

Welcome everybody, um, I really appreciate you coming, thanks so much. My name is uh Dave Turnbloom I'm a member of the theology department here um and tonight we're going to be talking about liturgical theology and trauma and how those how trauma influences liturgical theology.

Before we get into the content of the evening there's a couple things; we have people joining us on zoom and so you will make from time to time hear a ding um so just and as if on cue so just ignore that. Um I wanna um thank the summer undergraduate research experience program um that is run out of UP here um this whole project started last summer when we received a grant through that program to kind of envision a humanities research lab which is what we are so you see up here that little logo that says CHIRP that stands for collaborative humanities investigating religion and power. So that grant allowed me to hire these wonderful collaborators um and we spent last June and July thinking about what a humanities lab could be how we would want to do our research together and that's this is kind of the fruit of that work. Then we spent the last academic year focusing in on a particular topic which is uh ptsd, moral injury, moral distress and how those relate to liturgical worship. Um so uh this is our first public presentation we're in the process right now of writing an article that we're going to be submitting to the journal religions. They have a special issue that's going to be coming out on rituals of healing and so this topic hopefully will fit nicely with that journal. I also want to just say hopefully you've seen the title the talk we're going to be talking about clergy perpetrated sexual assault um and ptsd and so we're not going to be at any point in the talk getting into any you know particularly graphic material but just we just want to encourage everyone to take care of yourselves. At any point if you feel like getting up and going for a walk or getting out is what you need to do please do not worry about interrupting us just go ahead and get up and walk out that's totally fine.

Okay, um, so just a couple brief introductions and we'll get going . Like I said I'm Dave Turnbloom in the theology department here we have Meg Breen uh Meg is a third year third year uh history major and uh communications minor uh. We have Noah Lamberger, Noah is a third year philosophy major and theology minor specializing especially in bioethics I believe that's their interest. And then last, we have Kate Seddon, it's a second year um social work and criminology double major with a minor in theology. As well so um this summer we will be adding another person uh Sophia who is a communications major especially in rhetoric and we'll talk a little bit about our next project that's us i'm going to turn it over to Meg.

Okay great so in this first section I'm first going to be talking about the main focus of our research this past semester starting in last june so a little bit over that. But the first thing we're going to do is explain the failure of the church to recognize acknowledge and address the seriousness of the crisis and the systems that have perpetuated the clergy sexual assault. Then after that I'm going to be introducing the research of Jennifer Beste who's been really foundational to the work that we've done here. So I'm going to be looking at that and just

describing a little bit about her kind of giving some acknowledgement to what she's contributed to our work here.

So, this is what we have right on here is kind of just the the gist of what we've been researching and the conclusions that we've come to after the research that we've done so by paying attention particularly to PTSD and moral injury, we will examine how clergy perpetuated sexual assault has deeply changed the lay population's relationship with the Catholic Church and has contributed to the hindrance and degradation of liturgical efficacy for survivors of the CPSA. So CPSA that just refers to clergy perpetuated sexual assault you'll see that throughout the presentation just a heads up that's what CPSA stands for.

All right so first we're going to talk about the issue at hand, so kind of what's going on and I think a really great way to kind of illustrate the issue is actually just to read from a quote given by Pope Benedict the 16th who served as pope from 2005 to 2013. So I'm going to read through this whole thing and then we'll talk about it a little bit afterwards so "at the same time I ask you not to lose hope it is in the communion of the church that we encounter the person of Jesus Christ who is himself a victim of injustice and sin like you he still bears the wounds of his own unjust suffering he understands the depths of your pain and its enduring effects upon your lives and your relationships, including your relationship with the church. I know some of you find it difficult even to enter the doors of a church after all that has occurred yet Christ's own wounds transformed by his redemptive sufferings are the very means by which the power of evil is broken and we are reborn to life and hope. I believe deeply in the healing power of his self-sacrificing love even in the darkest and the most hopeless situations to bring liberation and the promise of a new beginning".

So this is kind of the issue that we're getting at here— really there's an acknowledgment particularly in the underlined phrase here I want to pay attention to that particularly. So there's an acknowledgment in the first sentence I know some of you may find it difficult to enter the church and the second sentence is kind of where we really get into that issue where he seems to still believe very full-heartedly that they can choose to enter anyways and have that choice to do that and that they should not lose hope in an institution that has traumatized them deeply. That they can be healed by the very same institution that has done that trauma to begin with so continuation on to that this is the main problem just kind of summarized in one sentence a little bit of what we talked about with Benedict. So the church has failed to truly recognize the weight of the problem and the extent to which a survivor is traumatized as a direct result of clergy perpetuated sexual abuse.

The Catholic Church has failed to fully recognize the consequences of CPSA on the liturgical life of the church at large as well and then we're told they're going to be exploring this in our discussion of PTSD and moral injury, but I think there's just a really big failure here to talk about.

The systematic issues that have persisted and hindered any sort of progress in the future despite acknowledgment that Pope Benedict did give in that first sentence, it doesn't really go far enough in reaching the consequences of the clergy sexual assault crisis. Not just on the direct victims and survivors of this crisis but also on the general day population as a whole. And then next we're going to talk about Jennifer Beste who's been really foundational to our research here so she's a professor and chair of theology at the college of st benedict at st john's university. So we've looked at a lot of her work just trying to be foundational in our studies of trauma in relation to a survivor's relationship to God and then this is one of the articles that we really started out with and got a lot from. So I'm just going to read a particular quote from it it's in the article receiving and responding to God's grace a re-examination in light of trauma theory. "In situations of overwhelming violence a person's capacity for responsive agency can be severely disabled she argues that a critical re-examination of the human capacity to receive God's grace must include greater appreciation for how God's love is mediated at least in part through loving interpersonal relationships". So interpersonal relationships is going to be a really big theme in the rest of this so the way that she looks at it she actually examines trauma through the lens of talking about incest survivors in their relationship to God, so a little bit different than our research here but still kind of focusing on that trauma aspect and how it creates a difference in relationship with faith.

And then the deep effects that trauma can have on one's personal relationships it has a similar effect on one's relationship with God so it's not just person to person it can be person to whatever your spiritual practice is or to an institution like the catholic church in our personal kind of goes beyond that simple recognition that you might first have with what it would mean. And then lastly because we receive God's grace through loving interpersonal relationships trauma hinders one's ability to experience the grace of God. Dr. Turnbloom is going to be talking next about what the grace of God really more clarity on exactly what that refers to but that's kind of the introduction to this and then I'm going to pass it on to Dr. Turnbloom next.

Before we jump into talking about, um, the influence that trauma has on a person and how that influences their experience of the liturgical worship we need to talk a little bit about what liturgical worship is, what is the liturgy, and what's its goal. And very simply put the liturgy exists in order to bring about grace, to offer grace, or to the effect of liturgy is grace and so it's important for us to understand well what is grace exactly. And I want to kind of bring up uh the correct understanding of it and then a common misconception of that. So first the effect of liturgical rituals is grace in a way that I liked a very short passage I like to use to describe what grace is comes from the french sacramental theologian Louis Marie Chauvet, um, this is probably the single sentence that I have quoted most and everything that i've written uh he says "the right that is to say the ritual the particular celebration of liturgy the right is a symbolic expression of an ethical duty grace is always given as a task to be performed". So when we think about grace that way the first thing that I like to say is well grace is an activity first and foremost it's a way of living.

Um and so to expand upon that I actually want to turn us towards a discussion of liturgical causality. That is to say how do liturgies cause what they're aimed at, affecting how do they actually bring about the goal that they have. And one of the kind of common latin sacramental theology phrases that helps describe this is *ex opere operato* which in latin just means 'from the work worked'. In other words it's it's the effect is brought about when the liturgy is done and this is probably one of the most misused and misunderstood phrases in all of sacramental theology. In order to explain why it's so often misunderstood I want to turn to the catechism of the catholic church and unpack this just a little bit um this passage from Roger Nutt who's a sacramental theologian. It is a good indicator of the misunderstanding that I want to uh to explain a little bit more. Nutt says "sacramental or liturgical causation is of the sacramental signs and not merely extrinsic independent of some other factors such as the faith or devotion of the minister or recipient". Now that's a lot of jargon.

What I mean by that is to say that Nutt is arguing ultimately that the ritual works kind of like a shower. That's very often how people think of the sacraments especially when talking about baptism but kind of like a shower it's a mechanism and if the right person uses the right things says the right words well then kind of like turning the knob in the shower water will come out and shower down upon me and I shall be cleaned and I'll be holier and so no matter what my state is as the recipient what we really need is the mechanism to work correctly. And that's what we're going to argue is really a deep misunderstanding and notice what that argument does is remove the recipient we don't really care about the recipient what we care about is the liturgy as such this holy ritual. And so the catechism really pushes back against this right the catechism in paragraph 1131 says the sacraments this is the common, common definition of sacraments which are liturgical rituals, the sacraments are efficacious signs of grace instituted by christ and entrusted to the church by which divine life is dispensed to us in the word. The latin word that is translated as dispensed is *praebetur* the visible rights by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. And so often how this understanding of the liturgy gets misconstrued is again that mechanistic automatic efficaciousness right it says well it causes these things automatically no matter who the person is or the state of the minister. And what they believe as long as the ritual is done the right way it just works it's fine that grace is dispensed to you and grace in this situation can be imagined almost as stuff as things that just kind of get handed out and we go to church. We line up and we kind of get our grace and then we go back and then we're holier because we grabbed it. And what we want to argue is a really poor misunderstanding of efficacy instead of focusing on the effects it's really focusing on causality. It's more interested in protecting the holiness of that particular ritual and nobody's even considering the state of the person. So we want to argue is that the latin word that was just translated as dispensed is actually a really bad translation it's more accurately translated as offer.

In fact if you go through the catechism and you look at all the other places in the english translation where *praebet* is translated it's almost always translated as offered, but yet in this one section it gets used as dispense. So put differently, I'm the liturgical rituals offer the grace of divine life to those who celebrate them these rituals are provocative invitations into a life of faith, hope, and charity and each liturgical ritual is celebrated through signs the words that are said. The music we hear, the gestures, art, everything that makes up the ritual. And those signs are intended to provoke this graceful way of living. So the wrong way of looking at grace is that shower metaphor—it works automatically that dispenses holy stuff. The right way of looking at it is actually seeing it as like what's there to offer an invitation into divine life again a way of living.

So the metaphor I would use to get at this is when a parent is raising a child, it communicates a way of life love to that child. And they do so by feeding it, by speaking to it, by playing with them, right? Using all these different rituals as a way of trying to provoke out of that child another way of life, and we hope as parents to have that child grow into that way of life. When we think about sacraments that way, obviously I care about the recipient. I'm not here just thinking about my parental actions and my authority. I'm caring about the effect that I'm having on somebody. So we look at the liturgy this way, we can go back to that passage from the catechism and see that the catechism actually focuses on grace in the correct way. And so this is the same passage I had before but this last sentence is important, right “the visible rights by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the grace's property sacrament and they bear fruit and those who receive them with the required dispositions”. And that passage is key: the catholic church here in the catechism is saying that the sacraments don't work like a shower. When I get if I just turn the knob on like you know I get wet and I'm clean. Well here they're saying actually it's different it takes somebody being uh capable and ready to actually receive it fruitful.

So there's participation that has to happen. I have to be willing to receive that grace and try to adopt it. And so the catechism emphasizes this again and again the assembly should be prepared and should prepare itself to encounter its lord and to become a people well-disposed. The preparation of hearts is the joint work of the holy spirit in the assembly, especially of his ministers. The grace of the holy spirit seeks to awaken faith conversion of hearts and adherence to the father's will. And these dispositions are the precondition both for the reception of other graces conferred in the celebration itself and the fruits of new life which the celebration is intended to produce afterwards. In other words if we understand liturgical efficacy correctly we must consider the recipient and their psychological state because the psychological state of the recipient has a profound influence on liturgical ethics. In order for grace to be fruitfully received the recipient must be ready and able to accept the task so with that vision of how liturgies work to bring about grace. And we know that we need to consider the state of the recipient. That is to say, very often the laity who are going to church now can start to ask well what happens in the

wake of trauma? What happens when we recognize that the entire catholic church has been horribly scarred by the scandal of CPSA? And that's where we're going to turn now, and start to look at the effects of trauma. So we're going to talk about the definitions and then we'll talk about how they affect the literature. I'm going to turn it over to Kate.

So, like Dr. Turnbloom said understanding the definitions of these how they apply within our everyday context but then applying it to an example like CPSA and liturgy itself it's only one example. So keep that in mind, every definition and everything that I apply can apply to many different situations and many examples itself. So we're going to start broad and what's important about all these definitions is keeping them as broad as possible to be as inclusive in every event, um, without excluding people, um, because everything that people go through should be identified and conceived and recognized for the importance of what they go through. So trauma um within the book *The Body Keeps the Score* written by Bessel van der Kolk he defines trauma as “a result in a fundamental reorganization of the way mind and brain manage perceptions and changes not only how we think and what we think about but also our very capacity to function”. So if we take this definition of trauma in its broad range and the effects that it has on your mind and your body and everything that you experience but you then apply it to CPSA, which again is clergy perpetrated sexual assault, and then the liturgy that we participate in.

So, by doing this in the research one of the people that we relied on was Mindy Makant and in defining this and trauma within the CPSA section she says that “even in the midst of such traumas even in situations where the reality of the trauma is known by others churches like the communities of which they are a part of often have a tactic don't ask don't tell policy as if by pretending that the ugly reality of trauma is not real and it will go away”. One of the most common things is that the church can recognize that there's trauma but not accepted that it happens within their walls and within their communities and within that points. And so when trauma itself is not accepted within that community then you sit and the pews knowing that a part of you or what you've been through and what makes you new and what is a part of your identity, now is not being recognized and held for its importance and being taken care of in the community that you are part of that means that a part of your identity is something that is ignored and excluded um within the CPSA itself and the liturgy that you're a part of which then directly affects your ability to participate in the liturgy and understand that liturgy itself.

So, underneath trauma one of the most uh commonly known um aspects of trauma is PTSD which stands for post-traumatic stress disorder. Which is most commonly associated with veterans who come back for more after experiencing high intense high stress situations. Which if we look at the definition from the newest, like, version of DSM it states that “PTSD is persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with traumatic events beginning after the traumatic events occurred”. So this kind of can be seen and acknowledged through avoidance of distressing memories, thoughts or feelings associated with the event and avoidance of people, places

activities and objects that arouse these distressing memories associated with the event. So this understanding of PTSD came and originated from veterans but at the same point anything that falls under experiencing a traumatic event that is being relived every single time that you were in that space or with around those people. You experience that PTSD which then creates another barrier within your ability to participate in whatever you were in. So applying this to CPSA and liturgy we can see that the liturgical signs serve as a trigger of abreaction. Now abreaction is that literal re-living of a traumatic event over and over again, and so if the church itself for the liturgy itself where the person presiding over the liturgy serves as that sort of reaction and trigger to relive that traumatic experience you are sitting in a community that is reliving your trauma over and over again every time that you try and participate and most times the literal rhetoric and the language that is used within the catholic church is saying that the only way to find healing. And to find, like, comfort within that is to return back to those traumatic events and find it within the church which serves as a trigger for PTSD for many people. So PTSD does not merely hinder the benefits of the liturgy it actually transforms the liturgy itself into violence. And so you're sitting in an area where violence is being committed onto you over and over again in hopes by what people have been saying to you, what authoritative figures that it will provide healing when it just continually reminds you and experiences that PTSD and that traumatic event over and over again.

Moral injury. So moral injury, um, is a subsection that is defined as the “lasting psychological biological spiritual behavioral and social impact of perpetrating failing to prevent bearing witness to or learning about the facts that transgress deeply held more beliefs and expectations”. Now what's important to note about moral injury is that it really focuses on that betrayal of trust. That is usually happens between authoritative figures and somebody who has been has that reciprocated trust with so if we apply moral injury that definition to CPSA and liturgy that we experience that betrayal of trust is livid everywhere if the betrayal of trust itself especially within the liturgy destroys the desire for liturgy to serve as love by taking away faith and hope that's necessary to experience liturgy as love. When a betrayal of trust happens it creates a barrier and inability to fully envelop and feel that faith and hope um and moral injury can most mostly be defined under two subsections which is structural and interpersonal. So structural moral injury kind of relates between a person and the community and environment or structure that they are around so for our example it's between the person and the catholic church or priest or the community that you were within. um, But then there's also interpersonal moral injury which happens between you and another person so in this case it can be between a priest or somebody who has experienced CPSA and so when that barrier of trust happens between you and a community that you serve in or you an authoritative figure. That that trust is in every time that you sit in a pew and every time that you experience that liturgy there's moral injury being created within your own minds seeing the person who had once had an authoritative figure in that trust and then broke it then creating that morally injurious events on you moral distress.

So moral distress is defined as the feeling of “powerlessness experienced during power games and the microspaces of action” as quoted by Barem and Ramos. And one difference that's crucial to make it to a moral injury and moral distress is that moral distress focuses on the guilt and the shame that happens within trauma. Well like I said before moral injury is focused on that big betrayal of trust um so applying it to CPSA and liturgy the guilt that is experienced within moral distress overcomes the efficiency. It transforms that liturgy, that we're talking about into participation and violence so you're not fully able to participate within the liturgy that you experience because you know that something is wrong and you know that it's not okay with the power imbalances that you were experiencing, but because of that power imbalance you're not able to vocalize what's happening and what's wrong and act against it and so you were participating in something that you know was wrong but not know how to react against it. And some people are still having a positive experience within that that causes that moral distress and that uncertainty within your mind of what to do and what is greater and how to react upon that so if we take apart this definition that says the feelings of powerlessness.

Within moral distress and CPSA that powerlessness is what I was just talking about of that inability to respond of not feeling like you have a voice or being confused because you have all these really good memories within the liturgy but then you have all these really traumatic liturgies experiences within the liturgy and not knowing how to respond about that um or move forward with that there's also power games and these power games is really the power difference between the hierarchy of the catholic church and the people who are sending the pews and the laity and all of those different imbalances that happen there. So, there's an authoritative figure who is presiding over the liturgy that you are a part of the feeling of not being able to respond against that person who created that morally injurious or traumatic event to you because they have that power they hold that authority to multiple other people and that trust hasn't been broken there. Then you're silenced and confused about who to talk to how to state what you're going through um and if you're going to be heard or believed or thought through, and then those microspaces of action how we've discussed is really the the liturgy of it of that continual experience of stepping into um master whatever liturgical space it may be. Um, so moving on from this we kind of just want to give some more examples from text that we've done some research on to really drive home our point and what we've been discussing.

So, we're going to return to the passage from Pope Benedict just to kind of illustrate everything we've said here. So, I read this earlier but we just want to draw our attention to a couple points that need critiquing so just at the very beginning right Pope Benedict here is talking to people who have ostensibly experienced trauma and are suffering from things like PTSD, moral injury, moral distress notice. The first thing “I ask you not to lose hope” immediately we see a complete misunderstanding of what trauma, PTSD, and moral injury are. He's assuming that having hope is a choice saying ‘hey choose not to be at have abreactive experiences’ ‘choose not to feel that trauma all over again’ and that's just a deep misunderstanding of what ptsd or moral injury is.

It's not a matter of choosing, it's kind of like saying to somebody with a broken leg 'hey you know what you should choose to run faster,' that's not how this works. And so right off the bat if you talk that way it's a form of victim blaming. It's a form of saying the problem is really you. He goes on and he gets back down to this point that we had underlined earlier right, "I know some of you find it difficult to enter the doors of a church after all that has occurred" that's a nice sentence but it's him going 'I understand like there's you're struggling' but then he goes off the rails again 'yet Christ's own wounds transformed by his redemptive sufferings the very means by which the power of evil is broken and we are reborn to life and hope.' In other words it's like just keep coming back keep coming back it'll be okay. Just choose to have hope come back here and really, Jesus is here, and so it'll be all right just, I know you're struggling but just keep coming back to the site of your trauma and maybe one day it will be okay.

And I get and I take him to be very, very serious when he says that he deeply believes in the healing power of Christ and that's great for him, and I hope it works out for people who you know have that deep belief. But that is not taking seriously what trauma is, it's not taking seriously how it affects somebody and how they can be healed and actually what's nice is years later. I think Pope Benedict got a little bit closer to understanding this and this is, uh, from a letter that he wrote. It's probably the only good paragraph in it, um, because the rest of it there's a lot of problems with but here I love this passage because I think he's getting at what trauma really does he says he's talking about a conversation he had with a woman who was a survivor of CPSA, says "a young woman who was a former altar server told me that the chaplain her superior as an altar server always introduced the sexual abuse he was committing against her with the words "this is my body which will be given up for you now that for those of you who don't know that phrase is the words of consecration during the mass it's one of the holiest parts of the mass that we say Jesus becomes present and he says it's obvious that this woman can no longer hear the very words of consecration without experiencing again all the horrific distress of her abuse so that's where I left off this is really important he's finally recognizing that you can't just tell that person to go back the liturgy is violence. Not only does it not affect grace in that person's life, it does the opposite: it dehumanizes and it degrades, and that's what we want to—we're trying to emphasize here. Is that if we really want to understand how the liturgy functions and the effect of trauma this is what we have to be willing to admit the question is then well; What do you do how should you respond? Hopefully, as well we'll get to it a little bit we'll see that the answer shouldn't be like "we'll just keep coming back, just keep coming back."

Now before we get into our suggestions, I want to just offer a crucial caveat here this is coming from an article by Hilary Jerome Scarsella who has this wonderful article called "victimization via ritualization" and she says—I'm just going to read this at length because I think it's such an important point that really is something that's critiquing, I think, the argument we're making. And we need to be careful with the argument we're making. Says, "Some theologians may prefer theories that maintain a concept of the liturgy in itself or of a liturgical essence that stands apart

from its cultural construction and appropriation by ritual participants. This kind of theory together with a conviction that the essence of the liturgy is good would likely reason that when ritual participation results in harm that harm ought to be traced to misinterpretation on the part of the participant and not in the liturgy itself. Such an approach succeeds in protecting the sanctity of religious ritual and positive explanation for how the harm of sexual abuse is exacerbated through communion participation, but the conclusion that participants participants who are harmfully impacted by participation in religious religious ritual suffers merely due to their own misinterpretation is a sophisticated form of victim blaming.”

This is really important. What she's saying is ultimately if we take trauma and the way that we trace the problem is just saying well now you're a broken person, and as a broken person you can't understand the liturgy accurately, so the real problem is in you. The real problem is you and what you need to do is you need to get healed now. That approach is, I will absolutely say, is very close to what we're saying. We could say that, yep, when we understand PTSD, moral injury, and moral distress as conditions a person has that stops them from being able to experience the liturgy is offering grace. Well then, what they need to do is go get healed and then come back and everything will be okay again. We want to be very clear that is not what we're saying. What we want to do now is turn to some suggestions. Once we've understood the reality of trauma and its consequences, well what should we do? Especially from the roman catholic perspective. How should we respond to that and the number one thing, to say the response shouldn't be to tell the people to go get healed and then come back and things will be okay? That's a mistake. So let's ask the question: what should we do. Who's going first.

So we have three kind of categories and suggestions. The first thing should be to listen and learn. The catholic church, in particularly its hierarchy, need to recognize and address the cultural and structural issues that facilitate CPSA. There have been at least 200 books in the last 20 years written about clericalism and the problems that are connected with it, but what we need to do is listen to those people who have researched clericalism and recognized that it's a form of kind of, uh, idolizing clergy that perpetuates culture. A culture of deference and silence. Right? So, at the kind of beginning we need to say let's stop doing that, let's stop holding these people up as if all we should do as laity is just listen and say, okay, we need to work against that type of hierarchical violence.

That being said, I think we also need to really focus on the theology of ordained ministry and how it spreads trauma. And what I mean by that, is um, unlike say protestant churches which I think do this much better the roman catholic church, has pastors who have basically been reduced to little interchangeable symbols. The way that we talk about ordination and catholicism is that, as long as they're ordained in a valid way, they have an ontology that allows them to celebrate the sacraments in a way and they can basically do that anywhere and it works the same

way. What that does basically is, it says the catholic minister is just kind of like a little symbol that can be moved around from place to place to place and they can do their job.

Anyway now why is that a problem when it comes to PTSD, moral injury, and moral distress because as a catholic when I'm going to church and I just notice that I'm getting a new pastor, constantly they're just coming in and out and it, doesn't really matter because whoever they are, the liturgy is the same. What happens is the trauma and the PTSD, moral injury it creates now spreads much more easily because of my lack of trust, right? Because of the fact that the clergy now becomes a real symbol for the violence. Even if that person is a really great pastor, the fact that they're so interchangeable— to use the words of Corey Pressman here in the nursing school he said “oh well the theology of ministry in the catholic church just increases the surface area of abreaction.” In other words the ministers really just become more and more of an opportunity to experience that trauma and that moral injury again now if we did something instead like we did in the early church, where local communities actually chose their pastors and had more of an interpersonal relationship with them over a long period of time rather than having them just kind of cycled out constantly, maybe that would be something that could help us avoid losing trust as easily and avoid spreading the trauma just as easily. So those are a few of the things um we want to talk about with regard to learning and listening now we'll turn it over Kate again and talk about another suggestion.

So, the next section that we're going to talk about what to do focuses really on speaking pastorally. This can first begin by stop congratulating people for refusing to leave. If we use that language like ‘congrats for staying’ or continually putting yourself in that violent situation of continually going back to that point of a traumatic event. By saying you're gonna find it here, congrats for not leaving, keep coming up, keep showing up, um then it reinstates that idea of that shame and guilt for the people who have decided to leave to go and heal and find in a space that is not the root of their traumatic event. And so that shame and that guilt is built in thus creating people to want to continue to stay in that space that is traumatic. If we change that language and allow them with, like, by removing that shame and that guilt it can be a starting point of people feeling more able to to leave and heal in the time that they need to do.

The next point can be: the references to liturgical obligations should disappear. When you refer to something as an obligation that you have to do that you are required to do for somebody who has experienced a traumatic event within that obligation you are then forcing them putting the shame and the guilt on them if they choose not to fulfill that obligation, and creating that instillment that they have to continue to return back to that point of a traumatic event to fulfill that so-called obligation in order to receive that grace or that full liturgy and be morally, morally just.

Another point that we can do is stop telling people the liturgy will heal them. We've mentioned this a couple times within our presentation already, but if the source of the liturgy itself is trauma, is actually violence, you're not going to be able to find healing within that violence. You have to be able to remove yourself, find healing in a space that is supportive, that is not a continual reminiscent of the trauma that you have experienced.

And finally we can stop saying that the cross is the only sign of inclusion we need. By stating that the cross is the only way to fulfill that way of inclusion of feeling supported and recognized for who you are, then that cross itself is assigned in a symbol for many people of trauma and of violence. And if you're saying that is the only way to find inclusion and the only way to find healing, then you're bringing people right back to that point of violence. If we recognize that every symbol and every sign in the world has positive and negative effects to it as well, including the cross. It can be a sign of salvation and resurrection but it can also be a very vivid sign of violence and acknowledging both of those things and making it very obvious that there is violence assigned to the cross and that is not the only place that people can find inclusion and healing.

Okay, all right, so the last one we're going to go over is affirm ecumenism. So the definition of ecumenism is a relationship and kind of dialogue between churches. So different sects of a given church or inter-religious dialogue as well. The first thing is encouraging people to find safe communities, so kind of like what Kate and Dr. Turnbloom have been talking about, just understanding that there are spaces outside of the catholic church where healing can be done and not forcing that guilt and shame on someone who's experienced CPSA.

Next one, stop erroneously claiming that roman catholic liturgies have a monopoly on the presence of christ. So this is going to go back to the Benedict quote, especially, I mean when you look back on it it's talking about. He is here this is the place where he will be, this is where you can find salvation, to jesus to stop claiming that allows people to still experience the liturgy in some world and experience christ but have the understanding that it's not just the roman catholic church that can offer that. But there are other spaces, especially if the roman catholic church has now become a space of violence.

And last one: stop prioritizing membership in the catholic church and start prioritizing the person's spiritual and mental health. So, not focusing as much on where our number's at are our numbers down, we need to get more people at mass, we need to fill the seats. Instead, focusing on the fact that, what is the state of our mass? How are they doing? What is their spiritual and mental health? Putting that above the general population that shows up on Sunday, really making sure you're taking care of the people instead of just ensuring that they show up again and again and again.

So that's the last what we should do. Um, so next, first of all thank you all for coming. But we are also we have further research going on the lab is going to be ongoing this summer as well. Thank you University of Portland for the grant, we appreciate it. Um, our next research is going to be surrounding the rhetoric of the catholic church and bishops and how that we talked about Pope Benedict here, so if you enjoy that there's more coming. Um so we're looking at that and how it very unfortunately mirrors the rhetoric of domestic abusers and how they talk to the victims of said abuse, trying to keep them close to them. So that we're looking particularly through, um, like a lens of trauma bonds. So another psychological term but that in conjunction with some of the work we've been doing now, but particularly looking at the rhetoric of the catholic church. Also last invitation if anyone is interested in working with us we're always seeking further interdisciplinary involvement and also community involvement so please reach out to us. We have our our get in contact with us: gmail, instagram, website has a contact page as well um but thank you guys so much for coming we're gonna have a little Q and A questions comments concerns etc thoughts feelings emotions processing so yeah.

Now it is time for questions, please just raise your hand, um, but if you got to get going, that's fine too. Don't don't feel you've got to stick around. So, anybody have comments or questions you'd like to bring up?

I'm glad that you brought up the piece about obligation, uh, but I do want to just point out that the 1917 code of canon law states that the obligation is to attend mass but the 1984 code of canon law says the obligation is to participate in the mass. And so the failure here I think is that we haven't done the counter pieces with people. People still think that we need to just show up rather than participate fully consciously.

And absolutely yeah, I think the the language for me, and how I was understanding, is that word obligation, whether it is in experiencing or participating, um, or like fulfilling your sunday obligation. And showing up the connotation of the word obligation has a sense of like you, you do it um and you, you get like an applause for it, or you don't and that is more of sin that is something that wasn't just provided within the church. And so we're able to just change that rhetoric and that that word of obligation to something that is more inclusive into accepting trauma and inclusive into the acknowledgement that whether or not it's participating or fulfilling that obligation of that duty, it's allowing room for that trauma to be recognized and actually seen and practiced on a regular basis.

And I agree that we should get rid of the word what I would just say I mean you say catechesis but I would also say uh formation of clerics, because the number of times I've heard phrases like 'we gotta have butts in seats', you know like that's coming from a pastor of the pulpit completely misunderstanding what that obligation is. Right, and so even if it is correctly understood, though even if it's an obligation to participate and we can kind of figure out how that what that might

mean, it's still, I think, almost always going to be heard in that harmful way other questions. yeah.

If the church and the liturgists become a place of violence and where there where suffering is inflicted on them, where do they find their healing?

I think and how will how would they be healed. Yeah, I mean that is such a good question. And I mean it's unique to each person's experience who goes through trauma. A lot of people have different experiences, it there's no one answer to it. I think it really depends on the person whether that be spiritual feeling through another place of worship whether that be kind of internal healing I think it's hard to say that there's one space. But if the catholic church has now become a space where that is only getting worse, that abreaction, that concept of reliving it, then maybe that's not the correct space to be in. So it's really an individual's understanding reflection on yourself and what's going to be beneficial to you and getting away from that guilt shame obligation feeling.

So that would be kind of yeah, I know and and I think the problem that I see here when you over spiritualizing the problem right and that's where you have to depend on psychology on on a more integral and holistic approach to healing right. I mean because as I said the trauma is so deep and it has cut so deep and I think you have to get all the resources for the human healing of this person. uh and the problem I think of religion sometimes is that before we even have we before we even address the problem, as a human problem a deep human problem, we over spiritualize it but the healing will come with the blood of jesus christ ,I mean you know, I mean that's over spiritualizing the problem.

We've had a lot of conversations about lived religion as well, and just kind of defining what religion means for each different person. Yeah, um, and like you're talking about I mean that is such a big focus for us as this lab going beyond just theology. I mean we uh Dr. Turnbloom has been very conscious there are a lot of different majors represented up here, and kind of looking at it for psychology, through rhetoric it's a really intentional choice that we made that I think has really enhanced the research that we've been able to do, so I really appreciate that.

Yeah, so you guys talked about how it's kind of a focus of some people in the catholic church too rather, than focus on the spiritual and mental well-being of the of the lay people, but to focus on the number of attendees. That really struck me when you said that, because uh I'm an episcopal and that's never been like the goal to get as many people in church as possible. So that was such a striking difference for me, and so I'm curious as to what is the cause of a focus on more attendance rather than understanding or participating in faith?

I think in my opinion and my experience it stems from a fear, of fear of not having people there to celebrate the laity with a fear of thoughts of having the religion be able to continue generation after generation. And so if you're living in that fear of the religion itself dissipating, then your immediate goal is like okay well how do I how do I fix that. And the way to fix that is to get people in the church, and the way to get people in the church is, most of the time now especially the example that we've been talking about is, to pull them in shame them for not leaving and or before leaving and continually bringing that rhetoric back and forth. So and my understanding, in my mind, it stems from a root of fear I think there could be multiple reasons but that's the only reason um.

So how do you think, um, like doctrinal conviction can be reconciled with these new approaches to addressing people's real lived and pragmatic experiences of spirituality and trauma? I'm thinking of in the pope's letter when he talks about Jesus is your salvation and this here in this church like that seems like the real conviction of the Catholic church metaphysically true. And so if in approaching it, and saying actually no what is the church's responsibility in reconciling actually, we're going to go we're going to walk back on that doctrine. And say now it's fine or is it is there like a limbo, go ahead we're just going to not touch it, and not worry about it like what do you think is kind of the future of the church in in that struggle?

What a good question. In my experience, it doesn't have to be so black and white. Where it is like conviction and doctrine or it's like completely progressive and allowing this like for liberty to happen. I think that it can be a middle ground. It can be something where the doctrine is still upheld but allows for trauma to actually be recognized and acknowledged in the church. And if it is acknowledged in the church, starting by stating that they understand that trauma is institutionalized within everything that happens, within the way that they form priests, to the way that people experience it. and that language and that that understanding of it, I think is the first step and finding where that middle ground is. I don't I don't have the answer, I don't know where that middle ground is, but I do believe that it doesn't have to be one or the other. I think that I'm practicing Catholic and I love my faith, but I understand the difficulties of it. But I think in my mind and the way that I wrap my head around it is, that there is a middle ground and there is a way to recognize the trauma and how it plays a part in the liturgy itself without completely deconstructing the liturgy.

I would just add to that and say I actually think we can solve that problem with other doctrines. Um, so, if we understand what apatheticism is, um, we can do a better job of understanding how. What happens often with doctrines, especially when they're isolated, is they just become little ways of self-idolizing: what's my favorite doctrine and how am I going to just beat other people in the head with that, especially if it's something that helps me maintain my power right. And so, apatheticism is a doctrine that states that God is beyond all comprehension. Everything we say about God is more wrong than it's right. That's a doctrine and if I understand that and I take that

seriously that puts little asterisks next to every other doctrine. And so, I think that if we understand that and understand the nature of doctrines that'll help us out. So there's a whole lot that's been written on on the nature of doctrines right, and trying to avoid turning them into idols, which I think what you're talking about, I would say that's an abusive doctrine. It's a use of doctrine that's just about deploying power in order to maintain my position. Um, and of course, in the mind of that person, I'm not saying they're intentionally doing that. Right, all human beings self-literalize that's what we do. But it's just a matter of finding the ways to kind of chip away at that I think the doctrine of apathy isn't the transcendence of God if that's not the heart of your religious practice you're gonna be idolizing.

I was wondering it seems like your presentation is primarily focused on, um, the liturgy of the mass and um I was wondering if you had any thoughts on creative response and different types of liturgies, either that are like lay lead or um yeah space is outside of kind of like a mass liturgy, that could be a creative response to addressing the trauma of like integrating it in uh kind of like thinking about producing formation in a different way?

I think knowing what we're going to be researching later, on talks about trauma bonding and a lot of the rhetoric that's being used. Um a while in the beginning of our research we talked about the rhetoric, um, used within increasing formation, you could probably speak more on this, but it's been very militaristic. And so, when that is there and formed into the creation of priests and that militaristic and forceful acknowledgement of the power hierarchy and the power differential and then transfers over to their experience as stepping in to the authority figure of a priest. And so I think that if there is a way to change a lot of the rhetoric behind it, which holds that connotation, and thus creates the formation of that person. Then creates that person who's stepping into that like symbol of that betrayal of trust. I think that is one possible way of getting to the root of the problem as as much as we can and then watching it have sort of a ripple effect down to the experience of the people in the pew.

yeah I would ask that just like I think having an ongoing conversation about it and allowing like the policy that kate's talking about where it's just silence I think it's incredibly dangerous and some of that just starts with conversation and I hate to cite spotlight that's a great movie spotlight on yeah if you haven't seen that it's great and I think part of what it talks about it kind of opens with some of this discussion amongst a group of individuals who are survivors of CPSA so a space like that where if the concern is staying with the faith and wanting to still experience that I think there are ways to connect with other people who have experienced there are other people who are happy outside of the church setting that kind of allow for some of that

And so yeah, survivor support groups definitely. Yeah you know, um, but I think that you know the psychology kind of bears out that ritual is actually one of the best ways to heal ptsd. It's an embodied form of healing that allows for the processing of those triggering memories to kind of

get moved into long-term memory. So I think prescribing ritual is important, um, but I think that our presentation today is really just the first step. Of like stop telling people they have to do here tell people that they they're free to figure out what's going to be best for them, prioritize their own lives now. For me it's like well okay talk about the Episcopal church like you know I'll say this I'm somebody who has moral distress every time I step into a catholic church, um, I haven't been to a mass in three years where I haven't felt like I was perpetuating violence and it affects the way that I worship. And one of the ways I've dealt with that, is I go down to All Saints Episcopal where pastor Andrew Scoring is amazing. And I sit there and it's gone, like I don't I don't feel that, um. And so for me, finding the ritual spaces that helped me process that has been life-giving. Now how did that mean that's a mortal sin according to the catholic church now. I don't care, right like I disagree with that. And I mean, I take it seriously what they're saying, and I've thought about it, I've been like, yeah, I disagree. You know, so you have to follow your conscience and find out like where do you heal, where do you feel supported. Um, and so, to Dr. Astorga's question earlier, where are they supposed to go, well that's a process of exploration. And if what we do with people who are desperately trying to, is yell at them warnings about the dangers of where they're going, it's like, no no focus on the danger that you are and don't blame them for trying to find a safe place right. Um, so I would say that there's lots lots of ways of doing that, um, and I think doing that with the spiritual director, who you trust doing that with, a psychologist, who you trust, the counselor, you trust, friends, you trust, and then don't be scared to prioritize your healing.

Do you plan to share your research and your findings with church leaders?

Yeah, so, um, there's a bunch of them who are right now uh members of this community who are at a meeting they had to go to. and I've gotten wonderful emails of support saying this is important work that you're doing recording it and sending it to them, um. And the you know I think our work going forward like we're the the journal we're trying to publish this paper is an open source open source you know journal, um, so I hope so you know, um. and I think that as we get better at this this lab, and we learn how to use our website better um we might be able to create more content that's that reaches more people. But most definitely, yeah. We've been hoping to reach out to the beacon in some capacity so if there's any beacon reporters let me know.

I'll say as a student as a researcher too because I'm very avid in campus ministry and I love it, almost every single priest who we reached out to came up to me individually and was like I think that your work is extremely important and I wish that I could be here. And being on a campus at least acknowledged and in some form supported, um it's definitely something that I believe that those priests will actually take to heart.

Another important point to make is that the clerics aren't immune from all the things we just said, especially moral distress and moral injury. So many priests that I've talked to are torn apart by their obligations and their responsibilities. Just like everyone I've ever met cares deeply about the people they're ministering to, even if the way they go about it I deeply disagree with, I'm not calling into question for will at all. What I what I in fact I would say you know I think you're probably working through some things too. I mean talk about micro spaces of power gains that are happening trying to navigate the relationship between themselves and the laity they're serving and then the bishops who are telling them what to do and realizing that they can lose their job and their livelihood and all that stuff if they push back right. I mean there's an immense amount of moral distress and moral injury that I think happens within um the clergy. And so I don't we can't set this up simply as a us versus them right um. And so I think it's it's not just wanting to reach out with this research to them as a way of saying hey be better but hey maybe you need some help too you know um and you need to be treated as somebody who um you know has to prioritize your own health.

Well, I just want to, um, I want to offer affirmation of a fundamental thing of what you're doing here which is to um not be limited by the sort of sometimes explicit but always implicit idea that oh if you're going to talk about a thing, um we're going to ask at the end "so how will you fix it?" and if you don't have a comprehensive answer to that question then like maybe you shouldn't say anything. But I really appreciate how you're not being limited by that. I think that's a voice of wisdom and, uh, with humility saying you know you took it you did take some steps and say well let's offer some suggestions but even if you didn't have any of that it would still be perfectly valid and powerful to say there's only one thing that we actually believe we understand here which is that this—that continuing to do this is adding to the harm and we should stop that. That much we're sure of and, uh, we may or may not have ideas about fixing all the rest of it. It's not your job at the outset of an investigation to have the full answers to every aspect of the overwhelming thing. So thank you for just, you know, giving voice to the part that you know you are certain about and then just venturing with humility possible other things and let, um I guess the word that keeps jumping out to me is the word forgiveness. right um and i'm curious right on the one hand right once you think about how like people say well what about forgiveness right but I think one of the things that's really cool about y'all's research is it eliminates something about the complexities and it it eliminates something about forgiveness um and and like psycho dynamic and I was wondering if any of you could speak to kind of those categories of like forgiveness and reconciliation and how kind of this intensiveness to uh add reaction and kind of what it says there or what what some questions or what you might be there

Okay um we actually uh wonderful Dr. Turnbloom teaches a psychology of ritual class and that was something that we focused on a lot. That I personally applied to this teaching was this understanding of the difference between reconciliation and forgiveness. Where you can actively yourself forgive the situation and what you have been through the person that has done it but that

does not mean that you have to reconcile the relationship with that person. That does not mean that you have to then put everything in the past and fully participate in it again like nothing never happened. And so I think applying that understanding and that definition of like okay there is forgiveness there is something that is there but it doesn't mean that I have to fully reconcile my relationship with the church. It doesn't mean that I have to fully reconcile myself with the liturgy of which perpetuates, that I think that personally for me it serves as a way of healing. As we were talking about before a way of not letting that trauma completely like consume me to allow that forgiveness to happen, but not feeling so forced to have to completely reconcile that. And I think applying that here again, that you said is crucial and can for some people serve as that sort of healing.

I mean I did not have a close relationship with the church growing up, I do not identify catholic, I have never been to mass like twice I don't know. Um but I mean honestly some of my best experiences have been just the communication that I've had with these three lovely individuals. Because I'm not gonna lie, I walked in and I was like I do not know anything about the bible and I just got an internship with a theology professor. I don't know what I'm doing here. um but it's been really illuminating and just listening to Kate's process through it with her involvement in campus ministry, I think that the way that she has approached it and the just kind of the inputs I get from them are really eliminating to just kind of how I understand it. Because I definitely came into this university very anti-catholic, I would say like I had a really just negative perception of the whole shebang. um but being able to have these conversations with people who do uh identify with the catholic church, while doing this research kind of allows me insight into what that's like for someone who does identify that.

And I would just say like when we yeah the distinctions and forgiveness and reconciliations to obviously like to say that forgiveness is about self-healing first and foremost, um and then I would say reconciliation, to go back to jennifer beste work right, to focus on grace as mediator interpersonal relationship. It doesn't mean that you have to get back to that grace through that person, that maybe it's not reconciliation but it's conciliation with another source. And that you're reconciling God but through another source. And so I think that reconciliation almost always gets you know framed in the sense that I'm going back to the relationship I had before and I think that the second we do that we're displacing God. Because it's not about reconciliation with this particular person or this particular parish, it should be about reconciliation from a christian sentiment with God. Now as we said before about embracing humanism, that doesn't have to happen through this. You can have it through another place so forgiveness perhaps as a way of healing yourself and then reconcile with God wherever you need to.

Thank you so much. Yeah thank you really wonderful to have so many people here thank you for spending your evening with us!