Jesus was a contrast to his earlier stance of feeling rejected and alone at home. Lyn is another example of having acquired this felt relationship with Jesus.

This second characteristic of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in the context of 'Baptism in the Spirit' is originally a Pentecostal and Evangelical position that the Catholics seem to have discovered for themselves (Cheung, 1996). Catholic Spirituality as articulated in its Spiritual theology has been traditionally known to focus on practice rather than on presence. For example, Catholic practices such as contemplative practice, discernment of the Spirit, stages in development of Spiritual life, purification of the senses as in the dark night of the soul have been part of the Catholic Spiritual discipline (Del Colle, 2004). Then again, quite often in Catholic

Spirituality the focus has been on Sacramental practice. Even though the intended purpose of the Sacraments is a relationship with God, such a nuance is often alien to the traditional ordinary Catholic. Hence arguably, the focus on a personal relationship with God might be a contribution of the Pentecostal and Evangelical Spirituality to the postmodern Catholic. Arguably, it may have moved the participants from living their Christian life according to the doctrine to living their Christian life according to the Spirit, thereby turning it into a life-giving force. It was probably the case with some participants that this language had become a resourceful reality. Nadine's claim early in the Retreat that *'the Mass was nearly for an hour or so but I didn't feel that it went that long'* supports this claim.

Notably this element of a personal relationship with Jesus began from Day 2 for some participants. Lyn for example reported on Day 2 that she *'felt as if the Lord was present with me as if he was trying to say come, come out my child, come to me'*. This statement leaks out her felt sense. The use of *'as if'* suggests an experiential tone rather than that of mere cognition. It is an experience that goes to the core of her distress. She had reported a life narrative of feeling unwanted. So this experience was a counter-narrative to that experience where Jesus was seeking to address her sense of emptiness through the statement of belonging, *'come out my child, come to me'*. It was as if Jesus was saying to her 'I want to say to you that you are wanted'. This experience felt very real to me as I heard it and had a sense of tangibility to it. The expression *'come to me'* was a call with great tenderness and great love. I could only imagine how this experience would have felt to her. Perhaps, the best metaphor to capture that felt sense would be to compare it to a 'homecoming' experience.

The third element involves experiencing the experiential fruits of 'Baptism in the Spirit' (Del Colle, 2004). These fruits include elements such as the assurance of being empowered,



boldness to venture out into life and an inclination for prayer, to mention a few (Del Colle, 2004). According to Cheung (1996), aspects of this third element were adopted by the Catholic Charismatic movement from classical Pentecostalism. The second subtheme '*sense of empowerment*' highlights participants' experience of being emboldened. As mentioned earlier, Remo had a sense of real empowerment in his life. By the end of Day 6, he had moved to a sense of feeling empowered to go back to his wife and to his work. In addition, a sense of boldness leaked through his narrative about meeting strangers. Furthermore, although he claimed he had financial difficulties, he hoped '*to buy an apartment in Mumbai with an additional room which I'm only going to set aside as a prayer room*'.

Lyn also felt emboldened after hearing her friend admit, that '*there is God*'. She wanted to host a programme, '*something that invites people from all over*' where there will be '*music and skits*' which would enact the stories of transformation '*over here*', meaning DRC. One of those stories would be her own story.

Brennan is another case of feeling emboldened. He was prepared to go out to his cousins and beg for forgiveness even if that meant rejection or shame.

This third element also captures the charismatic, the regenerative and the missionary aspects of the DRC Retreat. Participants reported a sense of feeling renewed, regenerated and of finding a new sense of self. For example, Rosanna disclosed her sense of being regenerated. Consequently she '*cannot be the same person anymore, I cannot even if I want to, I cannot because now I have already got so much of me*'. Lyn revealed her sense of being called to a mission while disclosing her internal conflict over leaving the Retreat. She declared, '*now I'm feeling do I have to go back can't I just stay here but then I also remember that even if I want to stay however much I want the Lord...wants me to go there*'. This declaration suggests a

commissioning and a shift in priorities. This is a powerful sign of conversion, a real movement within Lyn. It is as if she was saying, 'Although I want to stay here at DRC and do not want to leave, yet I will go' because the '*Lord...wants me to go*' and so 'I will go'.

Interestingly none of the participants provided significant material about 'speaking in tongues', an activity historically associated with the 'Baptism in the Spirit'. It was considered an important physical corollary to the experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit' in Pentecostal circles and which the Catholic Charismatics seem to have adopted later on (Duiker, 2012; Hocken, 2004). This lack of material suggests that the participants of this study appear to challenge this association. Their experience seems to resonate with the contention of Robbins (2004) that such an association is missing in the more recent Charismatic movements. The DRC Retreat under study is a more recent Charismatic phenomenon in the Catholic Church.

Overall as identified in the analysis, the hypothesis suggests that it is only those participants who had dared to immerse themselves into their wounded-ness and struggles that benefited from a felt connection with Jesus and with a sense of empowerment.

In addition, there appears to be another hypothesis underpinning the above hypothesis. Those participants who had a difficult childhood or emotionally impoverished background seem to have had a greater level of openness to what was offered in the Retreat and hence had a greater engagement in the Retreat. Thereby these benefited from the experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This hypothesis relates with the compensatory hypothesis emanating from attachment research (Granqvist, 1998, 2003; Granqvist & Hagekull, 2001; Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2004). This pattern is discernible in the case of Remo, Lyn and Rosanna. Arguably, these participants could connect easily with their childhood pain. For example, Remo lost his mother at an early age and was then given to the care of his uncle by his father. This uncle sent

him into a boarding school. Later, when he returned back from the seminary he was physically abused by his uncle and sent away.

Lyn had disclosed that *'this has been going on since the time at least I realized it I started realizing it since the time I was seven'*. The reference to *'this'* was a reference to her narrative about felt deprivation in her childhood. She had felt *'at home no one wanted me'*. Rosanna had revealed that *'when I was a kid, I was in second standard I was molested by my cousin'*. Perhaps these participants could connect with their childhood pain because they had an experience of it. This pain associated with their past was activated in the course of the Retreat. It could be argued that the others could not easily connect with their own childhood as strongly as these three participants simply because such a painful childhood was missing in their life. Assumedly, if there was such a painful childhood experience, it would have re-surfaced and manifested given DRC's focus on excavating the past to heal it. Thus those who could not re-immense themselves into their wounds failed to get immersed into the Spirit.

If the above hypothesis is true then drawing on the experience of the participants of this study, it could be further surmised that those who benefit the most from the DRC experience are the ones who have had an emotionally impoverished background or a difficult childhood. All these propositions are tentative and need further verification although they are discernible from the inductive analysis of the participants of this study.

The above contrast between participants' experience and the three elements supports the fact that the experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit' was very much an experiential reality that reveals participants' humanity in what is considered a spiritual encounter with the divine. Thus the above discussion supports the claim that Day 6 is essentially an experience of immersion in the Spirit or metaphorically a 'Baptism in the Spirit'.

Lyn's indication that she was distracted highlights the ever present possibility of being distracted in the course of the Retreat. Such distraction is valuable feedback to the management of DRC. Given that Lyn had intense experiences beginning with Day 2, it is possible that the altered seating configurations deprived her of further pertinent experiences on Day 6. Her narrative of Day 6 lacked the depth of felt experience that was consonant with her across the rest of the days. Thus arguably the distraction deprived her greatly of what could have been another rich and potent experience.

## Chapter 12: Discussion

### 12.1. Introduction

In their advice for writing the discussion in an IPA work, J. A. Smith et al. (2009) recommend the following:

And with a qualitative write-up, it is fine to introduce some literature for the first time in the discussion. As with the introduction, this engagement with the literature should be selective not exhaustive. There will be a large number of literatures, and then texts within each literature, that you could connect your work to. You need to select some of that which is particularly resonant (p. 113).

Accordingly, this discussion is restricted to comparisons and contrasts between the religious conversion experience of the participants and the literature that resonates with it. These comparisons and contrasts are intended to “illuminate or problematise what other studies say” and “shed light on what (was) found” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 112). Importantly, the light is shed on the profound changes alluded to by the participants of this study.

### 12.2. The fulfilment of the 'what' and the 'how' of the research question

The initial tentative hypotheses that were generated iteratively for each super-ordinate theme after reading and re-reading the transcripts of each participant answer the two facets of the research question, namely the '*How*' (*Noema*) and the '*What*' (*Noesis*) of the change process. The relationship between the two facets and the themes is illustrated below. It must be noted here that the inputs of the retreat refer to the contextual factors that influenced the participants. These include the varied factors to which participants alluded to, namely the preachers, the retreat schedule, the confessors, the counsellors and even the person sitting beside them.

The hypothesis with regards to the first theme suggests that it is crisis that draws people to the DRC. Crisis is both the *'what'* and the *'how'* in this instance. All the participants including those who did not speak about it initially had experienced crisis. It is crisis that had set them on a quest for a resolution and eventually brought them to DRC.

On Day 1, the *'what'* is the struggle that participants experienced following the *'how'* which was the call to surrender experienced in varied forms.

On Day 2, the *'what'* is once again the struggle but in this case with opening up to aspects of themselves and to others following the *'how'* which refers to the inputs of the Retreat regarding opening up.

On Day 3, the *'what'* is yet again a struggle but experienced as a challenge in the three different phases of making their confession following the *'how'* which refers to the inputs of the Retreat regarding 'Confession'.

On Day 4, the *'what'* is once more a struggle before and during the Counselling session, but also the positive after-effects of counselling following the *'how'* which refers to the inputs of the Retreat regarding Counselling.

On Day 5, the *'what'* are the varied changes and the dawning awareness concomitant with the two phases of the 'Inner healing' process following the *'how'* which refers to the inputs of the 'Inner healing' session.

On Day 6, the *'what'* is the experience of immersion or 'Baptism in the Spirit' experienced in terms of a bodily, cognitive and felt experience as well as the sense of being empowered following the *'how'* which refers to the inputs of the Retreat.

As indicated in the literature review, the *'what'* seeks to understand the *degree* and the *content* of conversion or religious change and the *'how'* seeks to understand the *context*, the

*agency* and the *duration* of conversion or religious change. All these aspects of conversion as reported by the participants are compared and contrasted with the literature below.

### **12.3. A theoretical statement that emerged**

In comparison to the subsection 12.2 presented above, this subsection is an answer to the research question applied globally to the Retreat. It must be noted that it was not the goal of this research. It emerged out of the cross case analysis given the richness of the data. It provides an added perspective to the original research question, a perspective that accounts for the Retreat experience as a whole. Accordingly the research question could be adapted to ask, *how do the participants at the Divine Retreat Centre come to be what they come to be at the end of the Inner Healing Retreat?*'

In answer to this adapted research question, what follows below is a theoretical statement. This theoretical statement was inspired by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), who outline varied ways in which an IPA analysis can be conducted. As an example, they propose doing a cross case analysis which involves:

a form of micro theory development drawing on ideas from the analytic induction (Robson, 1993; Smith et al., 1995) whereby provisional hypotheses are modified in the light of checking each case. This means the theory development is itself idiographic as each case is used to refine it. The aim is to produce theoretical statements which are true for all cases in the data set, or every case with clearly articulated exceptions..." (J. A. Smith, et al., 2009, p. 166).

Accordingly, the following theoretical statement was derived by drawing together the initial tentative hypotheses across all the days. To reiterate, it provides a global perspective of the Retreat experience:

*It is crisis that draws people to the DRC. On Day 1 of the Retreat, participants report a struggle with the call to surrender which is experienced in varied forms. On Day 2, participants find themselves struggling with 'opening up' to aspects of themselves and to others owing to the inputs of the Retreat. On Day 3, participants reported feeling challenged and thereby a struggle with adequately making their confession following the call to confess their sins. On Day 4, most of the participants reported a struggle before and during the counselling session and also reported after-effects following the counselling session. On Day 5, most of the participants reported experiencing varied changes during the two phases of the Inner Healing session and concomitant to these phases was an experience of a dawning awareness about themselves. On Day 6, it seemed that the greater the level of engagement in the Retreat, including an openness to re-immersion into one's wounded-ness and struggles, the greater the experience of immersion or Baptism in the Spirit experienced in terms of a bodily, cognitive and felt experience along with a sense of being empowered.*

This theoretical statement was generated inductively from the sample of eight participants. The benefit of such a theoretical statement for this study is its ability to provide a succinct narrative of the change experiences of the participants at the Inner Healing Retreat at DRC. It is also a strength of this research given that it adopted a bolder design, namely that it engaged a larger corpus of data gathered from eight participants across forty-eight interviews where the option of interviewing "participants more than once" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 52) was employed. It also provides a global perspective on the Inner Healing Retreat as a whole, although that was not the intended objective of this study. Arguably, this theoretical statement is also a working hypothesis that could be verified through further empirical studies.



## 12.4. Process of religious conversion

As indicated above, the varied facets of the 'what' (noesis) and the 'how' (noema) of participants' experience of conversion are compared and contrasted with the literature below.

### 12.4.1. Duration in religious conversion

As indicated in the Literature Review, the participants of this study evidence both the facets of duration: namely conversion as a sudden change, where change is perceptible as an event and conversion as a gradual change or as an imperceptible process (Iyadurai, 2011).

Perceptible moments of change were visible by Day 2 (Hood, et al., 1996; James, 1902/1985; Lee, 2008; Rambo, 1993; Reese, 1989; Snow & Machalek, 1983). For example, Johnson used contrasts such as *'today, now, but, then I did not'* to indicate his marked experience of feeling *'calmer'* and *'some sort of freedom'* that felt as if *'something is gone off, like something is been taken off my head'*. Nadine indicated on Day 3 that she was ready to *'start a new life'*. Following the improvised ritual on Day 3, Lyn reported an intense experience of *'someone like actually putting their hand into me and pulling everything out'*. This claim manifested her sense of an imposing influence of a felt sense of the presence of the Divine. She used physical imagery to portray her perception of the change, *'felt free...that there were no bonds around'*. Remo had a similar sense of *'Jesus, touching me'* on Day 5, thereby providing a kinaesthetic parameter to this experience where Jesus was *'touching my heart'*. Then on Day 6, he reported sensing the presence of Jesus *'on the same side as he stood yesterday'*. Some of the participants also reported their felt sense of an imposing influence of a human presence. For example, both Rosanna and Lyn benefited greatly from the intervention of confrontation by the counsellors as highlighted under the super-ordinate theme Counselling.

Seby and Carmo are exceptions to the reports about dramatic or perceptible moments. They did not indicate moments of experiencing the imposing influence of Divine agency.

There were also reports that suggested evidence of gradual change (Reese, 1989; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998). For example, Johnson implied that his was a long '*process of coming closer to God*' which '*started off in end of April 2007*' which was one and a half years prior to the interview date. The whole experience of the Retreat could be surmised as a gradual process because the effects of change on each day seemed to have carried over cumulatively into successive days. For example, Johnson alluded to such an experience when he declared on Day 2, that '*today was extension of yesterday*'. Seby added to this perspective by indicating that for him, change was occurring in '*very small steps*'.

#### 12.4.2. Degree of commitment in religious conversion

The continuum presented below highlights the variation and thereby the degree or intensity of conversion experience or religious change experienced by the participants of this study. The varied points on the continuum of increasing commitment identify the increasing intensity of religious change:

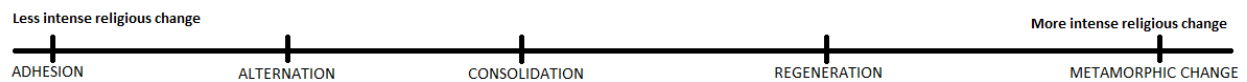


Figure 7: Continuum of increasing commitment

As indicated in the Literature Review, for a majority of the participants their experience of religious conversion is best captured by the concept of regeneration (James, 1902/1985; Reese, 1989). These participants include Remo, Lyn, Rosanna, Nadine and Brennan.

Regeneration involves a return to the religious faith or an affiliation that was either not taken seriously or abandoned (Reese, 1989). It is not that these participants had abandoned their

Catholic faith. Rather they had not committed themselves seriously to its practice. The experience at DRC had helped them to return to their Catholic faith with a greater level of commitment. In the words of Snow and Machalek (1984), DRC had enabled not a metamorphic change or a complete shift in their universe of Catholic religious discourse. Rather it had helped them move this discourse from the periphery to the centre of their attention. In Rambo's (1993) Integrative Model terminology, DRC had helped a majority of the participants to establish a revitalized commitment to their Catholic faith with which they had only a formal affiliation. This commitment was immediately manifest in their increased engagement with the Catholic Sacraments and the rituals employed by the Inner Healing Retreat.

Another indicator of this return was the sense of purpose that emanated from their enhanced commitment to their faith as outlined under the theme, 'Baptism in the Spirit'.

Johnson and Seby also had a similar sense of returning to their Catholic Faith. However, both of them found it difficult midway to fully engage with the Retreat. They comforted themselves by thinking that they would return to DRC for another attempt.

Carmo is an exception to this category of regeneration. The concept of adhesion seems to capture his experience better. It appears he had perceived DRC along the lines of Alcoholic Anonymous (AA), a place to give up his addictions rather than a place to enhance his faith and beliefs although AA does acknowledge embracing the concept of a higher power.

#### **12.4.3. Agency in religious conversion**

Participants seemed to suggest an operation of both active and passive agencies. Although most research on religious conversion is polarised on these two agencies, suggesting that conversion is either active or passive, there is some research that captures the presence of both these agencies, for example Lofland and Skonovd's 'Conversion Motifs' model (Hood, et al.,

2009). Crowe (1991) had noted the presence of both these agencies in the Charismatic understanding of surrender. Kahn (2000) also identified the presence of both these agencies in the stage of Interaction in Rambo's Integrative Model.

The DRC structure seems to provide for both these agencies because the narratives of the participants of this study appear to validate the presence of both the active and passive agencies, not just in the case of Surrender which was the theme of Day 1, but also across the six days of the Retreat. For example, on the first four days, passive agency was implied by the participants through their references to the inputs of the Retreat, which predominantly included the preaching. They reported that the preachers called them to surrender, to open up, to confess and to engage in counselling.

Participants alluded to active agency in their references to experiencing dilemmas, to entering into negotiations with themselves about their level of engagement in the Retreat and their struggles with making decisions in response to the passive agent of preaching. For example, Rosanna admitted facing a dilemma about how much she should surrender because *'in God it is supposed to be all or nothing'*. Brennan entered into negotiations with himself. He admitted to suggesting to himself that *'it was high time that I open up everything and talk about it and be released from this burden'*. Lyn and Remo experienced a dilemma about going to counselling. Whereas Johnson and Seby sought to be in control and decided not to go for counselling. Noticeably, participants seemed to allude to only partial or "makeshift versions of surrender" (Dueck & Goodman, 2007, p. 610) rather than a comprehensive or a radical version of surrender. The above examples portray participants' sense that conversion is a choice, decided upon and sought after by the convert (Reese, 1989).

The struggle with self-agency, and hence active agency, manifested itself in the form of emotions such as anxiety and even a confusion of mind. The content of the subtheme '*Raw emotions*' on Day 1 is an example.

Participants implied passive agency through their allusions to feeling '*moved*' and of being '*convinced*', highlighting their experience of being acted upon by external orchestrations (Cummings, 2012). For example, Rosanna reported feeling '*convinced*' about the need to confess when the preacher referred to Carl Jung who '*talked about how if only Catholics were to go for Confession half of the psychiatrists' work would be reduced*'. On Day 4, Remo disclosed that the preacher '*said something it really moved me*'. Johnson also referred to the influence of preaching, '*the preachers what they said, what they didn't say made me realise a lots of things*'. While some of the literature such as the World Saver Model (Lofland & Stark, 1965) portrays the convert as a totally passive agent that is acted upon by external stimuli, participants of this study seem to problematise such claims by suggesting that they retained control of themselves in terms of their response to external orchestrations, decision making and commitment.

Although the early psychologists included Divine influence into passive agency, more recent literature on religious conversion appears to allude to passive agency as a mere external influence from human or environmental sources (Anderson, 2000; Reese, 1989). However, there are some exceptions that recognise the influence of Divine agency in religious conversion (Ai-Banawi, 1994; Cummings, 2012; Iyadurai, 2011). For the participants of this study, the rituals associated with the Sacraments of the Eucharist, 'Confession' and Anointing became passive influences of Divine agency. The Catholic belief system assumes these rituals as avenues for an experience of the Divine. For example, Lyn and Nadine who had an experience of incompleteness following their Confessional experience capitalised on the improvised ritual at

Mass the same day to arrive at a resolution. It gave them an opportunity for a felt sense of the Divine. In addition, Remo reported a felt experience of the presence of Jesus.

The music and the singing were another source of passive agency. Participants reported on how they felt energised owing to the singing. For example, Nadine reported that *'these hymns always keep us going because we are clapping and singing alleluia'*. Remo reported that when he was *'praying or while singing the praises...I became very lively'*. Referring to the singing, Seby indicated that *'they are powerful hymns, so does touch your heart you know does touch your heart, does touch your brain'*. Batson et al. (1993) highlight the significance of music in facilitating the four stages of religious experience proposed by them. They indicate that the power of music lies in its ability to generate emotions. Galvin (2002) found a strong relationship between these variables of music and religious experience. Notably, these two variables were not studied in isolation. Hence arguably the relationship could have been facilitated by the contextual variables that were included, namely, the religious mental set and personality orientation to receptivity. Even though only a few participants implicitly alluded to the role of music and singing, these allusions do highlight the significance and the possibility of a link between music and singing and their conversion experience. Further studies, particularly experimental ones, are recommended to identify the possibility of such a link in the context of DRC.

Another area of note is arguably the idea of Brainwashing which could be read into participants' accounts. For example, Lyn reported that the preachers *'want you to open out'*. Moreover, as highlighted under the Third Movement in the History of Religious Conversion, Lifton (1961) who had studied the Chinese techniques of Brainwashing, noted sleep deprivation as one of such strategies. As highlighted under the subtheme, *Struggle with the call to surrender the familiar*, Brennan, Carmo and Rosanna alluded to sleep deprivation and their consequent

struggles with staying awake during the day. While such allusions may be read as instances of Brainwashing, they could equally be read as part of the process of encapsulation. Rambo suggests that encapsulation is a normal and accepted stage in the process of religious conversion (Kahn, 2000).

#### **12.4.4. Context in religious conversion**

Given that this study is situated in Kerala, India and the participants formally belong to the Roman Catholic Church, this study fulfils the following gaps identified in research. Rambo (2010) had noted the neglect of mainline churches such as the Roman Catholics and the Anglican Communion in Religious Conversion research. Lee (2008) had noted that most studies were conducted in North America and Europe, thereby revealing a geographical and racial bias. In addition, Iyadurai (2011) identified a research gap in the psychological study of religious conversion in the Indian context. The data of this study was collected from the Indian context of DRC and of Roman Catholic participants with a Goan lineage.

#### **12.4.5. Content in religious conversion**

As indicated in the literature review, the Content in religious conversion refers to the effects of the conversion experience. The following are variables that portray the content of participants' conversion experience (Cohen, et al., 2010; Hood, et al., 2009; Hood, et al., 1996; Lakhdar, et al., 2007; Magaldi-Dopman & Park-Taylor, 2010).

At first is the role of emotions. Of note is the influence of negative emotions in motivating the participants to go to DRC as highlighted under the theme 'Crisis'. Besides, these negative emotions intensified only after participants arrived at DRC. But this intensification initiated them into further changes. For example, Remo, who alluded to an experience of confusion on Day 1, sought a resolution to it. Other participants like Nadine and Lyn benefited

greatly by capitalizing on their negative emotions. For example on Day 3, participants' sense of incompleteness at the Confessional spurred them to further enquiry. In contrast, Seby and Carmo, who also were negatively impacted, found it difficult and eventually resigned from engagement in the Retreat (Cohen, et al., 2010; James, 1902/1985).

Positive emotions were visible towards the end of the Retreat (James, 1902/2005; Stephen, 2004; Ullman, 1989). For example, Lyn reported feeling '*calm*' and '*cool*' after the counselling session. Although she was confronted by the counsellor, Rosanna '*didn't feel disappointed*' but '*happy*' and '*joyful*'. Nadine felt '*very light, felt very happy*' after her 'Inner healing' experience. Remo '*was feeling great joy in my heart, I can't believe it*' after his 'Inner healing' experience.

Another notable emotion was surprise at the speed of emotional change. For example, Lyn appeared surprised by the shift in her resentful disposition towards her father and sister. Following her experience of 'Inner healing', Lyn declared, '*I didn't know, it would happen in just may be two hours but it did*'.

Another variable is the changed disposition to life, including a new perspective on their past (Clement, 2003; D. Y. Kim, 2011; Paloutzian, 2005; Rambo, 1993). From a sense of '*complete emptiness that had to be filled with something*' and '*with no goal, no focus, no direction*', Rosanna had discovered '*the need to change the way I spend my time*' which for her was '*equal to changing my entire world-view*'. From an initial claim that she '*was tired of suffering*', Lyn had moved to declare towards the end of the retreat that she '*felt happy because I suffered*' because '*I gained something out of suffering*' and that she '*lost nothing*'. Apparently, she had found a new perspective that had enabled her to integrate her narrative of suffering.



Still another variable is the discovery of a new-found self that was filled with a sense of unity of self, an enhanced level of confidence, self-belief and decreased addictive behaviour (D. Y. Kim, 2011; Rambo, 1993, 2010; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998). On Day 6, Rosanna reported that *'I just felt a smile within me'*. The smile seemed to be a metaphor for a sense of unity of self that countered her earlier sense of brokenness referred to as *'garbage'* and *'emptiness'*. Following the counselling session, she had felt *'completely cleansed'*, *'in the core of my being that everything was wiped clean'*. Referring to her traumatic memories impinging on her life functioning, Rosanna seemed to indicate a level of self-confidence when she disclosed that *'from this point of time I'm not going to allow them they cannot affect me anymore'*. Lyn appeared to indicate a contrast in her self-belief when she declared that *'I know I'm the chosen one, I know I'm not unwanted anymore'*. She seemed to have found a call to mission when she declared, *'I'm actually seeing it, that I have it in me, that if I believe I can make someone else believe'*. Trulear (2007) suggests that the call to mission is an important feature of the Christian identity. Seby was unsure about making a difference to his addictive behaviour. He seemed to have settled for a compromise position when he disclosed *'but now definitely I will reduce and go move on to, lower drinks you know and see how it goes'*.

Spiritual changes are another set of variables in the content of change (Barsness, 2006; Devenish, 2001; Mahoney & Pargament, 2004). Talking about a sense of certainty of salvation enthused Lyn. It gave her a sense of purpose. She claimed that *'the very fact that the Lord along with me has given salvation to my family has obviously proved that I should not move away from them...he has sent me to that family for a purpose'*. Nadine had recognised her sense of estrangement from God in the early days of the Retreat and hoped to come closer to God. However, as stated above, she complained about her lack of faith on Day 6. Remo, Rosanna and

Lyn reported a sense of new-found relationship with God. Remo reported feeling that he *'was a child of God'* and that he would take Jesus along as a companion *'to work'* and *'everywhere'*. In contrast, Nadine who on Day 5 appeared to indicate arriving at a new sense of self, namely that of feeling loved by God, contradicted herself on Day 6 when she appeared to distress over her doubts and lack of faith. Rosanna leaked out her sense of change in the new-found relationship with God. She revealed recognising that *'she was only a tiny speck in the universe between, in the presence of a great and almighty presence'*. Lyn had a sense of certainty about the availability of Jesus in her life. She pointed out that, *'I know the Lord will I know now that there is somewhere I can turn to, some person I can look to, someone who is going to be there for me whenever I need him'*.

Lastly, enhanced interpersonal relationships are another significant variable in the content of change (Dylin, 2008). Johnson, who did not at first appear to care about others, indicated insensitivity towards how others felt about his smoking behaviour. Remo, who complained about feeling unloved by his family members, apologised saying, *'I'm sorry I would like to take back my word for saying that I do not love them'*. He seemed to manifest an ownership of his share of responsibility towards his relational problems. Following the experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit', Brennan felt empowered to go out and meet his cousins and express his forgiveness. It was an avenue that he had avoided until then.

An aspect related to interpersonal relationships but is a significant variable in itself is the area of forgiveness (L. G. Jones, 1995; Legaree, Turner, & Lollis, 2007; Sherwood, 2007). Two of the participants, namely Rosanna and Lyn, are notable for their understanding of forgiveness. Rosanna indicated arriving at an awareness that *'I had to forgive those people to forgive myself'*. Lyn indicated a contrasting claim. She stated, *'one thing that I made a big mistake in life it was a*

*big mistake that I don't know, I mean at least I feel that if I had to forgive myself I don't think I would be able'*. Both had recognised the importance of forgiveness in life. However they differed on the pre-eminence of self-forgiveness and forgiveness of the other.

### **12.5. Rambo's Integrative Model of Conversion**

Given the theoretical richness and phenomenological inclusiveness of Rambo's Integrative Model (Kahn, 2000; Kahn & Greene, 2004; D. Y. Kim, 2011), the following subsection identifies the similarities and differences between this Model and participants' experience of conversion (Rambo, 1993, 1999, 2010). Such a comparison provides further evidence to the rationale for situating this research into the literary domain of Religious conversion. Rambo identifies six different stages of conversion which appear to occur sequentially, but are also recursive in nature.

#### **12.5.1. Context**

Participants referred to their personal and familial contexts rather than their cultural, social and political contexts. These references are outlined under the subthemes: *'Build-up of Crisis'* and *'Looking for someone to blame'*. For example, Nadine revealed that *'there are, I mean events in my life that have made me more weaker than making me, you a stronger person'*. Notably, there were no social or political upheavals of any significance outside the DRC context when the data for this study was collected.

#### **12.5.2. Crisis**

Participants reported experiencing crisis in their lives. Lyn, Remo, Rosanna and Seby had endured crisis for a long time prior to their arrival at DRC, whereas Carmo, Nadine and Johnson had comparatively endured crisis for a shorter time period. Arguably, the crisis was quite forceful for most of them such that their lives were disrupted. Crisis was experienced in the form

of personal inadequacy at coping with life problems and manifested in the form of raw emotions. All these facets of crisis are highlighted under the super-ordinate theme: Crisis.

### **12.5.3. Quest**

Before coming to DRC, participants had availed varied other avenues in their active search for a resolution to their problems. These included negative avenues such as addictive behaviours and positive avenues such as professional help. For example, Seby disclosed that *'I have too many addictions, problems...drugs, alcohol, cigarettes you know, probably gambling'*. Lyn disclosed that she had been *'going to different priests, different people counselling'*.

References to participants' quests are also presented under the super-ordinate theme: *Crisis*

### **12.5.4. Encounter**

This stage refers to the encounter with the advocate who either persuades or manages to convince the potential convert about the benefits of conversion. Almost all the participants reported an encounter with an advocate who was predominantly a significant other and who managed to convince them of the benefits of going to DRC.

When Lyn was seeking ideas on how to leave her home, her friend had told her *'you go there, you will find everything solved each and everything'* as if she would find new techniques for living. Because Remo came with a group, it is possible that his leader may have motivated him, for he revealed his aspirations for new strategies to resolve his problems. Johnson came along with his parents after being deported from the prison overseas. It appears he hoped to find a resource that would help him integrate this experience. Seby hoped that DRC would help him find a connection with a higher power, namely God. Brennan came to satisfy his wife's vow which probably was an implied reference to his desire for an emotionally satisfying marital relationship. Carmo's friend appears to have convinced him that going to DRC would help him

find peace of mind, for that was his expressed desire. For Nadine it was her dream that inspired her to go to DRC. Perhaps she had found a promise of relief to her difficulties.

Arguably, the first four stages of Rambo occurred prior to their coming to DRC although aspects of the encounter stage could also be associated with participants' experiences at DRC. For example, advocacy could be associated with the preaching at DRC. Yet, preaching seems to fit better with the notion of ideological encapsulation that belongs to the next stage. The next two stages were visible with participants' participation in the Retreat at DRC.

#### **12.5.5. Interaction**

The interaction phase represents participants' experiences at DRC which provided for physical, ideological and social encapsulation, although none of them were strictly enforced.

Physical encapsulation was visible in the confined physical space of the DRC campus. While participants were free to roam the whole campus, they were restricted from going outside the campus. Doing so warranted obtaining permission. Participants were expected to participate fully in the Retreat although this aspect was not strictly enforced as is evident with the participants. For example, towards the end of the Retreat, Seby and Carmo absented themselves from participation. Others like Nadine overslept in the mornings and appeared late for the sessions.

Social encapsulation which required participants to keep silent was also not strictly enforced. While some participants reported speaking to others, others like Carmo used his mobile phone to contact people overseas.

The ideological encapsulation which involved providing the participants with a Catholic and Charismatic world-view was facilitated through the use of rituals and rhetoric. For example, the improvised ritual at the Eucharist on Day 3 had a visible impact on Lyn and Nadine. The

rhetoric or the preaching which involved the use of language provided the participants with a narrative to this world-view. This world-view was communicated through the use of metaphors such as '*opening up*'. The major themes across the days are instances of ideological encapsulation in operation.

#### **12.5.6. Commitment**

In the interest of Commitment, participants were regularly called to decision making through the use of rituals, the call to surrender and through being inspired by the testimonies. For example, participants had to make a decision on Day 1 about what they would be surrendering. The decision making was established through inviting the participants to enlist the content of their surrender. This list was then ritualised as an offering. Similarly, there were other ritualised forums for further decision making and surrender, namely the Sacraments of 'Confession' and the Eucharist. Notably, there were only a few references to testimonies.

#### **12.5.7. Consequences**

This research could account for only the immediate effects of the experience of conversion. These effects are outlined under the subtheme: content of religious conversion. A long-term perspective on the impact of the conversion experience was beyond the scope of this study.

### **12.6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this Chapter began by demonstrating how the study addressed the research question. Then a theoretical statement which brings together all the initial tentative hypotheses of the super-ordinate themes is presented as an option for further empirical verification. The different facets of the process of change are then evidenced in the data to highlight the change processes in the findings. This evidence substantiates the rationale for locating the findings of

this study in the literature on religious conversion. This relationship is further discussed by contrasting the data with Rambo's Integrative model of religious conversion.

## Chapter 13: Conclusion

### 13.1. Assessing the study

Smith (2011) presents an evaluation criteria for assessing a qualitative study that adopts IPA as the research strategy. Accordingly, the following four criteria of Yardley (2000), were adopted, namely sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. This study also adopts the criteria of J. A. Smith (2011; 2009) which includes prevalence, representativeness, variability, clear focus and strong data in the interest of idiography, interpretation, elaboration of each theme and divergence and convergence.

The IPA strategy was adopted for this study to give a voice to the participants in their interpretation of their experience of each day. Such a focus is evidence of sensitivity to the context of the research. Hence an effort was made to obtain what participants chose to confide in the interview process. Towards this end, this research had only one opening data collection question that identified the territory to be covered namely the experience of each day. This singular data collection question let the participants navigate this territory as they chose. At the stage of data analysis, their voice was privileged by grounding the researcher's interpretations into the data through an empathic hermeneutic. Therefore, verbatim extracts of the participants are retained in the final outcome presented in the findings. Besides, sensitivity to context was also demonstrated by situating this study in the substantive context of DRC as well as the theoretical context of pertinent literature on religious conversion.

Commitment and rigour were ensured through conducting this study within the parameters of an IPA paradigm and thereby keeping it congruent with the underpinnings of IPA. The assumptions underpinning IPA influenced all aspects of this study, namely the research question, the purposive sampling procedure, associated sampling criteria such as homogeneity



and small sample size, the inductive, in-depth, participant-led manner of collecting the data and the double hermeneutic adopted to analyse the data.

A commitment to provide a suitable environment for interviewing was the most demanding. Some participants were uneasy with the noise pollution at the interview venue and with the distance between the interviewing room and their lodging. At times electricity supply was interrupted. Being committed to providing a suitable interviewing ambience meant a search, on the part of the researcher, for an alternative conducive venue. Besides, commitment to qualitative interviewing meant synchronising participants' availability with times and venues. In addition, commitment also meant personal inconveniences. Retaining both the levels of analysis, namely a single case as well as a cross case analysis, is testimony to the commitment and rigour of the analysis of the data.

The Super-ordinate themes and the working hypothesis in the form of a theoretical statement has provided the 700-odd pages of participants' data, with a level of coherence, complexity and configuration that makes the outcome interesting, engaging and insightful. Coherence is also visible in the match between the assumptions of IPA and the manner in which this research was conducted. Transparency is provided by evidencing the claims in participants' data as well as through declaring researcher's assumptions and the self-reflexive process. The data collection and data analysis procedures also provide transparency about the research process. Pertinent extracts from the personal journal of the researcher which include attitudes, emotions and struggles are also incorporated in the self-reflexive analyses for each of the super-ordinate themes. Furthermore, the Supervisors provided an independent audit for this study as they cross-checked the transcripts and audio files for verification of the claims made in the findings.

The outcome of the analysis is complex and comprehensible. The results are supported with strong data, not merely from a case perspective but also from across the cases. Thus the reader has the benefit of knowing the points of convergence and divergence across the participants on a particular super-ordinate theme as well as its subthemes. To demonstrate representativeness, the super-ordinate themes contain a proportionate number of extracts from across the participants together with variations. The study preserves these variations by presenting individual case extracts to illustrate the extensiveness or the range and the profundity of a particular super-ordinate theme.

### **13.2. Self-Reflexivity on the research**

In keeping with its philosophical underpinnings, the IPA strategy acknowledges the role and influence of the researcher on the research process. It does not dismiss or minimise the researcher's influence but calls for managing it through a self-reflexive process. The following self-reflexive aspects were considered pertinent.

#### **13.2.1. Influence of my background on the topic of interest**

This subsection addresses how my background influenced my orientation towards the topic of interest. As the eldest in the family, I was given to taking care of my siblings. This role sensitised me to human relationships and from hindsight catapulted me later in life into the study of human sciences. Subsequently, I undertook graduate and postgraduate studies in Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy. While such an education helped me primarily to embrace the academically warranted scientist practitioner orientation, it empowered me with skills, knowledge and abilities to enter into people's life worlds and facilitate a healing encounter.

The above mentioned educational background has thus shaped my personality and my view of human life and experience. It benefitted me with a heightened respect and regard for the

integrity and value of the individual human person. It privileged me with sensitivity to individual uniqueness and how it had been denied or sacrificed at the cost of privileging actuarial claims.

The paradigm of IPA and its thrust on idiography thus resonate with this deep felt orientation to value, acknowledge and appraise the uniqueness of individual human experience.

Furthermore, the above learning also kindled in me the hope and desire to be the benevolent difference to people's lives. It explains my interest in the dynamics of change, particularly change in the religious context.

### **13.2.2. How data collection was managed**

This subsection addresses how my preoccupations, prejudices, motivations and desires affected the data collection process and how these were managed. To begin with, the self-reflexive subsections presented for each of the super-ordinate themes manifest the management of these dynamics during the interviews. In so doing they attest to my effort of seeking to privilege the voice of the participant during the interview. The following therefore is an addition to what has already been presented under each super-ordinate theme.

As part of my preparation for the field trip of data collection, I drew on the training in Gestalt psychotherapy to declare and thereby make explicit to myself in writing my foreknowledge. The purpose of this exercise was to facilitate its bracketing. For example I declared my motivations. To enunciate, the underlying motive of data collection was to secure good qualitative data for this research project. Furthermore I had envisaged the possibility that the management of DRC would be open to such an investigation given that the earlier doctoral investigation was a phenomenological pursuit. I also assumed that such an investigation would be supported by the Catholic University of Notre Dame. In addition, I was desirous of getting to

know the change processes operating at DRC. The hope was that I would be able to uncover these changes processes and employ them in my own therapeutic practice.

I was prejudiced about the type of participants I would encounter. I thought that participants would be practising Catholics. So I was surprised when I discovered that although a few of the participants formally identified themselves as Catholics, some of them were not practising Catholics. I recognized that some of them were very secular minded and un-Catholic in their attitudes and behaviours. However the broad cross-section of the sample was representative of the Goan Catholic lineage and society.

It was this effort of writing down my foreknowledge that provided me with a compelling clarity about the need to have only one data collection question. The need was to reduce the power differential between the participants and me as the researcher because I was a priest and participants would get to know about it through my introduction. So the singular question enabled me to let the participants know the territory to be covered in the interview without much direction on my part. Thus the participants were empowered to take control of the interview content. This singular data collection question was a strategy at managing my preconceptions, prejudices and motivations lest they should influence the nature of the data shared by the participants. As indicated earlier, the probes focused merely on the emotionally and bodily activating issues.

From my Gestalt training as well as through my daily practice of meditation, I am exposed to the art of awareness of awareness. This practice has enabled me with a capacity for self-monitoring. As Gestalt practice suggests, becoming aware dilutes the intensity of the underlying emotions. While a part of me was present to the interviewee during the interviews, another part of me engaged in monitoring my own parallel processes. The Gestalt training had

also facilitated enhanced body awareness. As evidenced under some of the super-ordinate themes, this monitoring greatly involved awareness of my viscerally felt activations to recognise my phenomenology and bracket it but also as a mirroring feedback of participant's phenomenology. I could not always draw on this mirroring resource because I found the most of the participants to be in a rush. Very often I had a sense that the participants were trying to communicate as much material as they could about their experience within the twenty minutes time-frame provided to them. Consequently, I was aware of the need to be patient with my probes. The benefits of bracketing were immediately visible because participants were very forthcoming. It is a strong point of this study that almost all the participants reported what appears to be a very close narrative of their experience. Together, the experiences of the participants are rich but diverse such that points of convergence and divergence could be drawn out from the data through a cross case analysis.

Keeping a journal was an asset that aided this process of bracketing. Declaring my emotional issues to myself in the journal helped me take note of my own activations arising from the interviews as well as those others from the unexpected predicaments that surfaced on some days. Writing a journal at the end of each day thus helped minimize possible interference of personal emotional issues on the data collection process.

What greatly aided the above attempts at bracketing was the decision not to attend the Retreat myself. I had anticipated that if I attended the retreat then I would be prejudiced and that it would perhaps influence the quality of my presence. Hypothetically, instead of staying present to the participants, I could have probed for comparisons and contrasts with my experience of the retreat. So avoiding participation in the Retreat facilitated a level of naivety about the retreat such that I could remain truly phenomenologically present to the emerging phenomenology of

the participants in the interview moment. I found myself seeking to discover the Retreat experience through the eyes of the participants. In addition, it also helped me to let the participants take control of the territory of the interview without much intrusion from me.

Data collection was not merely a case of managing my foreknowledge from impinging on the process. It was also a case of my foreknowledge being challenged and altered. For example, my preconceptions about God were impacted by the data collection. Having grown up in an orthodox Catholic background, I had anticipated a traditional theology about God, that God would be portrayed as an authoritarian entity. I found myself being surprised as this preconception was confronted in participants' reports. Consequently my world-view was impacted as I began to notice an alteration in my personal understanding of God. It gradually dawned on me that I had begun the movement towards personally assimilating the new-found theology about God as a loving and caring Father. Witnessing the difference such a theology had made to some of the participants across the days of the retreat had convincing power and impact on me.

### **13.2.3. How the analysis was managed**

This subsection addresses how my preoccupations, prejudices, motivations and desires affected the data analysis and how these orientations were managed. Larkin et al. (2006) advise the researcher "to draw from a wide repertoire of analytic strategies, and that these may be informed by prior experience and knowledge, psychological theory, or previous research – provided that they can be related back to a phenomenological account..." (p. 116). This quote highlights the reality that the researcher's 'forestructure', namely the preoccupations, prejudices, motivations and desires, are not to be bracketed entirely in the data analysis phase of IPA. Fade (2004) puts it more clearly by saying, "the researcher's beliefs are not seen as biases to be

eliminated but rather as being necessary for making sense of the experiences of other individuals” (p. 648). IPA seems to adopt this position because, through its hermeneutic facet, it recognises that an empirical investigation requires interpretation on the part of the researcher. Hence IPA prescribes a double hermeneutic, where "the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 3) or “something is (very deliberately) revealed ‘as something else’ (Dreyfus, 1995)” (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 116). However this does not mean that the imposition of meaning or the interpretation offered by the researcher is arbitrary or ungrounded in the data. Rather as Larkin et al. (2006) suggest above, the interpretation has to be grounded in the data and ascertained for compatibility with the meaning offered by the participants because as J. A. Smith and Osborn (2003) observe, “the main currency for an interpretative phenomenological analysis study is the meanings particular experiences, events, states hold for participants” (p. 51).

Accordingly, all my prior learning and experience came to bear on the interpretation of the data. This prior knowledge includes my learning from the fields of psychology and psychotherapy, the literature review that had informed me about the nature of the experience of the participants at DRC, my upbringing as a Goan Catholic and the experiences thereby. All this 'forestructure' emerged in my consciousness during the analysis in the form of an embodied feedback such as intuitive hunches, viscerally felt sensations, images, ideas and the critic that my embodied self presented to me as I familiarised myself with the data. However, because the basic unit of analysis is the meaning making of the participant, the analysis required me not to arbitrarily impose this embodied feedback on the data but rather to seek a grounding of this feedback in the data through searching for evidence. Towards this effort of grounding my interpretations into the data, I employed the following strategies.

At first I listened and re-listened to the digitalised recordings of the interviews in the effort to hear participants' voices and note inflections of tones as well as shades of meaning to gain familiarity with the data. Such an effort helped check the embodied feedback as it presented itself sporadically over the weeks and months spent in analysis. I carried a digital recorder during the entire period of analysis in my everyday living to capture the contrasts and affirmations that surfaced in my awareness. Such an effort was also supported through memo writing. This memo writing included summaries, paraphrases, comparisons, similarities, echoes, amplifications, contradictions, associations, participants' use of language which were initially unfocused but were eventually arranged for patterns and themes through the use of mapping diagrams (Eatough & Smith, 2008; J. A. Smith, et al., 1999; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003). The iterative process of analysis also aided this effort such that a meaning ascribed to a word or phrase was modified owing to an insight emerging from a later analysis (See Appendix R).

Furthermore, I sought to situate myself into the world-view of the participant. The interest was to know, "what is it like to be experiencing this or that for this particular person" (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p. 181). I assumed that it could be the case with the participants of this study that "people struggle to express what they are thinking and feeling, there may be reasons why they do not wish to self-disclose, and the researcher has to interpret people's mental and emotional state from what they say" (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 52). Hence the meanings leaking through the narratives of the participants are also accounted for.

The bodily activations experienced by the participant provided much of the evidence to ground the interpretations. Towards this end, I drew on my own notes from the data collection phase which helped me reconnect visually and also at times viscerally with the participants as I read the transcripts and listened to participants' voices. The discordance between Lyn's verbal



report and the lack of bodily display of emotion is an example. It is noted under the super-ordinate themes: 'Opening up' and 'Inner healing'.

Drawing to my Goan Catholic 'forestructure', including my knowledge of religious conversion and the Catholic Charismatic movement, I sought to listen for cultural nuances. IPA draws on the Heideggerian notion of 'forestructure' in its assumption that "when people tell stories of their lives, they are drawing on the culturally available stock of meanings" (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p. 185). So the meaning making was not established through isolating texts out of their contexts. Rather the context was accounted for by noting the culturally recognisable thinking and emotional patterns together the biographical information that was provided by the participants. Thus the culture, language, skills and activities were accounted for in the interpretation of the data. It was this same objective that influenced the selection of a homogenous sample.

Additionally, the IPA framework also influenced the nature of the analysis in terms of what was retained and what was discarded. To begin with, the entire focus of the analysis was on the meanings, participants were seeking to communicate through their narratives. But what was selected for presentation was material that was pertinent to the research question. Thus the focus on the 'what' and the 'how' determined what was retained in the analysis for presentation. The steps for analysis outlined in Chapter 4 (refer subsection 4.7: Analysis of Data) together with the criteria for evaluating an IPA study (refer subsection 13.1: Assessing the Study) also greatly influenced what is finally retained and highlighted in the findings.

In the course of the analysis, I had to ask myself whether I was misjudging the meaning? Could I be fooling myself? Could the participants have meant something else? Although the

feedback from the Supervisors added another facet to the verification of my claims in the analysis, their interventions were particularly helpful in resolving such dilemmas.

#### **13.2.4. How participants' perceptions may have affected their self-presentations and thus the Data**

This subsection discusses how I may have been perceived by the interviewees and how this may have affected participants' self-presentations as well as the whole research process. These Catholic participants knew that I was a priest for that is how I was introduced publicly to them on Day 1 by the preacher. Besides, in my own invitation to them on Day 1, I had declared myself to be a priest. Hence assumedly, participants would have ascribed a level of authority and competence to me that they would normally accord to a priest. It was for this reason and therefore to reduce the power differential and to re-inforce my role as a researcher that I refrained from actively participating in the rituals and from exercising priestly ministry on the campus throughout the course of the field trip of data collection. While such an assumption could be taken forward to suggest that participants would have wanted to present themselves as being socially desirable, as good and honourable people who would want to be seen positively by a priest, participants' reports seem to present a contrasting self-presentation. They did not begin their presentations by claiming that the experience of each day was all good. Rather they were quite honest with reporting what seemed to be more negative experiences rather than positive ones particularly at the beginning of the Retreat. Rather than camouflaging such experiences or even portraying them as positive, there was no hesitation on their part with regards to disclosing these negative experiences as evidenced under the first four super-ordinate themes. In fact, underpinning these super-ordinate themes is a storyline of struggles and failures at responding to the inputs of the Retreat. Some of the participants were also critical of the Retreat. Arguably

these could have entertained a desire to be viewed positively by me. So there seems to have been mixed self-presentations rather than the case of a single self-presentation. Drawing on my learning from the Internal Family Systems therapy, I recognized the many diverse selves of the participants that presented themselves across the six days of the Retreat.

There were instances initially when I felt that some of the participants were trying to impress me. I also had a sense that most of the participants began to perceive me as someone who was accepting of their person irrespective of their past experiences and not someone who was imposing on them. I recognised that my emotional joining in through staying present to my emotions had greatly facilitated that acceptance. From hindsight, I recognize that this strategy had greatly contributed towards evoking rich personal reports from the participants. At times, some of the participants surprised me with the level of disclosure they brought to the interview. There was a level of honesty on their part that a part of me recognised instantly. But the scientist in me also sought evidence for it through monitoring for congruence between their narratives and their physical presentations before me.

In addition, I had a sense that participants had found in me a mirror that reflected back to them their experiences of each day. Some of them seemed to have used the mirror to enhance their commitment and engagement in the Retreat. One participant expressed his gratitude on Day 6 outside the interview context and disclosed that the interview had enabled him to engage in the Retreat. Perhaps others too might have experienced a similar benefit although they did not explicitly make such a declaration. The fact that they kept coming to the interviews at the end of each day, in spite of failing to fully engage in the Retreat, suggests that they benefited from the interviewing at least to some extent. The fact that I met them in private and inquired about their

experiences may have given them a sense of being special and honoured. Such a treatment of them may have been an added reason they kept coming to the interviews.

It was obvious that participants were influenced by my probes about how they felt emotionally and in their bodies and what they thought about what happened to them. I noticed on successive days that some of the participants had registered this interest of mine and were providing this information without any probes. It was as if they had learnt what they had to talk about as part of their reporting in the interviews. Without being asked most of them reported on the varied dimensions of their experiences, namely their feelings, their bodily felt awareness, their cognitions and their relationships. In so doing, it was obvious that some of the participants were seeking to present themselves favourably.

### **13.3. Limitations of the study**

The specificity of the DRC context and the idiographic focus of IPA imply that this study cannot be generalised, as is the case with many if not most qualitative studies. This research investigated participants' experience at an in-depth level. Such an orientation warranted the selection of fewer participants. This purposeful sample was undertaken because the researcher believed that the information being sought could be obtained from them. Hence this study cannot make a definitive claim about other participants at DRC. Even the claims made about the participants of this study are tentative claims. However, theoretical transferability is a desired outcome for the perceptive reader. In the context of this study, it means that a perceptive reader might find associations and differences between one's personal and professional experience and the findings of this study (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003). Thus it is hoped that aspects of this study may be appropriated by the discerning reader.

At times there was real disturbance in the physical ambience of DRC owing to ongoing repair work and singing practices conducted in the neighbouring buildings. This disturbance may have affected some of the participants in their ability to stay present to their experiences of the each day. Obtaining the desired privacy for the interview was a difficult accomplishment at times.

The data obtained for this study is a refined version of participants' actual experience. It is a report of what participants remembered as they recounted the experiences of each day. Snow and Machalek (1984) observe that views about conversion experiences are temporary and that they vary. Hence the analysis presented here is not a definitive statement on the participants nor a claim that the effects of their participation in the DRC Retreat persisted for a long time after the data collection. Establishing such a possibility was beyond the scope of this study.

Participants referred to what seem to be references to body gyrations. The researcher has actively refrained from discussing this issue owing to a lack of adequate knowledge about such experiences because they border on energetic experiences. Besides, the field of bioenergetics is in its nascent stages of adoption by mainstream disciplines.

#### **13.4. Recommendations**

This study makes only tentative claims. Future studies that will expand the findings of this study, particularly the working hypothesis in the form of the theoretical statement, are called for.

Instead of enhancing participants' capacity to stay in touch with themselves, the social environment of the Confessional seems to have negatively affected some of the participants. As the individual instances of Nadine and Lyn testify, the venue of the 'Confession' may function as

an anxiety-generating avenue for similar type participants. Thereby it may impede their ability to stay connected with themselves. Hence the venue for 'Confession' needs reconsideration.

The results of this study endorse the findings in the literature on religious conversion that teenage to young adulthood is the most potent age for change. Hence, although DRC has a Youth Retreat, it could amplify its efforts at transformation by providing more regular retreats for the Youth.

The interface between DRC and the field of Bioenergetics has been an un-investigated territory until now and requires further investigation. Participants' narratives seem to endorse instances of energetic experiences. It is anticipated that further in-depth studies appreciating the experience underpinning such energetic experiences would provide another perspective to the conversion experience of the participants.

Similarly, instances of testimony could also be further investigated. There were negligible allusions to testimonies. Hence, testimonies could not be significantly considered as a theme.

### **13.5. Conclusion**

This study set out to explore 'how' each participant came to be 'what' they came to be as a result of each day's experience of the Inner Healing Retreat. It was assumed that each day's experience would be an experience of change which would contribute to an experience of religious conversion. Towards this end, this research adopted the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis research strategy.

Thus, what have we learned about religious conversion as it operates at DRC? Religious conversion at DRC appears to be a cumulative process of regenerative change for most of the participants.

Participants arrived at the Retreat feeling overwhelmed by their experience of crisis which generated raw and overwhelming emotions. There was a build-up of the crisis over months and years and participants often sought to hold others responsible for their crisis.

Day 1 at DRC was an invitation to surrender their whole life to God, their inhibitions with regards to the charismatic activities and their familiar routine, space and comforts. Participants reported a struggle with responding to these varied invitations to surrender.

Day 2 invited the participants to open up to various aspects of themselves and to a new level of relationship with others and God. Once again they responded with a struggle although some of them managed to open up: to new perspectives; to new emotions; to engage more fully in the retreat; to re-examine their past and to a new level in their relationships with others and with God.

Day 3 invited the participants to 'Confession'. Participants reported engaging in a serious preparation for Confession. But parallel processes interfered during their Confessional experience owing to which they felt incomplete. Some of the participants capitalised on the second opportunity at Mass to bring a resolution to that incompleteness while some of them began a process of disengagement from the Retreat. Day 3 also marked the polarities between the participants. On one end of the pole lie participants who continued to engage in the Retreat whereas others began a journey of disengagement from the Retreat.

Day 4 was an invitation to engage in Counselling. Participants experienced an anxious anticipation before the Counselling session followed by an experience of feeling challenged by the confrontational strategies of the counsellors. However they also reported varied immediate after-effects following the Counselling session.

Day 5 was about an engagement in the 'Inner healing' session. They reported an experience of revisiting their wounded past, an impactful experience of being called by name for a mission and of a dawning awareness about the changes they had begun to experience.

Day 6 was about the experience of the 'Baptism in the Spirit'. Some participants reported a bodily, cognitive and felt experience of 'Baptism in the Spirit' along with a sense of empowerment.

Finally, through comparisons and contrasts between the findings of this study and the literature on Religious Conversion as well as Rambo's Integrative Model of Religious Conversion, this thesis provides a convincing treatment of the research question:

*How do the participants at the Divine Retreat Centre come to be what they came to be as a result of each day's experience of the Inner Healing Retreat?'*

Some of the participants were fully engaged in the Retreat until the end of the Retreat. Others found it difficult to respond adequately and consequently disengaged from the Retreat. Some of these who disengaged envisaged another attempt at the Retreat.

There emerged a pattern that probably explains the reason why for more than a decade, DRC still continues to draw millions of people. Hence, the question could be asked, why is DRC successful even now? Arguably, it is because the process makes a difference in the lives of the participants. This thesis has highlighted some of the mechanisms by which this difference occurs at the personal level.



## Appendices

### Appendix A: A Typical Day at the DRC Inner Healing Retreat

Time	Activity
5 am	Rising bell
6.15 am	Praise and worship, Mass on Days 5 & 6, Rosary, Talks
9 am	Breakfast
10 am	Talks
1 pm	Lunch
2 pm	Talks
5 pm	Tea & Free time
6.15 pm	Mass/Homily
9 pm	Dinner, Silence, Adoration, to Bed

**Appendix B: Main Activities across each day of the retreat**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Important events of each Day</b>
Sunday	Arrival across the day Evening - Mass
Monday	Preparatory Talks/Praise & Worship/Mass
Tuesday	Confession/Talks/Mass
Wednesday	Counselling/Talks/Mass
Thursday	Fast from Morning till Afternoon/Mass/Inner healing session
Friday	Mass/Anointing of the Holy Spirit, Afternoon onwards - Departure

### **Appendix C: Helpful directives for interviewing**

Prime focus = - second level of reality since raw data is not available - immediate and concrete

impressions of participant's variables – i.e. participant's experience and interpretation

- you want to know what meaning client has given to the experience - obtain insider perspective - insider's perspective involves a detailed examination of the participant's meaning making, personal perception/account of events or objects or experiences

- get the client to be in touch with his/her noema

- help client describe her experience (right mode material) rather than provide merely an explanation

- capture participants' speech and behaviour about this phenomenon of renewal

For that on my part:

- I take a listening stance – communicate that I am listening

[Not that I will be blank but I will bracket - remain conscious of what biases arise within me but will bracket them or mentally recognise and put them aside so that they do not intrude into participant's sharing].

[I will remain open to the immediate and concrete impressions of participant's variables that make up the experience. These variables will become the basis of their narratives of renewal.

Thus I will attend to my phenomenology without imposing it on the participant].

All experiences [are] to be considered initially as valid.

I will track the energy/figure/activations evident in the participant and seek to support client's contact with his or her internal processes through a listening stance and rapport

I will remain alert for incongruities in the phenomenology of the client (namely, facial expressions) and probe such moments, by asking questions such as: “I noticed when you talked about...you were smiling?” I will ask such a question and keep quiet and wait for whatever arises. The purpose of such questioning is to raise awareness without asking for rationalisation and at the same time to facilitate the congruence between what is articulated and what is experienced

The underlying motives of the participants will become manifest as interviewing progresses.

Strategies for recruitment:

- recruit first time participants from an English speaking background
- similar religious (namely, Catholic) and cultural (namely, Goan) background  
as the researcher

Let the participant know that the territory he or she needs to cover is the day to day experience of the retreat and that the participant is free to take the direction he or she wishes to take, because the goal of interviewing in IPA is “to explore, flexibly and in detail, an area of concern”

Do not demonstrate a bias for any elements of participant’s sharing

Alternative solutions:

The following provisional prompts will help the participant re-orient his or her focus on the immediate concrete experience:

- “How do you feel about that now?” or
- “how are you now”?
- “Can you tell me more about that?”
- ‘What happened for you today?’

**Appendix D: Memo of the arguments against the scientific method**

1. Science has its limitations and boundaries. While science is effective in understanding the physical reality, there are other areas in life such as art, aesthetics, spirituality and morality, that need a different discourse because they lie outside the domain of scientific laws. While one can ethically manipulate chemicals and plants for the purposes of experimentation, it is not easy and may even be ethically wrong to manipulate people's lives in the effort to control the conditions of their social environment. Therefore, this research does not adopt the 'scientific model' as practised by the physical sciences but the empirical research model as practised in human sciences.
2. Reality is more than what exists 'out there'. Reality is a social creation; constructed and interpreted by people. For this reason, the focus of this research is on how people make sense of their world, and how they create their world. In adopting the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as the research strategy, this research therefore seeks to investigate Participants' meaning making of their experience.
3. Human beings are not the same as chemicals. Chemicals may remain indifferent to the influences occurring in the process of data collection but not human beings. Hence, unlike the physical sciences, social researchers cannot be objective because the researcher's feelings, values and expectations influence and are influenced by the research process and outcome. Therefore, social research has to appreciate the possibility of alternate and multiple versions of reality and truth. In addition, reflexivity on the part of the researcher, forms an important part of the research process. Thus, this research project acknowledges the influence of both the Participant's as well as the researcher's feelings, values and expectations in the research process.

4. Language is another mediating factor in social research. Drawing on IPA's link with Social Cognition, this research acknowledges the influence and role of language during data analysis (Denscombe, 2003; Willig, 2008).

**Appendix E: Characteristics of the Sample**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Highest Educational level</b>	<b>Employed/not</b>	<b>Place of Birth</b>	<b>Current place of residence</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Missed Day 1 interview</b>
Nadine	26	B. Com	Yes	Goa	Goa	Single	Female	
Lyn	19	Planned to pursue B. Arts	Student	Hong Kong	Goa	Single	Female	Yes
Johnson	30	Engineer	Not	Dubai	Goa	Single	Male	
Rosanna	20	Masters in Literature	Yes	Kuwait	Mumbai	Single	Female	Yes
Brennan	40	B. Com	Yes	Goa	Dubai	Married	Male	Yes
Remo	55	Year 12	Not	Burma	Mumbai	Married	Male	
Carmo	34	Architectural designing	Yes	Goa	Dubai	Single	Male	
Seby	42	Year 12	Not	Goa	Portugal	Single	Male	

**Appendix F: Agenda of the Meeting with the Director**

1. The following is my perspective which I enlist here for the benefit of clarity:
  - a. I am here at DRC as a Researcher although I will declare myself to be a priest.
  - b. Detached position - non-Participant in activities – minimum interference
  - c. Minimise visibility of priesthood so as to:
    - to minimise the power differential – since I am a priest
    - to minimise my influence in the actual happenings/experience of the Participants
2. I will focus only on the Inner Healing Retreats – 7 in number.
3. I plan to introduce myself to all – on the first day (Sunday evening)
  - Then meet with willing volunteers – would need a common meeting place?
  - Then recruit candidates that meet the research criteria
  - Plan to recruit 3-4 candidates per retreat
4. I plan to interview the Participants at the end of each day
  - After the evening meal (dinner) – approx. 8.30 pm onwards
  - Interview each Participant for approx. 20 minutes
  - Participants will receive transcripts of the previous day's interview – my interaction with the Participants otherwise would occur only if very necessary
  - On Friday - will interview them before they leave
5. Need - Names of Prospective Counsellors on campus - to be handed over to the Participants
6. Need - Room for interviewing – that will be free of noise pollution and interference



**Appendix G: My public request for Volunteers to the study**

*(The following was read out in public)*

Praise the Lord!

I am here to make a very special request to you. But before I do that let me introduce myself.

To a few of you we have said Hello! Those of you I haven't met...

My name is Fr. Joe Cardoso. I am a Priest. I am also a student, currently enrolled at the

University of Notre Dame Perth, Australia in a PhD programme, which is the reason, why I am here.

Now to my request

This place Divine Retreat Centre is known far and wide nationally and internationally for the many graces and blessings it has brought and continues to bring to thousands; but much more importantly, for the change it brings on a personal level. I am interested in documenting on a formal level this process of change that occurs with you in this religious context.

So there is only anecdotal evidence published in popular new columns apart from the word of mouth communication and more recently the Divine TV. Most of you have probably come because someone else told you about how he or she has changed and has become a different person. And I assume you desired the same for yourself.

I intend listening to and formally taking your experience here in the next few days into the scholarly field. And I intend to do that through a formal doctoral level empirical research that I am here to conduct. What that means is I will need volunteers from among you to participate in this study.

Hence may I hereby request you to volunteer for this study?

Fr Augustine Vallooran, the Director of DRC and the Ethics committee of the University of Notre Dame Australia have approved this study. I am grateful to Fr Augustine for his kind permission to conduct this study and to my University back in Australia.

I will interview those who will volunteer for the next 6 days of the retreat, as I accompany you on your participation in this retreat. I want to assure you that whatever you share, will remain confidential with me and my supervisors. May I once again humbly request you to volunteer to be part of this study. To those of you desiring to volunteer and to others of you who would want to know what is involved before you can commit yourself, let us meet behind the stage in front of the phone booth after this service and we will take forward your interest from there.

**Appendix H: Information Sheet handed to the Participants**

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is ... I am a student at the University of Notre Dame, Australia and am enrolled in a Doctor of Philosophy degree. As part of my course I need to complete a research project.

The title of the project is “Religious change experiences of the participants of the Inner Healing Retreat at the English-speaking site at the Divine Retreat Centre, Kerala, India”.

The purpose of this study is to obtain participants' narratives of their change experiences at the Inner Healing Retreat.

Participants will take part in a 20 minute tape-recorded interview. Information collected during the interview will be strictly confidential. This confidence will only be broken in the instance of legal requirements such as court subpoenas, freedom of information requests or mandated reporting by some professionals. To protect the anonymity of participants in a project with a small sample size, a code will be ascribed to each of the participants to minimise the risk of identification.

The protocol adopted by the University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee for the protection of privacy will be adhered to and relevant sections of the Privacy Act are available at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>

You will be offered a transcript of the interview, and I would be grateful if you would comment on whether you believe we have captured your experience.

Before the interview I will ask you to sign a consent form. You may withdraw from the project at any time.

Data collected will be stored securely in the University's School of Arts and Sciences for five years. No identifying information will be used and the results from the study will be made freely available to all participants.

Due to the sensitive nature of this issue, the interview may raise some difficult feelings for you. If this happens I will make sure that support is available for you if you desire it. You will be provided with relevant counselling information at the interview and contacted by the researcher one week afterwards.

The Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Notre Dame Australia has approved the study.

Dr. Martin Philpott, Dr Peter Black, Dr Carol Holmes and Dr Denis Ladbrook are supervising the project. If you have any queries regarding the research, please contact me directly or Dr. Martin at martinphilpott@nd.edu.au or Dr. Peter Black by phone 0011/61/08/94330135 or by email at pblack@nd.edu.au; Dr. Carol, Holmes by email at cholmes@nd.edu.au or Dr. Denis Ladbrook by email at denisladbrook@gmail.com

I thank you for your consideration and hope you will agree to participate in this research project.  
Yours sincerely,

---

signed

*If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher or, alternatively, to the Provost, The University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 1225 Fremantle WA 6959, phone 0011/61/08/ 9433 0941.*

**Appendix I: Consent Form**

**Narratives of change: An Interpretative Phenomenological inquiry into the Charismatic renewal experiences of the participants of the Divine Retreat Centre, Kerala, India**

Informed Consent Form

I, (*participant's name*) \_\_\_\_\_ hereby agree to being a participant in the above research project.

- I have read and understood the Information Sheet about this project and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that I may withdraw from participating in the project at any time without prejudice and also withdraw any unprocessed identifiable data previously supplied.
- I understand that I will be interviewed for about 20 minutes at the end of each day of the retreat on my experiences arising out of the participation
- I understand that the interview will be audio-taped and all information gathered by the researcher will be de-identified and treated as strictly confidential.
- I agree that any research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information is not disclosed.

<p><b>PARTICIPANT'S</b></p> <p><b>SIGNATURE:</b></p>		<p><b>DATE:</b></p>	
--	--	---------------------	--

<b>RESEARCHER'S FULL NAME:</b>			
<b>RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE:</b>		<b>DATE</b> :	

*If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher or, alternatively, to the Provost, The University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 1225 Fremantle WA 6959, phone (08) 9433 0941.*

## Appendix J: Credentials of the Provisional Counsellor

From

Mr XYZ

Counselor, Divine Retreat Centre

Muringoor

To

The Participant of this study.

**Sub: BIO-DATA HIGHLIGHTING THE COUNSELLING ACTIVITIES BEING  
CARRIED OUT AT POTA AND ELSEWHERE**

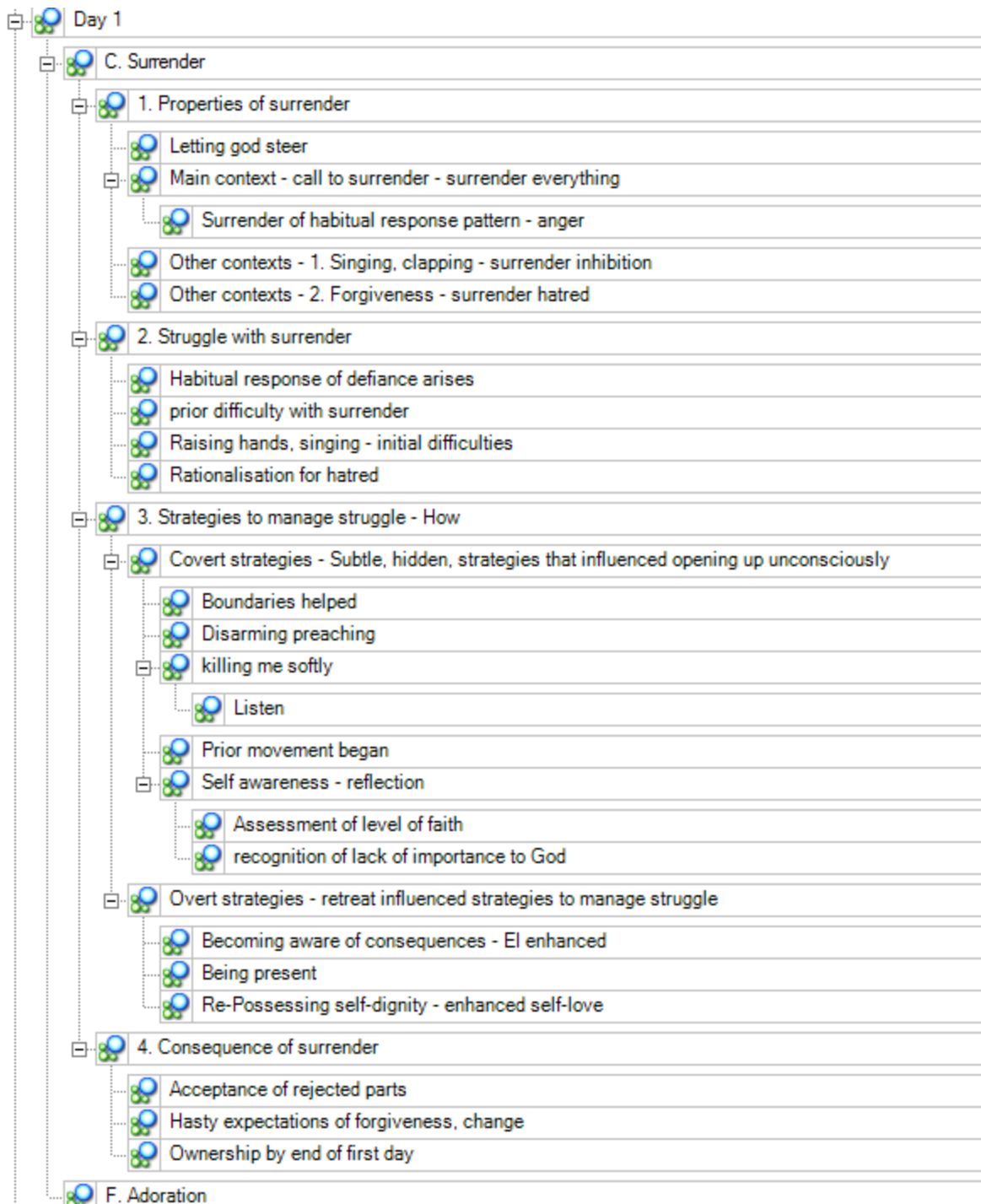
### Counselling experience:

- From the year 1987, I have been doing counselling activities at the church premises
- Having attended a few courses on counselling and with high educational background and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, I believe I am a competitive counsellor.
- The centre where I work attracts people from various parts of the country. Besides the people from different states of India, we also have people coming from various parts of the world
- For the last 21 years I have been doing counselling work not only in English but also other Indian languages. I do counselling for individuals and families.
- During my counselling, I do interact with them on their spiritual, mental, physical and relationship problems.
- I consider that it is a great privilege for me to have this profession by which people are able to look towards our God for redressing their various problems in life

### **MY EDUCATIONAL BACK GROUND**

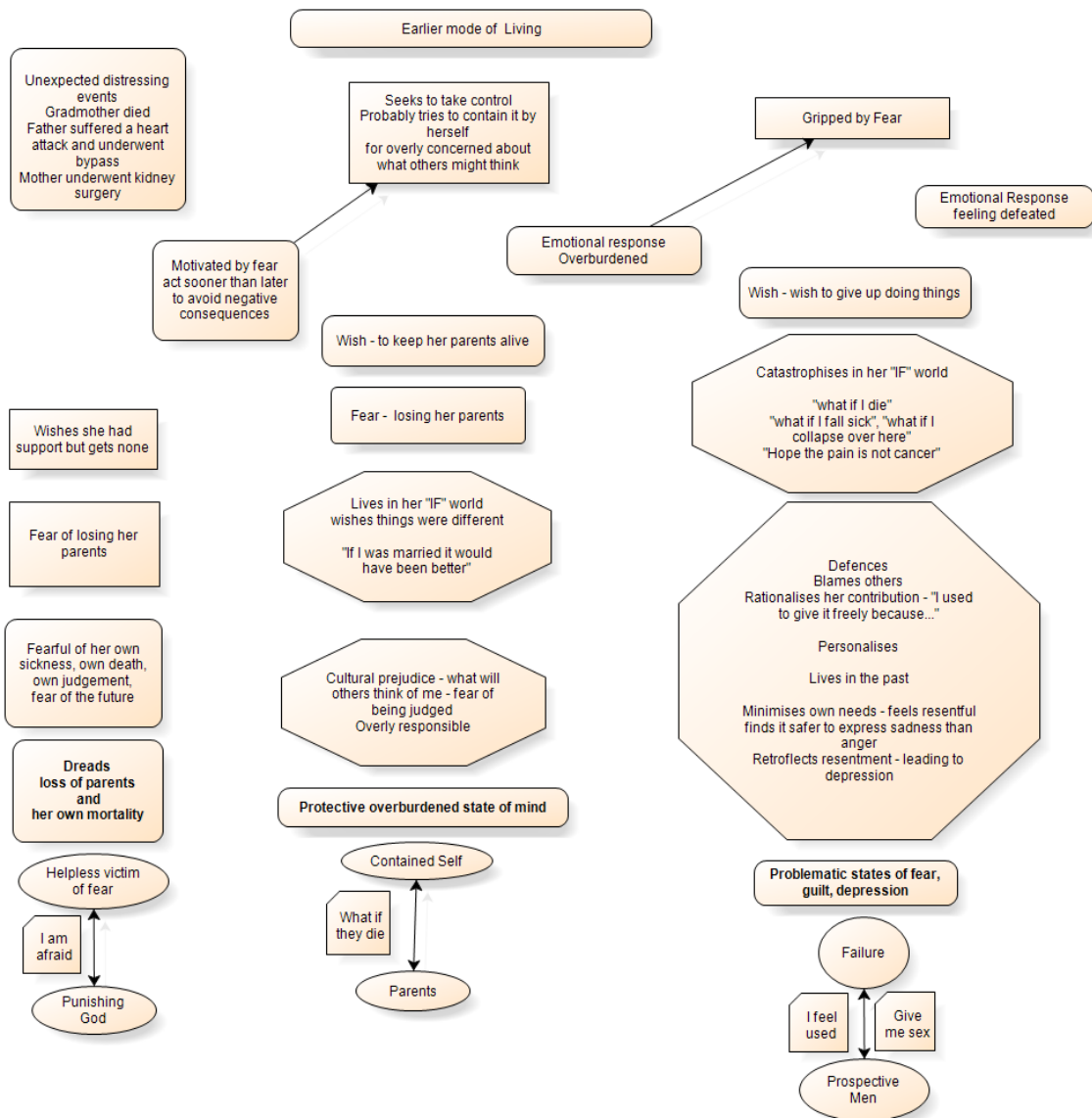
- After completing my Degree Course in Mechanical Engineering in the year 1969, I attended a few courses in Management Science and System Analysis
- While working, I attended a Post Graduate Degree Course in SQC & Operation Research conducted by ISI, India and successfully got the diploma.

**Appendix K: Example of screen clipped - an earlier coding in NVivo 8**

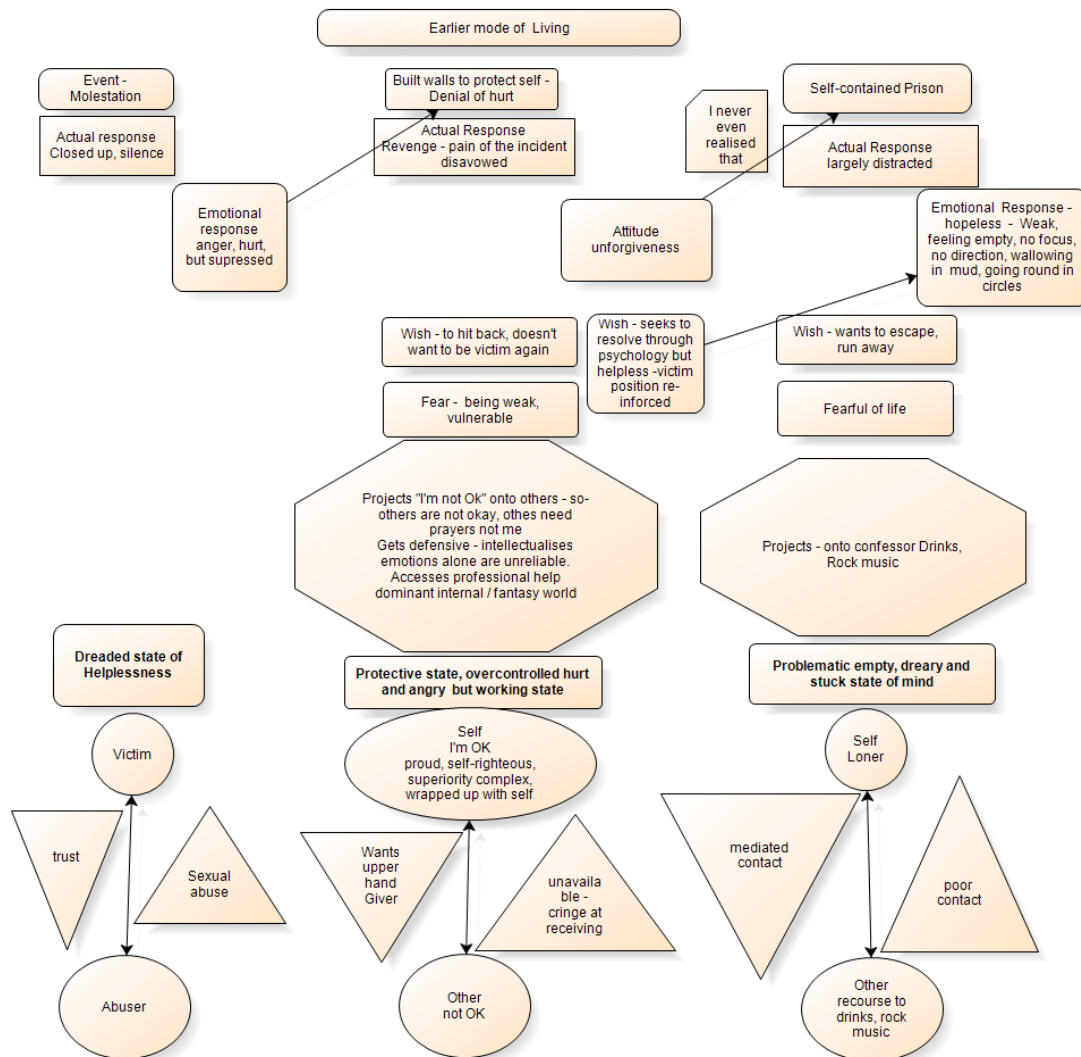




**Appendix L: Configurations for Nadine**



**Appendix M: Example of a preliminary model for Rosanna**



**Appendix N: Example of coding on paper and Word Document**

<p><b><u>Emergent codes</u></b>                      (Here shift from transcript to my comments – more of me)                      Psychological essence of the piece (draw on CA here)  <b>How why when</b>                      persons move/don't move from one step to another</p>	<p><b><u>Conceptual coding</u></b>                      Ask questions                      Comparisons                      Properties/dimensions                      Conditions                      Action/interactions                      Consequences</p>	<p><b><u>Exploratory comments</u></b>                      Descriptive comments                      Linguistic comments                      Is it incident, issue, event, problem, concern, matter</p>	<p><b>Open range of provisional meanings – drawing on my exp, expertise</b></p>
	<p>Hope therapeutic element</p>	<p>Am waiting with hope &amp; faith                      Till now no exp                      My part – gave 100%                      Sat in 1<sup>st</sup> row hoping to get best out of it                      So looking forward for God's blessings, Holy Spirit to touch me</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>R – Day 1</u></b></p> <p><b>Interviewer 7a:</b> so R thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this study, tell me about your experience of the retreat today  <u>00:00:11-2</u> <b>R 1:</b> well today is the first day, I'm just attending the sessions with some hope, faith and really hoping something will happen to my life, so right now I didn't experience any touch of the holy spirit or change                      but I have been giving 100 percent attention, I have been very attentive, participation is 100 percent and I'm chose to sit on the very first row hoping to get the best out of this retreat,                      so I'm just really looking forward to getting god's blessing and that holy spirit should touch me</p> <p><u>00:01:01-4</u> <b>Interviewer 7a:</b> what happened to you, tell me about what happened?  <u>00:01:05-1</u> <b>R 1:</b> what happened in today's session or  <u>00:01:08-0</u> <b>Interviewer 7a:</b> what happened in for you in today's session, what were you aware of,</p>

	<p>Issues with son</p> <p>angry</p> <p>Blames in-laws</p>	<p>Yesterday’s sermon related to my life, to very purpose of my coming here</p> <p>I’m coming to your house – one person visiting will bring blessings – entire family</p> <p>Problem I came with – is with family members</p> <p>Immediate one = booked tickets for all to come here</p> <p>Son backed out – thought it was satan’s work</p> <p>Son been black spot</p> <p>He backs out with excuse, daughter follows – for no company</p> <p>Wife after convincing agrees to come – got 2 tickets confirmed, wife backed out last moment</p> <p>I was broken down</p> <p>Still shattered</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> reason – what happened on Xmas day – 21 years of marriage</p>	<p>what was happening?  <u>00:01:12-4 R 1:</u>ok, what I was aware of is yesterday when I came for the evening mass, when father gave a sermon during mass, it was related to my life, the very purpose of my visit for this retreat</p> <p>because when he spoke about Jesus calling down Zacharias and told him that I’m coming to your house and father said that one person who’s visiting the retreat will bring blessings to the entire family members</p> <p>because the problem with which I’ve carried along all the way from Mumbai to this Divine Retreat Centre is the problem that I’m facing with my family members</p> <p><u>00:02:03-9 Interviewer 7a:</u> can I ask you about the problem  <u>00:02:07-1 R 1:</u> the immediate problem was, two months ago I booked four tickets for my wife, my daughter and my son  <u>00:02:18-3 Interviewer 7a:</u> to  <u>00:02:18-3 R 1:</u> to come for the retreat, unfortunately my son backed out, I thought it’s a work of the Satan</p> <p>he has been a for me a black spot in the family, for all the life I’ve seen, and I don’t know because of the superstitious that I have been having he backs out with an excuse, therefore my daughter backs out for not having a company and then finally after lot of convincing my wife agrees to join me, was very happy, got the two tickets confirmed and at the last moment my wife backs out just to stay company with the two children.</p> <p>I was very much broken down, I mean very much shattered, so  <u>00:03:14-9 Interviewer 7a:</u> are you feeling shattered now  <u>00:03:16-6 R 1:</u> I’m still feeling shattered because I was going to cancel my trip at the last minute for what happened on a Christmas day, 21</p>
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	<p>Self-esteem tied to money</p> <p>Evaluating his worth by assets</p> <p>Shamed me – issues with shame</p>	<p>Though not with wife on 25<sup>th</sup>, had bad day, left home on bad note, very disturbed</p> <p>Though here I was praying</p> <p>Reason – life in total mess since marriage in 1987</p> <p>Till marriage – was financially sound – had good job, flat, in cloud nine</p> <p>After marriage attribute down fall to in-laws, bro-in-law who came to stay in my house</p> <p>Experienced financial losses – lost job, lost flat, moving in rented places</p> <p>Bought 3 flats but lost ownership of theirs</p> <p>Back on streets</p> <p>Reason bad Christmas = was having grudge – that nothing is happening</p> <p>When wife handed phone call from father – I refused to take, she forced it on me</p> <p>I stubborn –</p>	<p>years of our marriage, yesterday being our 21st wedding anniversary,</p> <p>although I was not with my wife on the 25th of December, Christmas day, we had a very bad day in the family and I left home with a bad note with my family, very disturbed</p> <p>although I’m here, I was praying</p> <p><u>00:03:52-4</u> <b>Interviewer 7a:</b> can I ask you about it</p> <p><u>00:03:53-8</u> <b>R 1:</b> the reason is my life is in a total mess since I married in the year 1987,</p> <p>and till the time I was married, I got married I was very very sound financially, I had a very good job, I had my own flat, I was really in the clouds nine</p> <p>but after my marriage I attribute my down fall to my in-laws who came in my picture, my brother-in-law come to stay in my house,</p> <p>I have experienced heavy financial loses by the money transactions, I lost my job, I lost my flat, 20 years down the line I’ve been moving from rental to rental, rental to rental</p> <p>I bought three flats but I lost those ownership flats in a month, in a period of 12 months to 15 months and I’m back on the streets and the reason why I had a bad Christmas, father, because I was having that grudge in me that nothing has been happening</p> <p>and when my wife handed over the phone call from her father, from Goa to wish me happy Christmas, I refused to take that call, she forced it upon me</p> <p>and I was stubborn I refused to take and then she switched off, she cried, she blamed me, she shouted at me, she finished with all her anger upon me,</p> <p>I waited for about one hour I went to her and I explained the whole thing which did not find a solution but erupted into further arguments</p>
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<p>Confused state of mind</p> <p>Blames others</p>	<p>Internal conflict</p> <p>ashamed</p> <p>blaming them</p> <p>feel like failure</p> <p>Material success</p> <p>Realisation as he talks</p>	<p>refused to take, she switched off, cried, blamed me, shouted</p> <p>Waited for 1 hour – went to explain to her – no solution – further arguments</p> <p>So that was bad christmas</p> <p>Even son said – shame on you going to Potta – when you can't forgive father-in-law</p> <p>I had told wife of humiliations, insults, letters, terrible things, can't take it anymore, he sent letters asking me to leave wife – go to monastery</p> <p>I visit goa – he insults me, he visit me = shouted in front of my children – shamed me – no respect to my age, responsibility</p> <p>Still I hold them responsible, Feel like putting salt on wound</p> <p>Came with low spirit</p> <p>Preoccupation – with family</p> <p>Am praying for them</p>	<p><u>00:05:53-3</u> and that's a bad Christmas I had, she told, even my son told me, shame on you going to Potta when you can't even forgive your father-in-law</p> <p>because I expressed to my wife the amount of humiliations (with emphasis on each word), the insults, the letters, terrible things I can't take it anymore, even he sent me letters asking me to leave her daughter and go to the monastery,</p> <p>every time I go to Goa, I get a insult every time he visits me, the last visit in may 2008, he shouted at me in front of my children, in spite of my age and responsibilities</p> <p>but still I attribute my loss of everything because of them</p> <p>and it's like inflicting with a wound and then putting a salt on that wound (manifesting the intensity of pain) so that's what I see life</p> <p><u>00:06:48-4</u> and therefore I come here with a very low spirit</p> <p>but continuously I'm thinking of my family,</p> <p>I'm praying for my family, I'm praying for my wife, I'm praying for my daughter, I'm praying for my son, I also prayed for my father-in-law, but it was not coming from my heart, I didn't, I'm just looking forward when holy spirit could touch me I could really forgive them all,</p> <p>but still from the back of my mind what's the use of forgiving them (rationalizing his thrust)</p> <p>because my life is in shatters just not one or two years, the 15 years of the job which I had built and where my colleagues in Blue Star Limited today</p>
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	<p>Confused state of mind</p>	<p>Including father-in-law But prayer not from heart Hoping Holy Spirit touches me and I forgive them Another voice – no use forgiving Cause life shattered, 15 yrs</p> <p>Colleagues earn ½ lakh Juniors earn ½ lakh Know what I should earn Told wife I should retire – get so much It's all because of you Rationale why I shouldn't forgive I feel like failure I couldn't own a flat, still not lost hope Want to make best of 5 days I'm asking God</p> <p>clarifying feel like failure because blaming it on someone was successful – year, two since marriage, everywhere owned flat at</p>	<p>are earning half a lakh, my juniors are earning half a lakh and I know what I should be earning and I told my wife in another two years I should be retiring and then today I should be getting so much of money, it's all because of you so I was thinking what's the use of forgiving them, and ask god to forgive them <u>00:07:49-8</u> and forgiving them, holy spirit touching me to forgive because my life is finished, I couldn't see a ownership flat, but still I was in a hope, I've not lost hope</p> <p>I want to make the best of this five days of retreat, I'm asking god for <u>00:08:10-4</u> <b>Interviewer 7a:</b> you feel like a failure <u>00:08:11-5</u> <b>R 1:</b> yes I have a feeling of faith in me <u>00:08:15-6</u> <b>Interviewer 7a:</b> you feel like a failure <b>R 1:</b> I feel like a failure because of someone blaming it on someone</p> <p>because I was a very successful person till a few, a year or two since my marriage, I was a very successful person, I was very successful everywhere, I owned a flat at a very young age where at that time owning a flat is a dream impossible</p> <p>and in Mumbai city owning a flat it was a great achievement for me, just at the year, age of 24 and having a very good job in Blue Star Limited plus having the other businesses I was doing very well and I never expected this,</p> <p>and still now past 20 years down the line, I'm blaming it on my family</p> <p>and I'm still shocked, I take it this way, my wife is not with me in spite of so many years she is still favoring and making her in-laws, making her parents right, I also told her on Christmas day the day before I could leave, that ok because they have done this to</p>
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	<p>young age when it was impossible owning flat in Mumbai great achievement</p> <p>never expected this to happen past 20 yrs – blaming it on family still shocked</p> <p>Wife supports her in-laws</p> <p>Told her – before leaving Because of what they did we suffer not they</p> <p>Children suffered but they have bright future ahead I told her – you'll suffer till you admit you are wrong Coming here – am confused Left home on bad note</p>	<p>me financially, now they are not suffering, your brother is not suffering, your father is not suffering, no one suffers, you suffer along with me, you're going to keep suffering all the time, children have suffered but they have a</p>
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## **Appendix O: Example of clusters of emerging themes for Brennan**

### **About him:**

It serves to deflect him – I am property **sales consultant** in a real estate company in Dubai:  
 What I do is like everywhere – we look to **making sales** across the globe:  
 We try to sell the best property across Dubai – it is growing at a fast pace:  
 So when it comes to commercial, residential development – Dubai is the place to go

### **He is future oriented:**

In terms of long-term plans – I don't intend to stay there long in Dubai – I just got my American visa:

So you will migrate:

I am considering that – but wife differs she is thinking of other places:

Most probably it might be Brisbane:

**Open about the future** but not the present as much:

My personal preference is for US – especially after having gone to New York – that place is full of opportunity and is blooming: If not New York – then to Denver or Colorado

He seems to have picked up my annoyance – so looks ahead – I am looking ahead to next 3 days – to tomorrow – to confession: Acknowledging – you are looking ahead to tomorrow: Yeah

looking ahead to tomorrow – I can only make a statement after the 5 days are over:

### **Salesman – in touch with what people feel:**

People must be asking or at least I was, when is father going to wind up: he should know what's going on with people, there are sick people here, not everyone can put up – salesman in touch with how people feel:

Wants perfection – **perfectionist** = closet narcissist – merges with other

### **Open about his dislikes:**

well there is always a like and a dislike,

Personally, I was never in favour of it earlier:

I have a brother priest in Bombay who told me about it:

My response was – see if I have to receive Jesus I don't have to come here for Jesus does not live here – but up there and in your heart:

Potta can do nothing – if you are not open, not receptive – you need to say it first, look Lord:

### **Why he came?**

Shifting his focus to why he came?

I came because of my wife – she made a vow – after marriage I'll come with my husband:

**Challenging** – you came because of her?

Yes I came because of her – her honour and commitment – her vow – so I am here to complete her word:

I am here for the first time:

I challenged him:

Challenging him – on his receptiveness:

About my receptiveness – I opened up here:

Challenging again – I think I did not hear it:

Although critical – yet open to being receptive:

I am receptive, in fact **I have decided** – if I am going here make sure I have given my best because that's all I am come here for, otherwise you are wasting your time and I am not used to wasting time:

**His critique on 2<sup>nd</sup> day:**

Last couple of days pretty good: Except for some things:

**States of mind on 2<sup>nd</sup> day:**

I felt **out of place**: experienced uncertainty – likes to be in control – control freak? Worry is another indication of it

And yesterday I was **upset** because my wife said to me she can't go on like this: I will come at 10'O clock in the morning:

**Vents his frustration** - Tuning in to me – father you might not like what I say – yet I will say it – that way I cope: Publicise – because when you make a retreat – value people's time, at the end of the day see people's condition – some might be sick:

**Why out of place: out of Dubai mode of operation:**

1<sup>st</sup> one = **too many preachers** coming in:

2. Then they **talk about other things** related to other activity not biblical: I live from Dubai – time is very precious – we focus only on what we really want – not digressions:

3. How? – focusing on what had to be the **key focus was not** the key factor here: What they focused on was their life styles: You know when focusing on a subject, let it be just that, not **too many things**: Dislike is too many subjects of discussion – which is not needed – that is something not quite important

**I was sleepy** - I suppose for a country like India **time** is no concern – for us it is – spending whole day at the retreat – tends to get you into sleep: Yes I was sleeping – that was important for me because **I couldn't focus**

I wanted to know the agenda that's what I am used to: The key focus of the agenda should have been pre-planned, **key points of agenda should have been given** but that was not there: I wouldn't criticise that though:

Summarising the last couple of days – I **felt very sleepy**, not able to focus on – that's the out of place feeling:

Another dislike is they take **too long a time**:

Repetition of earlier statements: (clearly annoyed)

Goes back to earlier statements – its time consuming – sorry I like to be honest with how I feel:  
It's a long time – right from 5.30 in the morning to 10.30 at night:

My reaction to it:

I know you told me that earlier – I am sick of hearing it – do you have anything else (I suppose I was getting annoyed with hearing the repetition):

He seems to have picked up my annoyance – so looks ahead – I am looking ahead to next 3 days – to tomorrow – to confession:

Again another repetition

Only after 5 days can I say how has been my experience – first two days have been purely what I told you – **time** is the main constraint:

You might like to bring it to their attention – you are welcome to do that:

You can even **publicize** wherever you go:

Only if **timing** was streamlined:

Especially the **mass** – don't stretch it too long, 10 minutes sermon is enough not 45 minutes:

Why you know? Because people must be cursing, I was cursing too (projects own stuff onto others)

People must be asking or at least I was, when is father going to wind up: he should know what's going on with people, there are sick people here, not everyone can put up – salesman in touch with how people feel:

You are repeating what you already told me:

**Time** is the main one here – I say focus on the time, key agenda time:

Still another repetition:

Thank you for hearing me – don't forget what I told you, if you want to publicise go ahead and do wherever you go in the world:

**Even Father was like that:**

The exception was mass – but even there father took a long time:

Ok let the mass be for 40-45 minutes: But if you stretch it for **2.5 hours**, I mean it's a point of concern: Why a point of **concern**? Because you begin by saying this place is amazing: but then:

But then that perspective changes – someone just walked out – although I do not know why he walked out – you may not feel very comfortable after 2.5 hours:

**Self image:**

I know better how to run this place – I am a better organiser

**Transaction** – gives advice

So you know have those key points and focus what on what is necessary, keep it limited and short:

Take people's feelings into account - Why do so? – Because people are so tired – everyone for that matter – so many out there: This needs to be really cared for – how people feel:

Checking to see if he walked out, No I did not walk out. I stayed up – but I may not do this for

long:

If you conduct the retreat – finish it in 5-6 hours – gives advice: Don't take so long till night:

**Your rationale is faulty:**

Look it's a problem all through – you haven't thought it out properly – narcissist mode of being: Then you have another rule – that says 5.30 get up after you are liberated from the prison here at 10.30, after the adoration: You get to your room after that – sit down – say max you go to bed at 11 – it gets very difficult to get up at 5.30: then at the end you are sleeping during the day, which may not be the right way:

when you make a retreat – value people's time, at the end of the day see people's condition – some might be sick: Example a diabetic – you can't keep him standing there for 11-12 hours – he needs his point:

**Initially says:**

No I did not walk out, I stayed up – but I may not do this for long:

**Later decides before me – how interview affected him:**

For my part what I did was, with effect from today – I said I want to sleep

**Provides rationale, explanation:**

- if you want me to stand there on my toes then I need my desired hours of sleep – 9-10 hours of sleep: If you want me to sleep there then you can't expect much output from me – I will not be able to pray:

And worse if the service goes waste - it will go waste – I am not used to wasting time – I am very **productive** every moment of the day: I am a **perfectionist**

I am receptive, in fact I have decided – if I am going here make sure I have given my best because that's all I am come here for, otherwise you are wasting your time and I am not used to wasting time: Otherwise you won't get anything out of it - I might as well go to any other church and the Lord is there

**What he was expecting from the retreat:**

Yes I have been expecting more of the biblical side – that's what we came here for – to have spiritual growth – more of that should have been given:

If one preacher talks for so long as 2.5-3 hours – then the actual point, the biblical side of it and times of adoration are not there:

**What else happened today**

Today I prayed hard – I asked the Lord, I have come here for a prime purpose – I need to complete something that may be I want it:

If what I want is what you want and you want me to receive something before I go, let me know, I am open to receiving these gifts: so I have an open disposition

Sorry now I realise – may be your perfect will is what matters: His perfect will is what I am looking for:

I want to see what his perfect will is, I am waiting for that message to come across:

Mediating belief - But when I heard father say – be receptive to his will and his will is perfect will, I turned from my will to his perfect will – new belief:

Trusting in the Lord:

Until now I haven't got the message right, but I have hope - in the next 3 days there's something better – the Lord will reveal everything what is his perfect will and plan for me: new belief, new control:

**3<sup>rd</sup> day:**

3<sup>rd</sup> day's experience was really good: 3<sup>rd</sup> day was all about confession:

**Confession:**

I was looking ahead to this opportunity: Why? Because we had to make it thoroughly since we are in phase of entering the retreat: So as soon as the opportunity came – when we had to look back into our past, when father referred to it yesterday on how we need to enter this phase:

I wanted to make this a great and thorough confession: Since I am going to be here for the 5-6 days it was important that I make a thorough confession:

So this was a very good time of my life – where I said, if I can do this now why not:

**It was a thorough preparation:**

I spoke to father this morning: He said – this is something confession is something we really look ahead to: so hears from others that it is important:

I felt the healing presence: I also felt it was high time I opened up everything and talked about it and be released from the burden: **turning point – decision:**

On my part what I did was – looked back into all my past: did not miss out on anything – so it was general confession: But this time – I could sit, reflect on, look back into my past history and I kept my eyes on everything I could remember:

Particularly the past where I had difficulties with my family and loved ones – where I found it difficult to move on: It is so many years since I couldn't make up with them: This was an opportunity which I wanted to capitalise on:

When father asked me after how long you are making confession: I said I made one in Dubai: But that one was not thorough – I did it more or less for the sake of getting across my way: So it was a confession with a thorough meaning in it: Why thorough meaning? – Because the Holy Spirit was on us and me in particular:

I was holding the burden in several areas of my life – I was having **bondages** which I could not release **so easily**: The burden was **un-forgiveness**: Talking about un-forgiveness – I found it difficult to forgive so easily:

I was **pushed to the wall here** = So I faced a dilemma here – do I want to release this person, let go of this person: earlier I held back:

I got the strength to do it – the strength from the Holy Spirit – he gave me the offer to release the burden:

**Experienced strength of the Holy Spirit** = Wanting detail about this experience of strength: So when I prayed yesterday after the Blessed Sacrament was exposed – I did the following:

**RS to God** = What I did was – I asked the Lord – look I want to be cleansed, want a thorough relief, a thorough opportunity where I could be set free from all kinds of evil: Where I felt I have not done good especially to my friends, relatives and all the like, even the bosses: If I failed

somewhere Lord, forgive me:

**RO of God** = There were certain areas where the Lord said – if you want to get it out – submit yourself totally to me:

**RS to God** = My response to that = I did that – yes Lord there are certain areas, where I have bonding, I can't let this go but with your strength I will let this go: I managed to **let it go** – all this morning: - major turning point:

Seeking more detail on his letting go: I was holding areas of unforgiveness against these certain relatives: I couldn't meet up with them – **dreaded state of mind**: I couldn't team up with them:

If given an opportunity I would act on it now = I let him go – I was given this opportunity – where I could meet with them, make my peace with them – say hello and greet them: These few words would heal the relationship with others: So that's where I felt this was the area – where the bottom line = release

**Cognitive insight that helped to release** - Why release – because if I want to be free – if I want the blessing of the Lord, you need to give the Lord something: We can't go on like this – there has to be a full stop = it was the right time to capitalise on it – and I did it:

After the experience – emotion depicting impact of the experience:

I am so glad I came here

Challenging him on his 2<sup>nd</sup> day stance – his critic of the place

Goes back to the sleeping – well the drowsiness continued in the middle of the day:

Gives once again same old rationale = That drowsiness is bound to happen especially when you go through the entire course of the day and you have to sit here:

Gives his observational proof = I could see everyone feeling drowsy – of course as I said before its too long, but I am sure something can be done:

This sleep was something I was lacking:

Consequently because of lack of sleep I was drowsy:

Gives advice again:

Yes I repeat – something can be done – where the time factor can be considered:

Instead of 15 hours – 8 hours are enough:

If they do that – I think it will be more meaningful, people will be full of energy:

It would be a more meaningful retreat – I can see it myself, the more I get...

Back to what he was saying – I thought 8 hours was enough to have the retreat:

Maybe the time 9-5 is enough with few breaks in between – that would make a meaningful

retreat:

But doing the retreat from 6.30 to 10.30 at night – you get only few hours of sleep, to take up challenges of the next day – particularly the emotional challenges – you need at least a minimum of 8 hours:

The other thing was the **healing touch of the Lord**: another major thing on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day

What I did here was submitted myself completely to the Lord, surrendered:

Seeking more detail on the healing touch:

**Timing of the healing touch** = The healing touch occurred when – timing – Blessed Sacrament was raised

**RS = What he did** = What I said to the Lord – I said wherever there are areas in my life that I find difficult to manage, especially work related ones: Then areas with regards to relatives, friends, acquaintances, where I cannot meet up with their desired expectations and I have a feeling that this is just not right: = I submitted all these areas: The feeling was a desire to let go of it:

Maybe what I am doing is alright for me – but may be its not doing good for others:

**RO of God** = In fact it was the Lord who showed me that way: so I said, if that's the area to capitalise on, then let me get out of this: weaknesses such as his **short-temperedness**: It has been there for the last 10 years:

Provides more background = Sometimes I get short-tempered with business people: Short-temperedness is the area where I really need to work on: **Pleads helplessness** = It was an area where I asked father's help:

A person like me – what I do = when **people nag me at business**, not once but repeatedly, I want to put a stop to it: So I **get angry – to put a stop** – it is not strange - but common though: But then **I want to come out of that too**: So that's another area of weakness apart from unforgiveness:

**Why let it go** is because I was left in a dilemma - doing so is going to do good for me or am I going to do the will of the Lord?

The dilemma was about where do I want to go – please Jesus or please myself:

So you faced a conflict: It was a big conflict in the area: Big conflict because all these years – I have been doing my own will and now its going to be the Lord's will:

That's the reason I asked strength from the Lord:

**I said to the Lord** – help me in this area which will guide me – give me that wisdom that will take me ahead, that's what I am looking for wherever I go, let your will be done not mine:

what happened to the **conflict**? The Lord showed me all those areas I need to capitalise, work on: The lord also asked me for complete humility – where I did what he was asking for: What did the



Lord show? The Lord showed in the form of prayer:

You want to know that? – then know this its all about prayer – its about how much time you give to the Lord:

The more you give him time and once you are driven by him and drawn closer to him – he will show you the way and he will tell you – that’s what happened to me:

**How does he show me the way? He tells me look and he brings that image across to me:**

So this is your way of praying – is that new to you, or familiar to you: Yes it is new to me – I never had such an experience

What I noticed was – these thoughts come suddenly to my mind – it just comes to you - The way I look at it = when you ask for it, the Lord opens to it: Its as if, the Lord says to me = look this the relative you don’t want to get across to:

**The Lord then asks** – what do you want to do about it? – the Lord challenged me to a decision **My reply to that** = yes Lord I want to release:

I as interviewer am amazed by what you say – so it looks like you were quite aware of what was going on between you and the Lord:

Yes I was aware – the thoughts came, it just didn’t come like that, like lightning, it was Jesus who sent them to me: He sent them to me – because I asked for it and if you ask for it you are bound to receive:

But then take note = ask him with good intentions – that’s is also what the Lord looks at:

Don’t expect to ask for money of material desires, that might not be his perfect will for you

May be he will see what is good for you and that’s where he will open the doors for you:

So if you do according to his will and be obedient to him – then the Lord will definitely work much faster than you expect:

That was the healing touch I received from the Lord:

**That was the turning point of my life – where I could have direct contact with the Lord whilst praying:** It was also the time when I saw the power of Jesus in the blessed sacrament:

Wow, that’s quite a statement – turning point: Yes its a turning point because all these years I never had such an experience like the one I had here: I never had that opportunity where I could have experienced something like this

If I have got something today – the honours go to my wife Nina for bringing me here: I have to thank my wife for bringing me here The Lord may be chose this to be the right time: Of course if Nina had not to make the vow

State of mind: What are you feeling at the end of the day? I am feeling a sigh of relief: - state of mind:

Sigh of relief – because of all the stuff I was carrying within me

I am feeling really good and excited – that’s the sigh of relief:

I can’t hold my joy – joy as an emotion is about reproducing – so I want to reproduce - tell it to others:

Maybe if the Lord wants to do something for you, if its his will, you’ll be directed to go there, when you can go there:

so that’s great – Jesus is all about – when you submit to him – submission is important

Clarifying – who is Jesus for you?

Jesus is the ultimate saviour – he is the one who came when I asked for it:

I kept on persevering – I said to the Lord – I want to hear from you, I want to see that miracle:

I should have validated – but did not:

He comes back to it – I kept on persisting, don't let me go away when I go, I need to carry something with me:

I was desperate to receive something, I did not want to go away from here empty:

I wanted to go with something:

I said, don't send me away like this, I am calling you name Jesus and I want you to answer me and indeed Jesus did answer me – that is the healing touch, the miracle:

I want to thank the DRC for giving me this wonderful opportunity for being here: The opportunity was = **face to face encounter with Jesus**: This encounter has really helped me – I can't keep quiet – I am definitely going to spread the good word around to friends, other acquaintances:

They might want to come here – here is something anyone would appreciate – contrast to day two:

Being a salesman – I look ahead to spreading the good word – thanks again father:

**Appendix P: Audit trail for the Coding I employed for Day 1**

Pre-retreat material that participants disclosed

Memo: Stance of not believing in God:

Seby talked about his earliest stance of not believing in God. I didn't pray, never prayed.

earlier prayer

Never \_\_\_\_\_ yes  
 Seby \_\_\_\_\_ Johnson

I didn't have faith, except when in trouble or difficult situations

Didn't \_\_\_\_\_ not sure \_\_\_\_\_ did  
 Seby \_\_\_\_\_ Rosanna \_\_\_\_\_ Johnson  
 Lyn \_\_\_\_\_ Remo

Went two mass earlier

Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ regularly  
 2 to 3 times a year - Seby \_\_\_\_\_ Nadine  
 Carmo \_\_\_\_\_ Rosanna  
 Johnson \_\_\_\_\_ Lyn

Day 1 Memos

Acceptance of rejected parts - change element

Kerry pointed to his acceptance of rejected parts of himself. Give bad parts a you back. So Carmo spoke of how retreat gave him a perspective on his unwanted parts, parts of him that were relegated were accepted and integrated.

call to integrate badness

\_\_\_\_\_ Carmo

Adoration - first night

Quite unlike Rosanna who welcomed the fact that she did not have to go to adoration that is before the Blessed Sacrament a fourth time, Nadine, here says that she felt that she did not go to adoration. So she asks that it does not get repeated the following night. She prefers to be present at adoration and then attend to the interview.

adoration at night  
 Felt bad \_\_\_\_\_ welcomed \_\_\_\_\_ couldn't understand what it is  
 Nadine Rosanna Carmo

In talking about the adoration at night, Carmo said he felt weird. Unlike Rosanna, and Nadine he says he couldn't make sense of that last session, couldn't understand that the quiet eerie feeling that sort of unusual. what's wrong. Felt weird.

#### Defences arose - feeling conflicted

Remo spoke on the first day of his desire to forgive, but then he was feeling conflicted. He reminds me of my desire to forgive and how at times I get into the grip of ruminating over my hurts, lately, though I have been better. Rosanna too had something similar, she too felt conflicted about how much to give and how much to hold back  
 His defence arises justification rationalisation and consequently feeling conflictual.

feeling conflictual  
 Not much \_\_\_\_\_ more  
 Remo  
 Rosanna

Wants to forgive, but then thinks what's the use. Because my life is finished my life is in shatters. Angry his life is finished, but blames it on in-laws.

He was confused yesterday he says.

#### Context - surrender

The context for this is the sermon on Sunday morning. They had to write things keeping them away from God. Nadine also teases out the context well when she says, the head to write sins

Her action = writes a big list

Consequence = felt little light

Making sense = may be I did it right. They say when you follow exactly the steps, you tend to start feeling that.

When asked to surrender on day one Remo says he was confused and anxious. A consequence of internal conflict

Consequence of conflict  
 \_\_\_\_\_ confused and anxious  
 Remo

When asked to describe physicality, he says he was calm, which can't be. it could be he's on defensive, not wanting to admit it or it simply could be the result of de-sensitisation from early

years. he is out of touch with his body because he was not attending to it early on.

He says, he surrendered in the basket (like Nadine) my non-working habits.

When asked to surrender on day one. Johnson said = indirectly, it's more of a negative thing. Talker said cigarettes or any other bad thing.

Action = dear Jesus I surrender to you my anger and my very short temper.

Meaning = surrender is just giving up to the Lord. I just gave it to him. He takes care of it for me.

Belief supporting it = he takes care of everything. Only we should be ready to accept he can do things for us.

Writing \_\_\_\_\_ words  
Nadine Johnson

#### Change began prior

Remo on day one says that since July, when he lost his job, he came back home and drank a lot - his way of coping. so he says since July, he has given up drinks.

So that must have been a turning point for him. Drank too much and then he probably said enough and began a change.

Remo reports that his family has begun to notice the change in him.

Johnson also reported something similar in terms of change that he had begun prior to coming to the retreat in fact, it began two years before he came to the retreat.

Seby also indicated a prior movement towards change, and he said, that he had said enough is enough.

Johnson reported about an earlier change process that began. It is a change process about his faith.

As long as we know he's there.

Even me at first did not believe thought it was impossible.

Mediating belief = last couple of years , the way things are going I know he works things right and know for sure. (so certainty about God)

He will say on the second day = Now I can sit back and can forgive the manager , who set me up. He will also say that the last two years have taught me a lot. I'm sure what IM is because of past two years. Otherwise I'm a very bad person, I would say. Extremes (like Carmo).

On day one Johnson hinted at initial noticeable change = it hit me now.

Dad would insist eat, eat

Earlier = I would question Dad = what's wrong with you, why you bother me.

By evening, he says:

Now I'm just calm (soon after expressing it, he noticed change)

Effect

initial

Johnson

Disposition

calm

Johnson

To my surprise Dad stopped too, he didn't chase it.

In contrast, today morning - (that is before the retreat) = I lashed back what's wrong

Seby on day one spoke about prior change that began.

He says since arriving into Goa, he started going to church. This is also part of accessing other resources.

duration

3 months - Seby

two years – Johnson

Feeling defiant - defence arose

Carmo on day one reported that his defences arose that he was feeling defiant. he is usual mode of being in church in Kuwait is never open mouth, gives example of Dad forcing him to. it's my trait I'm defiant kind of person.

He says on and off I would sing then defiant that was happening in the first session.

I have to pay attention to how this progresses on the second day and whether there is a change of stance on the second day.

In fact, even before the second day Carmo said he opened up in the second session he just let lose. He said he felt different. Can't complain it now. Not something tying me down, usually self-conscious, defiant. He spoke of letting lose.

Close \_\_\_\_\_ let loose open  
Carmo, Nadine

What happened to facilitate let loose:

1. testimonies

No \_\_\_\_\_ yes

Carmo, Lyn (When I heard others that helped to open up)

2. Priests spoke stories (EX 14:14)

These are small beats on the drum.

3. No condemnation

No, you are a bad boy. but this also helped open up.

Hasty expectations of forgiveness, change

Remo is expecting a change quite fast on the first day itself. He says right now I didn't experience any touch of the holy spirit later he says I prayed but it did not come from the heart as if to say I should have changed and felt different immediately. In fact is pointing to what most people think that forgiveness should come readily and should be over quite quickly.

hasty expectations

Remo

I prayed but did not feel from the heart was looking forward when holy spirit could touch me and I could readily forgave them all. Later he says I'm waiting when the words will touch me they aren't touching me.

Seby on day one spoke about his expectations.  
I tried to go more into faith.

Expectations

\_\_more Into faith\_\_ want holy spirit \_\_\_\_\_ want solution to problems

Seby

Remo

Remo,

find out what I'm looking for in life – Seby

Hope

Remo says that he is attending the retreat with the hope that something will happen. he does not know exactly what. But that something will happen.

Hope

Remo

Immediate problem - why came - set the tone

Remo spoke about his family member, son and daughter backing out and at the last minute his wife backing out as well.

Black spot in the family is the son

His emotional reaction = shattered broken down

Then on Christmas Day eve he had a bad day = fought with wife.

Reason for that was the grudge he held against the father-in-law. He refused to greet the father-in-law and the wife was upset. He tried to explain himself to her but all that he got was insults, abuse, did not help, erupted into further arguments and Son said shame on you going to DRC

His son saying shame on you going to potta and you can't forgive your father-in-law, might have set the tone. This might be a higher category, and the push for change.

Initial change

On the day 1, Seby spoke about change in his life - stopped drinking, smoking, been hard - substitute sweets

Before coming still drinking

Listen

On the day one Seby spoke about listening. I'm listening to brothers etc, which I don't otherwise.

On day 2 = Seby started trusting what the preachers say.

So there is a movement from doubt to trusting to faith to believe. he says, these are things I had been missing for a long time. (in between, there is a critic for Rosanna and Carmo = They look for reason).

It's time to change, probably they are right and I am wrong, they must have a reason.

Others are straight = Lyn, Johnson Remo Nadine

Johnson too said, I have been looking for that feeling for a long time.

Long-awaited aspirations are fulfilled.

Length

Unlike Brennan who complaints about the programmes specially the mass being too long, Nadine is at the opposite end of the dimensional scale, whilst Brennan is high strung about it and stressed out. Nadine says she was enjoying it.

reaction to length

Brennan \_\_\_\_\_ Nadine

enjoying,  
relaxed,  
of course she admits  
that she loves music

Though the mass went over an hour on Saturday she was surprised and was actually enjoying it.

The question here that then arises is what helps her to enjoy it?

One of the contributing factors that I can see is her love for music, and so the singing will have helped it. She does indicate that she would have otherwise been looking at watch and saying, oh my God, it's already... it should end now".

Then again for Mass on Sunday I was surprised it went nearly for two hours so a different emotional reaction.

\_\_\_\_\_ surprised



Making sense of their problem

What I notice is that participants have different ways of making sense of your problem.

For example, Remo says, to figure it out and says that he thinks it is a bondage or a block or curse in in my life.

Action = after reading this - asked Jesus to release me from this bondage, of not being able to work inspite of he giving me good health.

Another way = . He reports making sense = wondering how to go about finding a solution to my difficulties.

Used to sit in blessed sacrament = more than pray I was trying to figure out what solution I should come up with.

Turning point occurs on the second day = I stopped figuring out things

I've been enlightened - am not willing to do anything about it, if at all anyone can do anything with the problem that is Jesus.

Now action = I was only contemplating in praise and worship

My intervention

I refrained what Remo was saying and said to him, you feel like a failure.

That triggered off a response pointing out exactly what he was doing, "I feel like a failure because of someone blaming it on someone"

So my intervention leads him to own his shifting of his responsibility.

ownership

\_\_\_\_\_ shift responsibility

Remo

Nature of impact of preaching - killing me softly

Killing me softly refers to the way DRC has an impact on participants. it doesn't come in like a sock in the jock as Rosanna would say. But involuntarily start thinking about the past. I suppose the past that had unfinished business started coming up to be resolved as Rosanna would say.

Impact

Sudden shock\_\_\_\_\_ slow killing me softly

Carmo, Rosanna

So participant talk of what sort of an impact it has on them. nothing dramatic, but slowly it eats into and makes deposits.

How killing softly?

He talked of things that were troubling me

Talked troubling things

\_\_\_\_\_ Carmo,

Rosanna (although she doesn't put it that clearly)

Lyn, Nadine)

Talk about broken things. (drifting apart- grieving that too always alone) (Non-availability of support from family, especially when he needed it, Nadine would say no support from cousins, Lyn would say family, not available).

\_\_\_\_\_ Carmo Nadine Rosanna

What person is talking is hitting a note

No \_\_\_\_\_ yes (Carmo)

Whatever they were talking was really nice something that I was looking for.

On the day one Seby spoke about listening. I'm listening to brothers etc, which I don't otherwise.

New belief - family will be blessed because of you

Remo reports on day one about the new belief that he has acquired. At yesterday's mass after hearing to the incident of Zacharius, Jesus says, am coming to your house. the intervening condition is a new belief, because of you your family will be blessed.

Consequent emotional reaction

\_\_\_\_\_ relief

Remo = I had a little bit of relief. was really relieved I was so happy since I've come here. God may bless my family.

Ownership by end of first day

By the end of first day Remo said, I think my biggest drawback is financial problem, which I am willing to work hard.

So Remo does two things by the end of first day.

- Recognises what is bigger issue amidst the many issues he has
- he has self propulsion to work at it and to make a difference at it.

But then he looks for external support = He asks for support from God. I asked God today to give me strength to go and work. I know I can make up.

On day one, Johnson manifested his ownership of his anger.

I have short temper, anger problem. difficult to control

Sense of no control over the problem  
control \_\_\_\_\_ no control

Johnson, Seby, Remo,

Helpless

\_\_\_\_\_helpless  
 Johnson

Swear \_\_\_\_\_ problem with expression  
 Johnson Nadine

On the second day he will say it's severe, extreme reactions.

Anything would set me off:

second day = I accept my reactions were very adverse ( to girlfriend because of her mother)

Prior experience of church

Carmo on day one spoke about his prior experience of church. Once a year, he would visit. I was thrown out of church.

Prior relationship with church

Close \_\_\_\_\_distant

once a year,  
 thrown out of church, an outcast  
 Never had the feeling but went for a visit

She spoke about her earlier relationship with God.

She questioned God - why gave such punishment

What wrong have I done?

Please forgive me if I've done any mistakes in my first life

God

forgiveness for past lives

Self

Conceived again got twins, praised God.

Little problem between mother-in-law and me.

Resigned from job

On the day one Johnson hinted at his prior relationship with the church

Going to church was an issue for him

Prior going to church

No problem \_\_\_\_\_an issue

Nadine Rosanna Johnson (Once a month) Carmo (once a year), (did not at all)

Seby on day one spoke about his earlier way of prayer.

I pray, but only a couple of minutes. just goes

Earlier way of praying  
 Long \_\_\_\_\_ quick  
 Remo \_\_\_\_\_ couple of minutes - Seby

So participants spoke of their earlier modes of prayer.  
 Different participants had different ways of praying.

Prior level of faith

Johnson on the first day, indirectly hinted at his prior level of faith.

certainty about God

No mention \_\_\_\_\_ doubt \_\_\_\_\_ certain  
 Carmo \_\_\_\_\_ Johnson

He uses the metaphor = shoot at me - I trust in Jesus.

Recognition of lack of importance to God

Nadine on the first day reports an awareness of not having given enough due to God. God has not been a priority for her and so that is an issue she wants to address.  
 not enough due to God

Less \_\_\_\_\_ much

Raising hands singing - initial difficulties

Another area where Nadine has a problem is with raising hands and singing. subsume all these issues where participants of the problem under initial difficulties, which are really difficulties with aspects of the DRC program some of the areas are not acceptable to them.

She came with a predetermined set of mind influenced of course, by her friends that she would feel awkward. However, when she does it actually she says she did not have a problem of course it is new to her. She has not done it before.

raising hands

Familiar \_\_\_\_\_ new

She has not done it before, largely because of the cultural prejudice that charismatics are fanatics of course this prejudice would have initially shocked her from coming, which means her actual coming indicates a lot of internal pressure, desperation to solve other problems which serve to override the cultural prejudice, that the cultural prejudices, effects/impacts on her is evident from what she says she checked indicated by her statement, "its ok fine, everyone is doing it". I'm pretty cool with it, so I had no problem raising up my hands.

pressure to come

External \_\_\_\_\_ internal

Carmo on day one spoke about his prior attitude to raising hands

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ no  
Carmo

Carmo said he would not raise hands and gave a background for that arising from his childhood saying prayers in heart, doesn't need to show it to somebody.

Exhibit \_\_\_\_\_ silent  
Carmo, Nadine

People do it because he is looking at me, so he was aware of cultural prejudice.

\_\_\_\_\_ don't do because of cultural prejudice  
No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
Carmo, Nadine

Nobody here is looking at you

No \_\_\_\_\_ yes  
Carmo, Nadine = consequence = it frees them up to participation

Seby on day 1 spoke about singing and clapping, "which I never do"

Before never did

\_\_\_\_\_  
Seby, Johnson, Nadine (had opportunities but did not)

This is first-time

\_\_\_\_\_  
Johnson, Seby, Nadine

how does experience feel

\_\_\_\_\_  
enjoying, relaxed = Nadine  
enjoying= Johnson

Never = indicates the approach taken by a particular sober Christians. cultural prejudice won't allow for it.

What helped?

I accept it's okay - was his reply when probed. He said God motivate me to do so. Consciously said it's okay.

Active intervention

\_\_\_\_\_ it's okay = Seby

others doing - no problem - Nadine  
feeling of freedom = from the Lord - Johnson

Movement in the retreat

fast straight away \_\_\_\_\_ slowly slowly  
Nadine, Johnson Seby

## Appendix Q: Audit trail of the coding I employed for other days

### All memos on 'Getting Up'

#### Anticipated reaction to getting up

Another Property of getting up is anticipated anxiety.

#### Bound to sleep

Brennan here points out the consequence of the rule of getting up early. He says, one is bound to sleep

#### Consequence of getting up early

There is a consequence for getting up early. And that is the lack of focus, attention during the day. Rosanna admits:

I was kind of surprised at my own receptiveness to the, to what they were saying.

Further = I was juggling between feeling sleepy because I hadn't slept all day = as if to say that she should have slept because she did not have enough sleep the previous night. So there was no chance to catch up with the lack of sleep. That is what I also think of doing now that I am feeling sleepy.

This consequence also becomes a condition for the following event which is lack of focus during the day.

Rosanna admitted that = I was kind of surprised at my own receptiveness to the, to what they were saying.

Brennan also admitted saying = that he was not having enough sleep and that for him was an important point of consideration.

Cherry talked about dozing after lunch. He says, I have never eaten so much in my life and seems to give that as the reason for his dozing.

#### Decisive action

An action strategy to deal with getting up early, adopted by Nadine is to say that this was like a sacrifice for her.

#### Defences surface

Rosanna's starting disposition is I will not be abused again. she doesn't say this explicitly, but implies it when she says: I have read about popular techniques used that people...mass hysteria... she admits later on, that she has been abused and has put up defences, one of which is intellectualisation. getting in touch with her emotions is difficult and so she is in touch with her reason, as she says, I don't believe you should rely only on your emotions.

Probably, in a previous instance of being in emotion alone, she was abused, and hence distrusts her emotions. Alternatively, the emotions that arose, from the experience of abuse would have been too strong to handle.

Running away= is another defence that surfaces for Rosanna. this defence is about escaping the

pain and pain in this instance is the unbearable sensation. From her abuse experience, she is probably oversensitive to her bodily experiences. this is also what she probably does even otherwise. Running away seems to be familiar to her. Another type of running away is living in a fantasy world. she admits to being distracted, the mind wanders, in other parts of the interviews. So here is a repeat. Will she really run away? She does not physical, the runaway it appears. however she manages to escape and says that she welcomed the fact that she did not have to go to the Blessed Sacrament a fourth time, but instead to the interview.

### Emotional reaction

Emotional reactions are varied

Surprise \_\_\_\_\_

Rosanna

### Getting up

In the previous memo of Rosanna what stood out as a property is 'kind of surprised'  
surprise \_\_\_\_\_ no surprise

This category is also found in Nadine.

Nadine talks about her previous nights reactions when she heard that she had to get up early.

anticipated response \_\_\_\_\_ no anticipations

She reports feeling nervous

nervous \_\_\_\_\_ relaxed

So there is the property of anticipated anxiety.

A part of her also doubts whether she could do it. However, she takes steps to address the issue and the step is to set up an alarm in advance.

Action - getting up strategy

strategy \_\_\_\_\_ no strategy

setting an alarm

However when it comes to the actual getting up period, she says, there was no need for an alarm Because the carol singing came on.

Getting up early, is in an irregular response. They are not used to getting up that early.

Rosanna says that it is a different experience for her. (I am not used to getting up so early).

Another decisive action she talks about is that this was like a sacrifice for her.

It also speaks about her preparedness, her level of motivation for the retreat that she is prepared to put up with whatever that is needed to make this happen or rather to participate and take the most out of it.

Brennan also reported about the difficulty of getting up

Brennan looks at the failure impracticality of the rule, that they should go to bed by 11 and get up at 5:30 am.



Another person to discuss about getting up is Carmo. He admits getting up late and seems to show no remorse or guilt. It speaks about his level of interest probably. Am not sure but that is what I feel. He puts it lightly. "the early morning sleep's stretched on a bit. He talks about an intervening condition which seems to have impacted on his getting up. The intervening condition is his habit of getting up at three in the morning and then going to bed. Then he talks about arriving late. I am interested in this category of how their sleep affects their presence in the class the following day. Here Carmo is referring to his absence from early sessions.

Presence\_\_\_\_\_ absence  
 Carmo absent at praise and worship  
 Brennan decides to absent himself too

Carmo = Cary woke up late. His early morning sleep stretched off.

No anticipated response\_\_\_\_\_ yes

No expression of regret\_\_\_\_\_ yes

Remo says getting up at 5:30 is impossible for me.

earlier  
 possible\_\_\_\_\_ impossible

Now  
 possible\_\_\_\_\_ impossible  
 Remo

Action = Remo learnt a new technique to get up and takes it home with him.  
 He will execute the new technique on the second day, which is Monday morning.  
 He calls it a great experience.

all of them specially Rosanna, Nadine and Remo wonder  
 Then they devise strategies  
 but interventions occur - Carols for Nadine, praise for Remo  
 others like Brennan calculate the effect of it on the following day.  
 Rosanna also reported on it.

### Managing anticipated anxiety

To manage the anticipated anxiety of getting up early, Nadine sets up the strategy of setting up an alarm.

### Post reflection of getting up early

### Property - timing of getting up

Timing includes getting up early or late. So we find varied responses among the participants

On time \_\_\_\_\_ late  
Rosanna \_\_\_\_\_ Carmo

Regularity of getting up

### 4<sup>th</sup> Day

Today 4<sup>th</sup> day was better than yesterday - Why better? - We are busy with **materialistic** world: so what I learnt: we need a transformation **to live in the Christian way**: In particular to pray as a couple:

Maybe we did not hear this before, even if we did I did not hear it, now I hear it loud and clear:

What we recognised is – we had **not seen it in the Christian way**:

Other thing of today was **counselling** – it took almost 2 hours

**Lots of things** were focused on: What stood out for me: We always give excuse – not to pray: driving is long, parking is an issue, then we even gobble food – we live in a hurry: that is our routine:

We don't have time really: Result of this lack of time – prayer life is absent: So **I learnt how to create time for prayer**:

1st way: pray whilst driving: pray at the signal, pray with the bible, few key points of the day, make own personal prayer – keep acquaintance with the Lord: Neglecting the Lord is not only not good enough but it should be our business

He gave us a lot of **examples** – which helped to sink in the message, it helped me exclaim, oh I need to work on that:

One example that sat with me: message there was - be with your **wife in times of distress** – when God puts you test – gives you trouble: In the examples – some people backed out others tolerated:

**One example** the guy did not back out: A good example – but I don't think today anyone would do that:

**Checking** to see if that talk has impacted him: I would first look for counselling: maybe I wouldn't take this burden – because she would endanger my job – my job is important – it would endanger my getting ahead in life – which is also important for me – so **individualistic focus**:

**Realising** – that's my materialistic point of view – but after hearing to the retreat – I have got the Christian side now:

What struck me about this gentleman: his perseverance, his obedience to God's word

There are only a few people here who will do that: have perseverance, obey god's word:

what I would have done is – backed out, said she needs treatment, but it would difficult, if I had to live with it:

Maybe I would have looked at options – send her to psychiatrist, maybe I wouldn't take day to day encounters – like wife spitting at me

I admire the tolerance and patience of this man:

**Insight** = I don't think he did it all alone – the Lord gave him endurance: I need the same

endurance from the Lord – especially if a situation like this comes across: What I learnt from it was: the Christian side of it: The Christian way is: have patience, be humble, submit yourself to the Lord, let him know about it, keep praying about it

When you ask the Lord answers you, works wonders in your life: I trust that – he will answer me:

Another good thing today was mass – when Fr saw every couple come across, learnt the importance of giving attention to one another as couple:

The mass was so well conducted:

The mass in the couple retreat was well conducted – I look ahead to working on my relationship with my wife:

More detail about my relationship with my wife – we are busy

Consequently on account of being busy - there's misunderstanding:

I get short tempered with her – actually I am worried about our jobs, success, getting better, what lies ahead – thinking about the future: where do we want to go – stay in Dubai or elsewhere - Dubai is the gateway you know: can't let it go – it provides opportunities, commercialised life styles:

Getting him back to the misunderstanding: There's been a lot of misunderstanding: Why misunderstanding? – because both of us are different work backgrounds:

So from commercial perspective – I am hungry for more customers, to give better service:

I cater to the British and Irish people: I am too tuned into the commercial lifestyle – I am finding it tough to get out of it: **evades** the topic of misunderstanding:

So taking time out – break - is very important:

Gets into new phase of thinking – we need to give time to the Lord

I need to take time out – to think of Jesus: even in little free time

To decide – do I really need to pray, is this the right time, can I think of you, is bible really going to serve my purpose:

other decision to make – can I take our few passages, think of love he's got for me:

Then it was Brother Samuel – he let us know about his past histories, how he fought various battles in his life, struggled after family members died:

He's got some good books – about encouragement - I will read them after the holidays:

This knowledge in the books of different people – will definitely inspire me:

Challenging him on his perspective of Jesus:

Tells me who Jesus was (pretty good person – called on him, remembered him only in time of trouble, not when everything is fine)

But now what I have learnt is remember Jesus in all situations – good and bad:

Digging it still further – on who Jesus is for him:

Jesus is mighty saviour – looks after his people, loves us all, wants to give more than we require:

Doing his will – will help us be better Christians – that's what I am looking for:

**Doing his perfect will is what has really come across to me:**

**Why do his perfect will – to help me get better – not do my will or go after success**

not holding on to my job – which is giving me fame, good notes from boss

I have gone after boss's approval – I was hungry for that:

Now I don't need boss's approval – but Jesus approval - Expecting Jesus response to be – I'll look after you, I'll take care of your needs

So its a shift for me – from my boss, from the world where I have looked for rewards, fame, future

**what I need to seek is = approval from God's eyes:**

Expecting Jesus response to be = I want to see you moving on:

Sorry I remembered fasting about tomorrow – another instance of future oriented:

That is something I have difficulty with – I can't really fast:

But tomorrow I will ensure – I work on that and forego breakfast, lunch and have only dinner:

Why I do that is the Lord is asking me to do it and he wants me to be open to it

### 5<sup>th</sup> Day

recapping 5<sup>th</sup> day = Today has been really good for me – I thank Lord for it:

5<sup>th</sup> day was one of the best day- compared to last 3 days: Why? I **saw the awesome power of the**

**Lord:** - where in the **inner healing:**

It was also all about the gift of inner healing: where people testified and spoke of good things Lord did for them and how he's worked in his life:

How it began – with mass which was more meaningful compared to before: then another thing is how we exercised healing: Consequently we want to continue – carry precious gifts we received forward after we leave: Carrying it forward is important for us – strong faith is needed – I need to live up to the faith – **new resolve after witnessing the testimonies about inner healing**

Testifying is where one has to come up and talk about what the Lord has done for them:

Testifying is not easy – it takes a lot of encouragement to go up there and say Jesus did that to me why not you?

**what that awesome power did to me: I needed miracles to have faith:**

This is something more encouragement was needed and I benefitted from it: when god does something in your life – you should come up there and testify:

That's the faith you give when you go up there (**so his healing is receiving that faith?**)

You meaning I am encouraged, others are encouraged by hearing the testimonies – that was the amazing thing I was referring to:

What I gained in last 4 days, I have never gained before: What I gained in last 4 days - power of miracles I saw today – never saw it before

How I saw it today – people's testimonies:

I've seen miracles in others: eg some relieved from pains likes, sicknesses, backaches, headaches:

Then there's the other example of the lady – who couldn't lift bucket of water – today she could she said:

So suffering people have testified:

The healing I have received = looking others testify in their best way: that they couldn't move

hands, legs and now they can:

– gave me encouragement – to go and speak if I have received healing: others also were encouraged: Advantage of seeing you speak enables others to increase their faith:

After what Jesus has done to me, made me a new person – I need to talk about it to others: So I am all fired up – to keep that moving, going, live by it:

I will not live same life style as before: Because I have gained so much, I need to keep it up, live up to it, exercise the same prayer focus I have been looking for – which is very important

Another reason why tell others – Lord God said this:

I saw it today:

Checking to see if he testified:

I wish I had an opportunity to testify – I could not testify because only those with aches and troubles with legs hands, couldn't move were asked – and I wasn't one of them:

Checking to see what he would have testified:

I would have testified for gift of prayer – **big one** – I never prayed so enthusiastically before:

I didn't do that before – that's where I failed before – I couldn't commit myself to a time when I needed to:

New decision – now I know I can – half an hour each day, even in the car

Wherever I am I will devote 30 minutes

What concerns me is how I will keep that going every day – not just start for some time and then stop

It was all about praying today – 5<sup>th</sup> day:

What I have gained – power of prayer: Never prayed before: The only time I prayed was when circumstances were bad: In good times I never remembered Jesus: My life was more of – when I need I call Jesus: I realise it should not be that way – calling in Jesus only when I need him: So today I learnt a lot more – to pray each day, to thank God every little thing he's given to me: Even gift of breath is itself a great miracle – I never realised that before: Seeing how people pray, how they have so many kinds of trouble – I realise the Lord kept me safe and sound and hearty – another reason to be grateful:

I never thanked him before for all these gifts – I was only looking at success, at betterment, at future growth, at commercial side: I never looked at it from this side – what if God strikes me one fine day – where would all these treasures – career, growth, prospects:

I did not even look back – so the Lord has been patient and tolerant to me – that's what I learnt to say

A new level of relationship: with Jesus:

I need to keep going everyday and remember the Lord, just as he remembers us we need to remember him – something I never learned before in my life – I benefitted from it today:

I look ahead to moving on with this and thanking Lord at every salvation – both good and bad times – I'll remember my Jesus

He is very important – he is a god who never fails - this is also something I have learned – to

trust in him and keep going – will give me added opportunity to know Jesus more each day of my life – that is the message for everyone out there:

Message for others = remember Jesus every moment of your life, every day of your life – exercise your prayer life – keep your Christian faith

The Lord understands our every need – he wants the best for us in his time: **New belief** – he wants the best for us in his time – that was a real good message:

I want to give a message for all out there – keep your faith and trust in the Lord – not other things: Give glory to him: - because that is what he wants: No sooner you give it to the Lord and submit to him – you’ll see the blessings that pour onto you: Personally I know what that means – trusting in him – has worked well for me – its done wonders in last 4 days – more than the last 40 years of my life – which I never gained before – I have gained here:

### 6<sup>th</sup> Day

6<sup>th</sup> day was same as 5<sup>th</sup> day – nothing different: But it was almost –similar as yesterday not much different: so what I told you yesterday – the mass and inner healing and few testimonies of Glen: Holy Mass had similar meaning as yesterday: Today there was more of inner healing – no doubt about inner healing taking place:

So it all got over very soon – by 1’Oclock: by then we were relieved: Other language groups teamed up in the common hall – so service took a bit longer

Challenging on what he experienced:

I had healing touch of the Lord more yesterday – it was better yesterday especially in the evening: I could see the Lord working very fast in the evening yesterday – a little after 4:

Back to his critique:

the inner healing was conducted so well – I thought this should have been initiated right from

day 1:

Anyway they run it – they have their plans –

Change in stance: appreciative now

if they want to have it on day 5 or 6 it is still good enough:

“But” – meaning now he realises what happens on day 1 or 2:

even on day one and two you are already possessed- - power of Holy Spirit has to continue

I know its a 6 days affair:

I am pretty pleased with the services held here for the last 6 days though first few days I experienced discomfort especially with regards to timing: (contrast with the 1<sup>st</sup> days reaction):

What changed my stance on that was inner healing process – I did not even look at the time Why I did not – because it was just the word of God that spoke and spoke:

New resolve:

As I move out of this DRC I have to ensure I carry this back with me, that I go by what I have learnt from here, what the Lord has spoken to me:

As long as I am here – I can still manage to be what I am: But once out there – I am a different person: doubting self?

But I need to carry this everywhere I go:

**Powerful statement = I carry a lot of change in my life:**

Another thing is the gift of inner healing – which is something very powerful here:

The inner healing is something I wanted to use wherever I go:

Of course its only two days that I could use time – but doing that has paid off, not gone waste:

How it has paid off – the inner healing has got into me – Now I feel absolutely relieved:

Relieved because I now have the assurance that I can do things that I could not before – dreaded doing it before:

Now God has given me the grace to go up and do things right:

**New stance on unforgiveness:**

Change in areas of relationships – I couldn't' meet with my relatives, very close people – it was difficult to meet up with them: Problematic state of mind

Now I have the guts – new control:

Now I desire to go up to them and shake hands with them:

desire to make them feel good about how I have changed after coming here:

So this entitles me to make my peace with them – to ensure thereby that the Lord has done better

– I desire satisfaction from the Lord:

I can't expect to respond similarly with me:

But I can be healed at least by ensuring them – look I've got what it takes from the Lord to make my peace with you:

What I have got from the Lord I want to give you

All of the above I do – but it is to them as to how they take it – feeling apprehensive – this might

have been a deterrent before to mending the relationship:

For my part – I leave them into the Lord's hand:

Proof of that is – I have been praying for them each day:

My prayer is that = when we meet, the lord opens the opportunity for us where we can meet with them and we make up our peace with each other:

So I focus more on that area – where Jesus makes the way open for us, especially people you cannot forgive:

The lord spoke to me – my name was called yesterday: I was told **not to worry (so earlier worried person)**, the lord has taken care of every situation:

My reaction to the name calling by Fr Augustine – was amazement:

It was said – Mr B there is a message for you from Fr Vallooran:

The message was very good – not to do things the way I want it, but give it little time, where the Lord will take care to ensure I am well taken care of:

So I trusted that message:

And the Lord **indeed showed up**:

And he said – look Mr B I'll do things brighter for you: (referring to the message)

I was waiting for such a message (hence the Lord showing up makes sense)

**My response** was = if it's his will for us, and I am certain the Lord knows everything I don't need to tell him (so did not tell something), he knows what his plans are for me and that he's kept something even better for me: When I go back, I know I'm going to have something even better;

But till that time, I'll have to hang around – so **perseverance**:

The Lord will show me the perfect door and that's where I go trusting in him: (**letting go of the control in life and surrendering**)

The other thing I am taking = **grace of perseverance**:

Perseverance as in – looking for another job may be:

I am sure the Lord has something for everybody – what is needed is putting trust in him:

Without doubt you need a strong faith:

Only after that the Lord speaks:

But if your faith is only 50% no it has to be 100%: was his faith 100% before: It used to be yes 50 %:

I used to pray for certain things ask the Lord but other 50% I used to say, fine I need to work on, put on my keen interest in everything I do:

I used to think the rest is on me:

Now I trust the Lord fully 100%: 100% means nothing on my own, no action from me, his action is the best action for me



**Shift** – so I look at it that way now – this is something – for when you put entire trust in God, he knows what is good for you, way ahead of time: **so I don't have to be a control freak**

This is what I got an opportunity, where the Lord opened my eyes and showed me – to trust him entirely: shift

So I have to wait on his calling – **perseverance**: this is what I have to say: (wait as against rushing always:

### **Appendix R: Memo of iteration I employed for the analysis**

Participants reported that almost as swiftly as the act of surrender was the swiftness of its outcomes. Nadine reported an altered visceral experience, perhaps an altered state of mind.

Johnson experienced an interruption of his habitual reactive pattern:

Nadine: frankly speaking after that I was just telling Angelina, I told her, you know Angelina after the entire thing got over and we were going back to the room, I said kind of feeling little light, you know after doing that what I did, ya I was feeling little light...

Johnson: and my dad has like as per me, he has this habit of like he doesn't do it in a bad, for, in a bad way like it's like when you go for dinner now, he'll be like because I'm his son, he'll be like Johnson eat, eat, eat, I'm done with dinner, he'll be like go get some more, I'm like dad I'm done, he'll like no, go get some more...

Johnson: because now it's like, it's hit me now, earlier it would, I would go to the point where I would say, what's wrong with you, why you bother me, even if you have to actually my dad would say no Johnson I'm just asking because I know you are hungry.

Interviewer 11a: so what hit you now?

Johnson: now it's like I'm just come, it's like even now he said it, go get some more, no ok I'm fine, I'm full and to my surprise he stopped as well, he didn't chase the whole thing earlier even today morning he said the same thing, I actually lost control, I actually hit back lashed back, I was like, what's wrong with you?

Nadine tried to make sense of the speed of the outcome, which for her was an unbelievable experience:

Nadine: so I was little surprised like, so I thought maybe I did it right you know because they say like when you do follow exactly the steps you know you tend to start feeling that, all the things that you are suppose to feel...

Through the process of iteration my later interpretation was this:

Participants reported that almost as swift as their act of surrender was the swiftness of its consequences. Nadine reported an altered visceral experience, probably a sign that her body was feeling lighter after releasing the burden. It is significant for her and she tried to make sense of the new sensation, which perhaps she had not experienced for a long time, given her depression.

Johnson experienced a change in his habitual reactive pattern:

Nadine: frankly speaking after that I was just telling Angelina, I told her, you know Angelina after the entire thing got over and we were going back to the room, I said kind of feeling little light, you know after doing that what I did, ya I was feeling little light...so I was little surprised like, so I thought maybe I did it right you know because they say like when you do follow exactly the steps you know you tend to start feeling that, all the things that you are suppose to feel...

Johnson: and my dad has like as per me, he has this habit...he'll be like John eat, eat, eat, I'm done with dinner, he'll be like go get some more, I'm like dad I'm done, he'll like no, go get some more...

Johnson: because now it's like, its hit me now, earlier it would, I would go to the point where I would say, what's wrong with you, why you bother me,...

Interviewer 11a: so what hit you now?

Johnson: now it's like I'm just come, it's like even now he said it, go get some more, no

ok I'm fine, I'm full and to my surprise he stopped as well, he didn't chase the whole thing...

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